Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement

A Guide for School Leaders, Grades 6-12

2023

Department of Education & Workforce

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Disclaimer: This guide was developed to support the development of comprehensive model literacy sites as part of Ohio's Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant. For more information on Ohio's plan and framework for comprehensive literacy instruction, see Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement.

Introduction

Schools that are successful in improving literacy outcomes for adolescents often have several factors in place:

- Educators catch and address reading difficulties in the early grades when they are easier to alleviate.
- Educators of successful adolescent readers engage in effective instructional strategies.
- Successful educators of adolescent readers take steps to ensure students are motivated to read and engaged with complex texts that are relevant to them.

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement calls for district and school leaders to increase learners' language and literacy achievement through the use of evidence-based systems, high-quality instruction and the selection of high-quality instructional materials. Equitable systems that help all learners thrive are grounded in access, opportunity, collaboration and efficiently matching resources to student needs.

A Call to Action

Students in grades 6-12 who struggle with reading often face the following challenges:

- They cannot decode new words accurately because they lack phonics and advanced decoding skills.
- They cannot read fluently because their sight vocabulary is restricted.
- They spend less time reading widely, which restricts their ability to learn new word meanings, apply reading comprehension strategies and learn new content.
- They frequently give up on the idea of ever being a good reader.

Adolescence is not too late to intervene. Educators should maintain high and realistic expectations that all adolescent students can improve with the right supports. The research suggests reading problems in older students can be stabilized, but closing the gap takes intensive and sustained support. Accurate assessment information is critical at the secondary level so instruction can be appropriately targeted to each student's specific skill needs.

School Leaders Play a Key Role

District and building administrators play key roles in improving literacy outcomes in their districts. Meaningful change must address four key actions:

- Operationalizing a collaborative culture of shared leadership
- Increasing teacher and administrator knowledge of reading research
- Aligning instruction with reading research
- Using data in the collaborative problem-solving model for ongoing improvement

The purpose of this guide is to provide support for secondary administrators in operationalizing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement. The guide provides district and building leaders with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to implement evidence-based literacy practices that support the above changes.

This guide is organized into four sections that correspond to the key actions noted above:

1. Shared Leadership
2. Effective Literacy Instruction
3. Collaborative Problem-Solving
4. Tiered Systems of Instructional Support

Each section outlines practices that model sites should implement, with an emphasis on what district and building leaders need to know and do. There are multiple references to Ohio's existing tools and supports, along with graphics, tools and templates to support implementation. High-quality professional learning and coaching based on the science of reading are vital to building educator capacity needed to increase literacy outcomes and make true and lasting changes for adolescent readers.

Tool 1: District and Building Leadership Team Self-Assessment of Professional Learning Topics
Use this tool with district or building leadership teams to determine what professional

Proposed Three-Year Implementation Sequence

This proposed three-year sequence can guide the implementation of practices and strategies addressed in the guide.

YEAR 1

- Form/modify the district leadership team (DLT), building leadership team(s) (BLT), and department teams; identify roles, including coaching; schedule meetings; establish a communication system
- Revise the local literacy plan as needed
- Conduct an implementation inventory to assess the status of existing district or building initiatives
- Train district and building teams in collaborative problem-solving
- Assess staff knowledge of the science of reading and engage in professional learning
- Conduct an assessment audit
- Train staff on any new assessments
- Conduct universal screening
- Build consensus and urgency for change
- Analyze the effectiveness of classroom literacy instruction and plan for improvement, including auditing instructional materials used

YEAR 2

- Revisit team membership and roles; train new team members; revisit communication plan
- Review and revise district and building improvement plans
- Schedule ongoing professional learning
- Adopt and train on any new programs, products or practices needed to improve classroom literacy instruction
- Use screening data to determine needs for intervention
- Develop data-driven decision protocols for meeting student needs
- Conduct diagnostic assessment and begin progress monitoring
- Continue coaching on the collaborative problem-solving process and learn to apply for the students who need the most intensive support.

YEAR 3

- Revisit team membership and roles; train new team members; revisit communication plan
- Review and revise district and building action plans and the local literacy plan
- Refine classroom instruction and intervention systems, including the use of high-quality instructional materials
- Continue coaching and professional learning
- Use direct assessment data in the collaborative problem-solving process to make data-driven decisions regarding instructional support for students

Section 1: Shared Leadership

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. Who is involved in literacy leadership in the building and across the district?
2. What teams or structures currently are in place to collaboratively implement literacy improvement plans?
3. How do educators in the building work together to plan, implement and evaluate instruction and common literacy routines? What are strengths and opportunities for improvement in those practices?

