

Louisiana Believes

Louisiana Early Literacy Commission
February Collaborations

Agenda

- Overview of Commission
- Review Commission Recommendations

Importance of Reading

Reading skill is necessary for productive participation in work and society.

- Students who do not read proficiently by the end of the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school, and those who have not mastered at least a basic level of reading proficiency are nearly six times as likely to leave school without earning a diploma.
- Students who are not proficient in reading as third graders make up nearly two-thirds of the students who fail to graduate on time from high school.
- Eighty-five percent of all juveniles who come into contact with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate, as are sixty percent of all prison inmates.

Overview

Senate Resolution 182 and House Resolution 222 requested that the state Department of Education create the Early Literacy Commission to study and make recommendations to develop and implement an aligned system to provide effective evidence-based reading instruction for children from birth through third grade.

Membership

The Commission is composed of twenty-four members, five appointed by BESE as follows:

- Two local superintendents from school systems which are implementing evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents;
- One school principal whose school is implementing evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Louisiana Association of School Principals; and
- Two educators with a demonstrated commitment to, and understanding of, evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the state superintendent of education and the Center for Development and Learning.

The remaining 19 members include parents, state officials, representatives from higher education, various educational organizations and advocacy groups.

Commission Charge

The Early Literacy Commission is tasked with:

- gathering and analyzing data to determine the degree to which evidence-based reading is being implemented with fidelity in the state's public schools and childhood care and education settings;
- conducting an assessment of the number of practicing educators, including K-3 teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists, with training and skills in evidence-based reading instruction; and
- assessing the degree to which state colleges of education and alternative certification programs provide a program of study on evidence-based reading practices for K-3 teachers, special education teachers, and education specialists.

Commission Charge

In January of 2020, the Early Literacy Commission made recommendations to BESE and the Legislature regarding:

- how the state might ensure that all teacher preparation programs produce teacher candidates with the competencies needed to teach evidence-based instruction from day one;
- how to assist school systems to adopt reading programs that utilize systematic and cumulative evidence-based reading instruction; and
- how the state can equip educators with the evidence-based competencies and skills needed to ensure the reading proficiency of third grade students.

The Early Literacy Commission also developed and propose a timeframe for increasing the reading proficiency of third grade students and established benchmarks for the intervening years.

Meeting Schedule

September 9, 2019: Full commission meeting

October 14, 2019: Full commission meeting

November 20, 2019: Small workgroup meeting

December 16, 2019: Full commission meeting

January 15, 2020: Commission submitted a written [report](#) of its findings and recommendations



Early Literacy Achievement

Literacy Screeners

Louisiana Law (R.S. 17:182) and a policy established by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) require the administration of a literacy screener not later than thirty days after the beginning of each school year in the early elementary grades. The literacy screener is a brief assessment of a particular skill or ability that is typically predictive of a later outcome. The key skills measured at each grade level follow:

- Kindergarten: Phonemic Awareness
- First Grade: Phonics
- Second Grade: Oral Reading Fluency
- Third Grade: Reading Comprehension

Literacy Screeners

- School systems can choose from four research based screening assessments. These assessments are valid and reliable tools to measure the skills listed above.
- Ninety-two percent of school systems administer one of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments — DIBELS Next or, the newer version, DIBELS 8th.
- Around six percent of school systems administer the System to Enhance Educational Progress (STEEP) assessment, and less than 2 percent of school systems administer the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessment.

Literacy Screeners

- Students' scores for all four assessments are reported as "On or Above Benchmark" or "Below Benchmark." Students who score "Below Benchmark" are considered "At Risk" for reading difficulties.
- Percentage of Students Scoring "On or Above Benchmark" in 2019
 - 43.2% of kindergarten students
 - 54.2% of first graders
 - 55.8% of second graders
 - 52.8% of third graders

NAEP Results

- Louisiana's 2019 NAEP results showed that Louisiana's pace of improvement since 2009 in all subjects significantly exceeds national trends. Since 2009, Louisiana has outpaced the national rate of improvement in every grade and subject.
- In Grade 4 Reading, from 2009-2019, the national public average scale score is down, but the Louisiana public average scale score is up 2 points. Also, the percentage of students at or above proficient nationally is up 2 percent, but in Louisiana, the percentage of students at or above proficient is up 7 percent. Louisiana ranks ninth nationally for improvement in average scale score and seventh for improvement of percentage of proficient students.

