



Targeted Literacy Interventions and Extensions

Targeted intervention for literacy is achieved through prescriptive, intentional planning based on individual student need for students who are not reading on grade level. **It involves both looking ahead to upcoming skill development and back to foundational gaps as far as is needed for each individual student.**

Purpose

Literacy outcomes for students improve when students are provided high-quality core instruction together with explicit literacy interventions and extensions based on individual student needs. Louisiana believes that students deserve every opportunity to read on grade level, and this vision will be realized through ongoing support for educators and students around best practices in reading instruction.

What are Targeted Literacy Interventions and Extensions?

Most students experience some amount of unfinished learning throughout their educational journey for a variety of reasons, and diagnostic assessments can be used to determine skills with which students may require targeted, direct, and explicit instruction with, as well as regular progress monitoring to determine progress. Extra time for learning is an essential part of academic recovery, and students experiencing unfinished learning in English Language Arts should be provided with ongoing and proactive support through an acceleration model that prepares students for current and future learning. Learning to read requires systematic instruction as students move through a continuum of reading skills that increase in complexity. Without support, students with unfinished learning will continue to struggle with reading. A clear example is students will struggle to read multisyllabic words if they cannot master single-syllable words.

The first purpose of this document is to specifically address intervening around core foundational reading skills for learners who are performing below grade level in reading proficiency. When this occurs, these students can be supported using high quality instructional materials, but they may also need additional and more intensive intervention. Students who are found to be below grade level in reading should be supported through Targeted Literacy Interventions. Targeted Literacy Intervention is intensive, systematic instruction on foundational reading skills in small groups for students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. This targeted literacy instruction may be needed at any grade level. Additionally, Louisiana [Bulletin 1566](#) states that any third grade student who scores below basic on the LEAP ELA assessment and has below grade level reading scores should have a plan to help them successfully transition to the next grade level. The [Individual Academic Support Plan Guidance](#) (IASP) and [template](#) can support schools in the process of creating support plans for identified students in grades K-5 who score below proficiency on the literacy screener or who score below mastery on the LEAP standardized assessment.

The second purpose of this document is to specifically address extending learning around core foundational reading skills for learners who are performing on or above grade level in reading proficiency. Targeted Literacy Extension is an



instructional method used to build additional foundational reading skills based on the strengths and interests of students who score on or above the benchmark on universal screening.

Data

Data is an essential component of the MTSS framework and assists with the initial identification of student strengths and unfinished learning, progress monitoring for flexible grouping, and planning for additional support. Teachers should use literacy screener data as well as diagnostic assessments available in high-quality, core instructional materials to drive decisions around instructional adjustments and intervention practices. Formative assessments during instruction can also be used as an opportunity to make adjustments to daily instruction. These usually non-graded types of assessments are embedded within the core curriculum and used to strategically check for understanding, adjust instruction, and make decisions related to interventions and extension.

All Louisiana students in grades kindergarten through third grade must be administered the state-wide universal literacy screener at the beginning of each school year ([Act 520](#) of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session). Screening and progress monitoring of the students must also occur at the middle of the year as well at the end of the year to provide data to show growth or additional needs. [DIBELS 8th](#) offers free screening materials through eighth grade and is used to identify students who may be at risk regarding reading foundational skills. Although screening is mandatory in K-3 grades, literacy screening is recommended through high school to identify students who may be at risk for continued reading difficulties.

Students in grades 4-12 have different data points to examine when considering if literacy intervention is needed. Secondary schools may use various universal screeners such as GPA, state standardized exams, curriculum-embedded assessments, attendance records, and disciplinary referrals to identify students requiring intervention. A good place to start is by looking at LEAP data. Students who score below basic, especially in ELA, may show cause for a further look. Grades from curriculum-embedded assessments and any screening data can provide additional information. If a literacy screener is not currently used in grades 4-12, DIBELS 8th can be administered; if the student is showing as at risk for reading difficulties, the [LIFT Kit](#) is available as a diagnostic in the Louisiana Literacy Library.

Frequent retesting of targeted skills through consistent progress monitoring is also necessary to assure that adequate growth is actually occurring as a result of the intervention and support being provided for each student. Grade level and intervention teams use progress monitoring data to make decisions about student responsiveness to interventions and supports, making adjustments as needed. Teams can review data patterns and compare students' rate of improvement to growth necessary to meet their goals. District and school teams may use system level progress monitoring data to assess the effectiveness of district and school level interventions.

Schools should use the assessment data from the literacy screener along with diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring data to provide intensive, systematic intervention on foundational reading skills to students who score below the grade-level benchmark on universal screening. This practice has shown strong evidence of successfully supporting struggling readers. Selecting appropriate data sources depends on the school's focus within a multi-tiered system of



supports, as certain sources better predict student outcomes than others. Teachers and leaders can refer to the [PreK to 3rd Grade Assessment Guidance](#) for additional information around screening and supporting students.

Time

Literacy interventions and extensions should occur during the uninterrupted literacy block. Adequate time should be devoted to core reading instruction utilizing high quality instructional materials for whole group learning, and time should also be set aside in the daily classroom schedule for Targeted Literacy Intervention and Extension. Small-group instruction is tailored to meet the specific needs of each student while providing an opportunity for teachers to model a skill and provide feedback as students practice.