School culture is guided by strong and engaged building leadership. The building principal and leadership team should model and lead a culture of collaboration where staff, families and community members are empowered to participate in school decisions. An environment of collaborative problem-solving creates a positive school culture where everyone – students, families and staff – is given the opportunity and responsibility to participate in building and sustaining the schoolwide literacy model. Family and community partnerships are essential and integrated into the district and building-level improvement planning process.

Creating a Collaborative Culture

Student outcomes are enhanced when family members and school staff share responsibility for student learning. Family members need options for meaningful involvement in their student's education and in school decisions. School staff should respond to families' interests and engagement. Schools can partner with community members, businesses and organizations to articulate and reach common goals on behalf of students and families.

Inclusive and equitable school culture ensures all students know they belong. All students have access to and fully participate in the general education curriculum and extracurricular activities. Schoolwide systems of literacy instruction promote high achievement for all students and communicate equitable expectations of all students (Appendix A).

Student outcomes are improved when teachers:

- Have high expectations for students from all backgrounds
- Use resources flexibly
- Promote positive social and academic growth
- Collaborate with colleagues, families and community members

Evidence-based reading instruction is effective for all students and essential for those who are marginalized or historically underserved, such as students of color, students acquiring the English language and students with disabilities. When students are not achieving, schools need to analyze the systems that may be contributing to that outcome. One way to promote equity is through the analysis and improvement of educational systems in partnership with families and community institutions.

Data-based decision-making and **communication** are two essential components involved in creating a collaborative school culture for implementing literacy improvement efforts.

Data-based decision-making	Communication
A structured data-based decision-making process that can be applied during meetings at all levels of the system. Details on implementing the collaborative problem-solving process can be found in section three of this implementation guide.	Effective communication is required to engage all stakeholders. At all levels of the school system, processes must be in place for the flow of information. One of the first responsibilities of district and building leaders is to identify how and when information is sought from and provided to family members, community partners and district staff.

Vision and Mission

To improve language and literacy, educators must embrace responsibility for meeting the needs of all students, including students with the most complex needs. It is the role of the district superintendent, in concert with district and community stakeholders, to establish a vision, mission and set of core beliefs (Appendix B) about teaching and learning that are clear, concise and communicate the direction of the district's educational system. Literacy improvement processes and resulting district and school improvement plans align to the district's clearly articulated and publicly shared vision, mission and core beliefs. Collaborative teams lead the work of creating, implementing and evaluating aligned district and building improvement plans.

Equitable Stakeholder Engagement

District and building leaders are charged with creating a collaborative culture that makes it possible for students to receive an equitable education regardless of race, gender, language, disability or socioeconomic status. The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework highlights equity and ethics as key components of leadership. Respect for the uniqueness of each student within the context of the student's family, language, community and culture can be operationalized by every administrator and teacher by setting high expectations, accountability, inclusive and culturally responsive instructional practices, shared leadership and effective teaming.

Teams at the district, building, grade and student levels are responsible for:

- Leading and supporting successful implementation of evidence-based literacy and language improvement strategies
- Identifying challenges facing students, families and schools
- Articulating causes of underachievement
- Generating local solutions

These tasks are accomplished through shared decision-making and accountability. Progress toward improved literacy outcomes will be accelerated by engagement and involvement of families and community members.

Effective teams have:

- A stated purpose
- Clear expectations for behavior
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- A structured meeting agenda
- A data-based decision-making process

Teaming

Implementing the practices outlined in Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement requires the effort of teams of educators working collaboratively at multiple levels to support improving student literacy outcomes.

Teams use student data in the collaborative problem-solving process to create, implement and evaluate district and school reading improvement plans. Collaborative problem-solving is a structured decision-making process for using data to answer questions about systems and students. Multiple teams should work in parallel at the district, building, grade and student levels (Appendix C).

Sample Meeting Norms for Effective Teams:

- Start and end on time
- Come prepared to meetings
- Follow the agenda
- Respect opinions of others
- Contribute
- Focus on team purpose

District and school improvement plans created at each level inform the work of teams at the other levels. Although each type of team uses different data sources at different levels of the school system, they share several common strategies.

ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS ON TEAMS

School personnel can create conditions that promote engagement with families and community partners. To accomplish this, districts and schools can work with families and community partners to analyze barriers to family engagement and consider how district policies may hinder or encourage engagement. Family and community members must be provided with an environment that supports them in feeling comfortable to engage. Schools can increase the comfort level of family and community members through regular and ongoing positive interaction.

School personnel can increase trust with families and community partners by:

- Sharing meeting agendas ahead of time
- Explicitly asking for input from all team members
- Avoiding "parking lot" discussions and "the meeting before the meeting"
- Minimizing the use of educational jargon

A mechanism or structure, such as a family partnership team, should be in place to support and encourage family partnership and involvement in school improvement planning and decision-making. Families can be active participants in creating opportunities to engage with educators and build relationships. These relationships are critical to supporting adolescent learners.

When districts engage community partners, they facilitate opportunities to problem-solve and consult on local planning. This can promote networking around shared supports and challenges and promote understanding of each entity's efforts. Examples of community entities that share the goals of school districts include libraries, after-school programs, health care providers, businesses, philanthropical and faith-based institutions.

District Leadership Teams (DLT)

The purpose of the district leadership team (DLT) is to use district-level data to design and evaluate a district improvement plan that will be implemented in each building. The team should view challenges and potential actions through a PreK-12 lens. Primary areas of consideration for the district team include funding, professional learning, policy, staffing and community engagement. District planning for literacy improvement should be integrated within any state-required improvement plans.

The district leadership team is not just about creating a vision of the work but also must monitor its own effectiveness as a team. The district leadership team considers district-level data and the needs articulated by each building leadership team, then allocates resources removing barriers to implementing evidence-based practices at the building level. Clear and reciprocal communication is essential between the district and building teams. District teams must have a plan for collecting information from building staff, families and the community and for communicating the district's vision, improvement plan and accountability data to all stakeholders.

Effective DLTs engage in the following actions to improve literacy outcomes:

1. Receive training and coaching in collaborative problem-solving, effective literacy instruction, assessment and the schoolwide literacy model
2. Create a comprehensive assessment system that is implemented within and across buildings as part of a multi-tiered system of supports

3. Use assessment data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate a district-level plan, such as a local literacy plan that is aligned to the state plan for improving literacy
4. Coordinate the delivery of districtwide professional development and coaching
5. Communicate district school improvement goals and actions to buildings and hold them accountable for aligning building plans to the district-level improvement plan
6. Align district policies and budget to the district-level improvement plan
7. Gather information from and communicate to building teams and the community

The district leadership team includes representation from all levels of the district. Members may include the following:

- Superintendent
- Central office administrators (including, but not limited to, the curriculum director)
- School board representatives
- Building administrators
- Teachers
- Family and community members
- A union representative
- Representatives from related services personnel

District leadership team members are responsible for providing their perspectives to shape district processes and procedures that will be used across all schools. Each team member's voice represents his or her own perspective and that of the stakeholder group the member represents, while at the same time recognizing the goal is to support all students, not just the specific student, class or building each individual represents.

Building Leadership Teams (BLT)

The building leadership team (BLT) is the driving force behind literacy improvement. The purpose of the building leadership team is to share responsibility in guiding development and implementation of building improvement plans and ensure the process yields sustainable improvements in student literacy outcomes. These efforts must be integrated at the building level across initiatives.

Tool 2: Sample Building Leadership Team Meeting Agenda
Use this tool to plan for and implement effective building leadership team meetings where literacy implementation and student outcomes are discussed.

A primary role of the building leadership team is to use building data in the collaborative problem-solving process to develop, implement and evaluate the building-level improvement plan. This team uses the collaborative problem-solving process to select evidence-based literacy strategies providing effective literacy instruction across content areas, as well as discipline-specific strategies and supports. Building-level improvement plans must be aligned to district improvement plans. The building leadership team is responsible for developing capacity to implement and sustain literacy improvement by coordinating and

guiding design of the three tiers of instructional supports and removing barriers to implementing instruction.

Tool 3: Sample Building Leadership Team Tier 1 Problem-Solving Template
Use this tool to support the collaborative problem-solving process at the building level to determine the effectiveness of literacy instruction across all content areas at Tier 1.