LEAP 2025 Results

- LEAP 2025 results also indicate progress in reading.
- Louisiana's students score highest and have seen the greatest improvement since 2015 in ELA. The percent of grade 3-8 LEAP 2025 ELA tests scoring Mastery and above was 44 percent in 2019, up from 43 percent in 2018 and 37 percent in 2015. Results for grades 3-12 in 2018 and 2019 were the same as grades 3-8.

Reflection

Reflect on the question below, and discuss with your shoulder partner. Be prepared to share!

What is encouraging about this data?



Commission

Vision

The Early Literacy Commission recognizes the importance of a strong literacy foundation in preparing children to succeed in school. Early literacy plays a key role in enabling the kind of early learning experiences that research shows are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates, and enhanced productivity in adult life.

The Commission's vision is for all Louisiana students to become proficient readers no later than the end of third grade as evidenced by performing Mastery on the state assessment.

Goals, Recommendations, and Milestones

To achieve its vision of reading proficiency for all children, the Commission developed a long-term plan to improve early literacy in Louisiana with short-term and mid-term milestones along the way.

The Commission's plan establishes nine goals and a set of seventeen policy recommendations to achieve these goals.

Approved Recommendations



Instructional Materials and Intervention Materials

Instructional Materials and Intervention Materials

Current State

Eighty-four percent (84%) of school systems have adopted standards-based, [high quality curriculum](#) addressing the *foundations* of reading in K-2. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of school systems have adopted [high quality curriculum](#) that *builds knowledge* through language and literacy in K-2. Reviews of research-based literacy intervention programs began in Fall of 2019 but have not yet been published.

Instructional Materials and Intervention Materials

Goal 1

Every teacher uses a high-quality curriculum to teach students the foundations of reading and language and literacy.

Goal 2

Students who need intensive intervention are provided research-based literacy interventions.

Recommendation

Review and, as needed, revise the [Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool for ELA Grades K-12 \(IMET\)](#). In addition to being fully aligned to Louisiana Student Standards, programs that receive Tier 1 ratings must provide evidence-based instruction methods that include writing and the five explicit, systematic components of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Review and, as needed, revise the [Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool for ELA Intervention Grades 3 – 8 \(IMET\)](#). In addition to being fully aligned to Louisiana Student Standards, programs that receive Tier 1 ratings must be data-driven, individualized by student, systematic, and provide explicit instruction on phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency. Add a non-required indicator addressing vocabulary and comprehension.

School system and school leaders ensure that every school and classroom has high quality instructional materials, including Foundations of Reading and Language and Literacy.

School System and School Leadership

School System and School Leadership

Current State

Our most struggling schools (CIR and UIR) with 1st and 2nd grade classrooms are being observed using the [Literacy Observation Tool](#). From August – December 2019, LDOE staff completed over 200 first and second grade classroom observations across 45 LEAs in 101 schools. Third party observations were also completed in 76 classrooms. Observations indicate that teachers need additional support teaching the foundations of reading.

School System and School Leadership

Goal 1

Every school has a culture in which all teachers are responsible for and equipped to deliver effective literacy instruction.

Goal 2

Every school leader maximizes the use of time and personnel through scheduling and collaborative planning.

Recommendation

School system and school leaders are continuously supporting high quality curriculum implementation in foundations and language and literacy.

Every PreK-2 teacher and administrator is provided with high quality professional development that includes initial training and ongoing support focused on the Foundations of Reading and Language and Literacy.

Create K-2 school schedules that incorporate daily foundational skills instructional blocks, language and literacy instructional blocks, daily time for interventions, and common planning time.



Teacher Preparation and Professional Growth

Teacher Preparation and Professional Growth

Current State:

Eighty-four percent (84%) of school systems partner with vendors to train teachers on the *foundations* curriculum in K-2. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of school systems partner with vendors to train teachers on the *language and literacy* curriculum in K-2. Vendors are not required to include the *foundation of reading* in curriculum training. At Louisiana institutions of higher learning, there are no common instructional materials for literacy methods courses.