Grades K-2 should provide approximately 60 minutes of foundational reading skills instruction, approximately 60 minutes of knowledge-building reading instruction, and approximately 30 minutes of small group intervention and extension. Grades 3-5 are recommended to provide uninterrupted core reading instruction lasting approximately 60 minutes plus 30 minutes of intervention and extension each day for all students during the literacy block. Middle schools (Grades 6-8) and high schools (Grades 9-12) are also recommended to provide uninterrupted core reading instruction lasting approximately 60 minutes plus 30 minutes of intervention and extension each day for all students during the literacy block.

Time for literacy intervention in grades 4-12 can be structured in different ways, depending on scheduling opportunities and student needs. Some successful methods include:

- scheduling an allotted block of time during the morning or afternoon, usually 20-30 minutes, that happens across the whole school.
- during an advisory or study hall period (may include ACT prep, guided study hall, or literacy interventions for those students that need it).
- utilizing the course code that can be offered to students in middle and high school who require work in literacy interventions.

Focus

The use of data to create flexible small groups and identify student needs and adequate scheduling for students to receive the necessary time for literacy instruction can still be undercut if the focus of what should occur during the Targeted literacy intervention and extension is not carefully considered and planned. Small group instruction should be responsive, timely, and inclusive. During Targeted Literacy Intervention, teachers provide intensive, systematic instruction on foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. This practice has shown [strong evidence](#) of successfully supporting struggling readers.

- Flexible small groups of no more than 5 students should meet at least three times per week for approximately 20-40 minutes.



- Target the specific skills in which students show a deficit by providing explicit instruction and interactions with opportunities for guided and independent practice with feedback.
- Avoid pulling students from Tier I core instruction to deliver targeted intervention and extension.
- Progress monitor students performing below benchmark at least once every 10 days.
- Professional learning needs to be provided for teachers and staff that are providing the small group instruction.

Targeted literacy interventions should be provided to students who demonstrate a weakness in any of the five components of reading.

- **Phonemic Awareness** is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Phonemic awareness is foundational to reading proficiency. It refers to a students' ability to identify and manipulate units of oral language. It is a crucial component of reading instruction, particularly in the earliest grade levels, and practice with phonemic awareness should occur daily. Studies have shown that the lack of phonemic awareness is the most powerful determinant of the likelihood of failure to read (Adams, 1990).
- **Phonics** is the connection between sounds and letter symbols.
- **Fluency** is a reader's ability to read with speed, accuracy, and expression.
- **Vocabulary** is the knowledge of words, their definitions, and context.
- **Comprehension** is the understanding of meaning in text.

Instructional materials are one of the most important tools educators use to enhance student learning through instruction that is grounded in the Science of Reading. High quality literacy instructional materials should align closely to the Science of Reading and utilize research-based best practices. When determining what materials to use, a first step is to investigate the additional resources provided within your high-quality core curriculum. All literacy instructional materials should align to [state standards](#), be [free of 3-cueing](#), and be identified as [high-quality](#). Core materials, supplemental materials, and assessments should be instructionally coherent, ensuring that all materials use the same approach and strategies to provide students with a cohesive experience across the tiers of support. Furthermore, most curricula provide intervention guidance for students who do not master the content within the context of whole-group instruction. Refer to the [Instructional Materials Reviews](#) for additional assistance with identifying and selecting high quality core instructional materials.

During Targeted Literacy Extensions, students who are on or above grade level in reading proficiency participate in challenging, content-based activities to enhance and extend learning. This includes opportunities to expand their reading and writing skills.

- Flexible small group instruction at a frequency of 2-3 times per week for 30 minutes to continuously improve fluency and build comprehension and vocabulary.
- Independent and partner work around current classroom topics in ELA, Science, and Social Studies to expand knowledge and vocabulary.
- Additional reading in a variety of genres based on student choice in [classroom](#) and [school](#) libraries.



- Open-ended, exploratory questions and activities based on student interests.

Where can I find out more information about properly supporting all students?

Teachers and leaders can access the [Literacy Library](#) for instruction, intervention, and extension activities and additional support. Support and resources are available on the following topics:

- Setting and monitoring literacy goals
- Implementation of literacy best practices
- Classroom and school libraries
- Engaging families and providing literacy activities
- Science of Reading professional development

Specific, actionable guidance is also provided for teachers through ongoing, on-demand professional development sessions to support instruction, intervention, and extension activities. Resources are available in the [Literacy Library](#):

- DIBELS PD Series
- LDOE Professional Learning Platform Literacy Series
- K-2 Teacher PD Series presentations, recordings, and redelivery guidance
- Leader PD Series presentations, recordings, and redelivery guidance
- Middle and High School PD Series
- Grades 3-12 Literacy Support PD Series
- Decoding and Multisyllabic Word in Grades 3-12
- Content Literacy Series
- ACT English and Reading Series
- Additional PD schedules and resources

Access the [Louisiana Tutoring Initiatives](#) for tutoring guidance and support. Utilize the Department's Staffing and Scheduling Guidance to ensure time is allotted for small group instruction and intervention.

Contact louisianaliteracy@la.gov with questions.