Effective secondary building leadership teams engage in the following actions to improve literacy outcomes:

1. Receive training and coaching in collaborative problem-solving, effective reading instruction, assessment, the schoolwide literacy model and multi-tiered system of supports
2. Implement the district's comprehensive assessment system
3. Use assessment data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate a building-level improvement plan aligned to the district plan
4. Analyze and guide implementation of three tiers, including analyzing, implementing and purchasing instructional materials
5. Coordinate the delivery of schoolwide professional learning and coaching
6. Communicate building literacy improvement goals and actions to the staff and community and share building needs with the district team
7. Align building policies and budget to the building-level improvement plan
8. Engage caregivers and community members in reciprocal communication

Tool 4: Sample Building Leadership Team Schoolwide Problem-Solving Template
Use this tool to support the collaborative problem-solving process at the building level to determine the needs and areas of focus for literacy instruction across all content areas.

The building leadership team includes representation from all stakeholders in the building and mirrors the population of students served.

The building leadership team may include the following:

- The building principal and/or assistant principal
- A reading specialist
- A teacher representative from each grade
- Representatives from related services staff
- Representatives from special education and reading intervention support staff
- A union representative
- A representative from non-certificated staff
- Family members representative of the school community
- Community representative(s)
- A coach (district, regional)

- District office representative(s)

Figure 1. Example of a team built to mirror the learners in the building.

Teacher-Based Teams (TBT)

Teacher-based teams (TBTs) are needed to implement two critical functions at the secondary level:

1. Using collaborative problem-solving to assess system needs, analyze data and plan for the use of evidence-based strategies across all content areas. *Department and cross-department teams implement this function.*
2. Using individual student data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate interventions for individual students who receive intensive supports and intervention in reading. *Student-level teams implement this function.*

DEPARTMENT AND CROSS-DEPARTMENT TEAMS

Department teams are established for all core subject areas. They plan for and discuss the use of evidence-based literacy practices and how to apply the practices to each subject area or discipline, as well as the implementation of discipline-specific frameworks and strategies. These can be academic teams within or across grade levels. Cross-department teams within each grade level collaborate to ensure consistent use of evidence-based strategies across content areas by all teachers.

The first critical function of department teams is to analyze student and system-level issues so instruction can be aligned to student needs. It is the responsibility of this team to contextualize the building-level improvement plan for the needs of students in their department. Department teams support the implementation of evidence-based strategies across content areas that have been adopted for use schoolwide as well as the use of

discipline-specific literacy practices. Additionally, they develop instructional plans to improve students' understanding of the content area supported by their department.

Effective department teams promote collaboration among staff and consistency within the building. They provide a mechanism for communication to flow to and from district leadership, and to and from families and the community. Department teams may also use universal screening data to design, implement and evaluate instruction for all students and for those who need reading intervention. These teams do not plan intensive instruction for individual students.

Department teams might be comprised of all teachers who teach a specific discipline within a school. Team membership for this purpose should include the following:

- All general and special education teachers at each grade level in the relevant content area
- Building principal or assistant principal
- Paraprofessionals
- Related services personnel
- Building, district and regional coaches

A representative from each department team should participate in the building leadership team.

Student-Level Teams

Student-level teams are established to improve students' reading performance. A student-level team plans individualized instructional support that characterizes intensive reading intervention (Tier 3). A key role is coordination of instruction across universal, supplemental and intensive instruction, particularly as different personnel are involved in providing those levels of support.

Student teams often are formed when a student has received instruction and intervention that has been effective for other students but not for the individual. Student teams may form, change membership and dissolve over time as the needs of the student change. When students are receiving the most intensive instructional supports, meaningful engagement of family members is critical.

Developing Student-Level Teams

Consider who in the building knows how students learn to read and will be able to identify the root cause of a student's difficulty with reading.

Student-level teams created for the purpose of student-level planning should include the following:

- School staff engaged in supporting the student (classroom teacher, intervention specialist, support staff, related services personnel)
- The student's parent(s) or caregiver(s)

Student-level teams are charged with critical tasks related to family engagement, including:

- Informing families of their student's progress in a timely manner
- Communicating and modeling high expectations
- Supporting families in understanding information about skills, assessments and instruction
- Listening and providing information
- Providing resources for communicating with families who speak a language other than English
- Providing more frequent communication as instruction becomes more intensive
- Offering resources for families to support their students at home

Tool 5: Sample Student Problem-Solving Form Template
Use this tool to support the collaborative problem-solving process at the student level to identify student needs, plan for instruction, monitor student progress and evaluate implementation.