Teacher Preparation and Professional Growth

Goal 1
Every teacher uses evidenced-based practices to meet the literacy needs of all students.

Goal 2
Every educator preparation program emphasizes evidence-based literacy practices.

Recommendation

Select and train Literacy Coordinators to provide support for literacy in K-2 schools

Select and train a literacy coach for every K-2 school

Provide K-2 mentor literacy training

Review and, as needed, revise the [PD Vendor Guide](#). Entries should clearly indicate which K-2 ELA vendors offer high-quality curriculum-connected training on the Foundations of Reading (phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency) and which vendors offer training in Language and Literacy (comprehension and vocabulary).

Teacher Preparation and Professional Growth - cont.

Goal 1
Every teacher uses evidenced-based practices to meet the literacy needs of all students.

Goal 2
Every educator preparation program emphasizes evidence-based literacy practices.

Recommendation

Review and evaluate licensure assessments for PreK-5 and special education licensure.

Provide literacy training for teacher-preparation and administrator-preparation program faculty.

Review and, as needed, revise the process used to evaluate teacher-preparation and administrator-preparation programs to ensure that literacy coursework in PreK-5 includes the Foundations of Reading (phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency) and Language and Literacy (comprehension and vocabulary) and writing.

The background of the slide is a watercolor-style illustration. It features a central white area that tapers towards the top and bottom, creating a sense of depth. This white area is surrounded by various shades of blue, from light sky blue to deep, dark teal. The colors are blended together with soft, irregular edges, giving it a painterly, artistic feel. The overall composition is balanced and visually appealing.

Progress Monitoring and Communication

Progress Monitoring and Communication

Current State

Louisiana's accountability system is inclusive of early childhood, yet skips K-2 and then continues with 3rd grade through high school. This gap means that educators and families receive less information about how children are performing in these grade levels.

Progress Monitoring and Communication

Goal 1

Every school system implements a comprehensive literacy assessment plan that includes different assessment tools used for different purposes at different times during the school year.

Goal 2

Every teacher uses literacy assessment data to monitor students' progress and inform instruction.

Goal 3

Every school community expands opportunities for parents and families to be engaged in their children's literacy development.

Recommendation

Build a clear accountability system for K-2 grades that defines excellence in each grade and incentivizes progress and rewards achievement. The system identifies one statewide screener, and early literacy is included in school profiles.

Provide and explain assessment data to parents/caregivers regularly, including how the data will be used to adjust instruction.

Progress Monitoring and Communication - cont.

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Goal 2

Every teacher uses literacy assessment data to monitor students' progress and inform instruction.

Goal 3

Every school community expands opportunities for parents and families to be engaged in their children's literacy development.

Recommendation

Develop a parent portal with literacy resources and guidance including resources to support students who struggle including students with dyslexia.

Develop education/media strategies and a campaign to increase families' and community stakeholders' knowledge about the importance of effective literacy screening and instruction from birth to 8, as well as the components of effective literacy instruction.



Looking Ahead

Future Actions of the Commission

Louisiana must continue to work to ensure that more students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade students. In 2020, the Commission will receive reports from the Louisiana Department of Education on the use of any new funds and study the following areas through its meetings:

1. Instructional Materials and Intervention Materials: LDOE will provide an update on 2020-2021 reviews and a timeline on resubmission of programs currently posted as Tier 1.

Future Actions of the Commission

Louisiana must continue to work to ensure that more students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade students. In 2020, the Commission will receive reports from the Louisiana Department of Education on the use of any new funds and study the following areas through its meetings:

2. **Teacher Preparation and Professional Growth:** LDOE will provide updates on literacy coordinators and literacy coaches, the PD Vendor Guide, recommendations for assessment for Literacy and a timeline for licensure changes, and proposed revisions to the process used to evaluate teacher-preparation and administrator-preparation programs.

Future Actions of the Commission

Louisiana must continue to work to ensure that more students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade students. In 2020, the Commission will receive reports from the Louisiana Department of Education on the use of any new funds and study the following areas through its meetings:

3. Progress Monitoring and Communication: LDOE will provide updates on K-2 accountability system development, assessment work with schools and school systems, a parent portal, and a communication plan.

Questions

Questions

For more information, email Chanda Johnson at chanda.johnson@la.gov.