

Third Grade Literacy Guidance: Start, Stop, Continue

Overview

Third grade is a pivotal year in students' literacy development and a key focus of Louisiana's assessment and accountability system. Students participate in multiple required state assessments, including DIBELS and LEAP, providing important data on reading proficiency.

While Louisiana has seen continued growth in the percentage of third graders exiting the year reading on grade level according to DIBELS, the percentage of students scoring Mastery and above on LEAP has declined over the past three years.

In response to these trends and statewide instructional patterns, the guidance below outlines **Start, Stop, and Continue** practices across system, school, and classroom levels. As you review, consider:

- What practices are already working well and should continue?
- What practices could be strengthened or elevated?
- What new practices should be initiated through [Instructional Leadership Teams and Teacher Collaboration](#) cycles?

Start

Focus on practices that address identified gaps and enhance literacy instruction

- Train all school personnel on the [Tiered Pathways for Literacy Support](#).
- Gradually release responsibility for learning and engagement across the lesson, unit, and school year.*
- Analyze the **vertical progression of standards** to strengthen coherence across grades.
- Elevate **Speaking and Listening Standards** within daily instruction.*
- Use **curriculum embedded student exemplars** to drive instruction.*
- Differentiate within **Tier 1 High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)** to scaffold student learning while maintaining grade-level rigor.*
- Expand intervention beyond phonics to address students' **language comprehension needs**.
- Link Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) practice to multisyllabic decoding routines and application to Tier 1 core texts.
- Complete the Professional Learning Platform course Grade 3: Instructional Preparation and Tiered Support using course code 15E4719D.

Stop

Discontinue practices that limit access to rigorous, comprehensive literacy instruction.

- Lowering the rigor of **grade-level standards**.*
- Prioritizing isolated strands of the **Reading Rope** rather than addressing literacy comprehensively.
- Increasing reliance on supplemental resources that are not aligned to **HQIM**.

- Providing intervention that does not address students' **highest-priority needs**.
- Practicing NWF in isolation.

Continue

Build on practices that are supporting strong literacy instruction and student outcomes.

- Applying **Science of Reading** knowledge across both Word Recognition and Language Comprehension.
- Utilizing [Unit and Lesson Preparation Protocols](#).^{*} (click on Planning Guides)
- Prioritizing strong **implementation of Tier 1 core instruction**.^{*}
- Providing ongoing job-embedded educator training on **HQIM**.^{*}
- Monitor progress using **HQIM-embedded assessments** and use them to inform instruction.^{*}
- **Progress monitoring** at regular intervals to track and respond to the effectiveness of intervention.
- Engaging families in literacy events and learning opportunities that support **student outcomes**.
- Maintaining collaboration with **professional learning partners and the LDOE**.
- **Communicating with families** regarding third-grade promotion.

^{*} Indicates guidance aligned to Tier 1 core instruction