Role of the Principal

The building principal leads the building leadership team and participates in each department team. In this role, the principal performs the following functions:

- Support the implementation of the school improvement plan
- Model the use of the collaborative problem-solving process in all meetings
- Communicate and reinforce expectations by setting meeting agendas
- Schedule building and teacher-based meetings, assign roles on teams and make sure team members are held accountable for attendance and participation
- Ensure results of meetings are communicated to all stakeholders

Due to the challenge of applying literacy knowledge to all subject areas, instructional coaches also play a critical role in supporting the principal. **The principal's goal should be to build the capacity of the system to improve literacy outcomes.**

The principal also serves as **instructional leader**, which involves the following actions:

- Communicating equity-based literacy achievement as the building priority
- Using student data as the central driving force in decision-making
- Engaging families and community members in decisions when possible
- Guiding the building leadership team in creating a three-tiered system of support to meet the needs of all students
- Conducting literacy walk-throughs using look-fors that align with evidence-based practices
- Establishing a building schedule that incorporates time for literacy interventions beyond core instruction

- Developing a building budget aligned to the building-level improvement plan
- Aligning decisions about staffing, materials and professional learning to student needs and the building-level improvement plan
- Creating two-way communication systems among families, staff and district leaders
- Serving as "lead learner" by setting goals and expectations; planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum; and promoting and participating in teaching and learning

To accomplish the actions of an instructional leader, building principals must:

- Possess a fundamental understanding of the critical components of evidence-based literacy instruction for adolescents
- Learn to analyze data and use it in the problem-solving model
- Keep the focus on improving student outcomes and not on what is easiest for adults
- Articulate the goals of the school and persuade others to join in moving toward those goals
- Value and engage all stakeholders and effectively facilitate team meetings
- Motivate those around them to work together on behalf of students

Coaching

Coaching is a function, not necessarily a person. It is not necessary for each school to have a dedicated person in a coaching role. Several team members can provide the functions of coaching. One person may not have deep skills in all areas, including systems change, consultation, assessment, data-based decision-making and research-based instructional practices. Teams need access to training and support in each of these areas, regardless of whether there is a person in the building whose title is "coach."

Educators in coaching roles have the responsibility of building the knowledge and skills of the school community and supporting it in implementation of the improvement plan with fidelity. Coaching is an adaptable form of professional development in a school setting. The purpose of coaching is to support deep implementation and sustained use of evidence-based strategies. Educators who coach others will help them develop deep knowledge, implement components with fidelity and provide supportive feedback to embed new practices so they are sustained over time.

At a minimum, school personnel who have coaching roles should regularly self-assess and seek to expand their skills in two broad areas: **systems coaching** and **instructional coaching**.

Educators who provide systems coaching must be able to:

- Analyze systems-level data
- Facilitate development of a building-level improvement plan
- Assist school teams in using an effective collaborative problem-solving process

- Plan, deliver and evaluate professional development
- Build communication systems
- Support building administrators

Tool 6: Systems Coaching Self-Assessment
Use this tool to self-assess capacity to provide systems coaching in literacy.

Educators who provide instructional coaching must be able to:

- Analyze student data
- Facilitate collaborative problem-solving to design reading instruction
- Serve as a consultant to teachers and reading specialists to build their knowledge of language and literacy content knowledge and evidence-based instructional methods
- Model evidence-based strategies and assist in the contextualizing of both evidence-based strategies across content areas and discipline-specific practices
- Consult without direct observation (for example, prioritizing material to teach; identifying resources available within the program; enhancing instructional routines, materials and behavior management strategies).

Peer coaching can be leveraged to support classroom implementation of evidence-based language and literacy practices by providing a supportive, collaborative framework for teachers to bring professional learning to life in their classrooms.

The amount of coaching support required by a district or school may fluctuate over the course of implementation. More coaching support will be needed at the initial stages. Over time, the knowledge and skills needed for literacy improvement will shift from the person who has been doing the coaching to administrators, classroom teachers, families and community members.

Families as Partners

Family engagement is an interdependent partnership between schools, communities and families. This partnership involves listening and including the voices of families in policymaking, engaging in two-way communication and supporting family participation. District and school leaders create the policies and environments for sustained family partnerships.

For more information on Ohio's Coaching Model, see Appendix C of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement.

School personnel can increase school-to-home communication by:

- Creating effective feedback loops with timely and consistent communication
- Including information on student progress in both academic and student well-being
- Establishing multiple modes of communication to ensure a connection to all families, including those who speak languages other than English

School personnel can increase transition support for adolescents by:

- Hosting family-support sessions and other in-person forums, as well as webinars or other virtual conversations, to share relevant topics
- Providing guidance and learning for parents, caregivers and educators on developmentally appropriate and supportive structures and routines for learners
- Communicating learning topics to allow for both community connections and family extension of conversations at home

Want to Learn More?

Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement: Resources for School Leaders provides more supports for **shared leadership**.

Post-Reading Self-Reflection

Component	**Use the "traffic light scale" to evaluate the current level of implementation in the building.** **Red** – Exploration **Orange** – Installation **Yellow** – Initial Implementation **Green** – Full implementation	**Using the scale below, determine the importance of the component.** **Red** – Not at All **Orange** – Somewhat **Yellow** – Very **Green** – Extremely
Collaborative Culture		
Teaming: District Leadership Team		
Teaming: Building Leadership Team		
Teaming: Teacher-Based Teams		
Role of the Principal		
Coaching		
Families as Partners		

Section 2: Effective Literacy Instruction

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. How does literacy impact all content areas? Consider the core subject area classes in the building. Without reading, writing, speaking and listening – what practices remain?
2. What frameworks or structures currently are in place in the building that promote and assess the integration of effective literacy instruction in every class, every day?

Effective literacy instruction for students in middle and high school requires attention to the needs of **all** adolescent learners. This approach may require educators to reimagine the ways in which literacy practices are leveraged in today's classroom. With a shift away from simple coverage of content toward the integration of standards, content and literacy skills that meet the specializations within each content, secondary teachers can create authentic learning experiences that prepare students for successful post-high school experiences.

District and building leaders must have a firm understanding of the connection between literacy skills and rigorous academic coursework across all content areas. Effective literacy instruction for adolescents also incorporates literacy skills and strategies that prepare students for successful post-high school experiences. This does not mean all educators become reading teachers, but that all educators differentiate instruction within their disciplines to ensure all learners have equitable opportunities to access grade-level text, discourse and writing.

The essential literacy skills must be integrated into **all content areas** and become the shared responsibility of all secondary educators and specialists who support learners across these grades.

District and building leaders also need a solid understanding of how students learn to read, why some struggle and what can be done to support all students. Research from cognitive science, psychology, communication science, linguistics and education inform the knowledge base commonly referred to as the **science of reading**. Reading science includes how the brain learns to read, skills that are essential for reading and research on how best to teach essential skills. Reading instruction that is **explicit** and **systematic** is effective for all students and essential for those struggling with reading.

Ohio's Learning Standards

Effective literacy instruction is standards-based and addresses the shifts in literacy instruction required through Ohio's Learning Standards. These shifts include:

- Students practicing regularly with complex text and its academic language through independent and scaffolded opportunities

- Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from the text, including both literary and informational texts
- Building knowledge through content-rich informational text

In addition, Ohio's Learning Standards for literacy in the content areas reinforce these literacy shifts for teachers in all secondary subject areas, including history, social studies, science and technical subjects including mathematics. The Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects in Grades 6-12 emphasize the role that content-area teachers have in students' literacy development and the value of literacy in supporting learning in content areas. These standards outline the specificity needed to prepare students for successful postsecondary experiences as they encounter complex text across content areas.

The Simple View of Reading

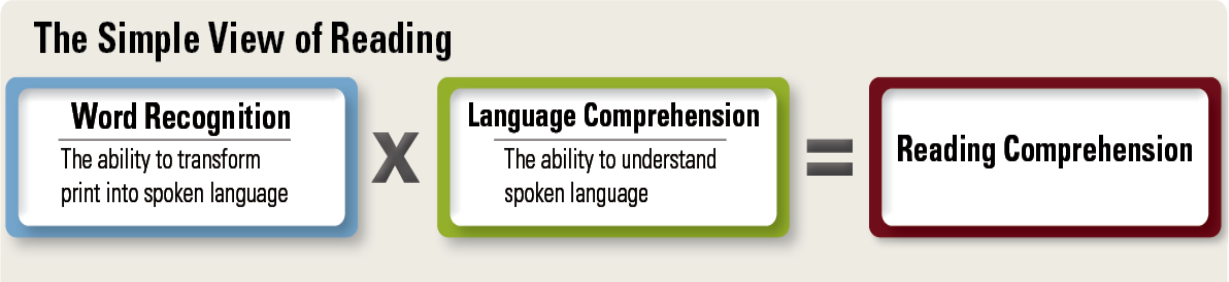


Figure 2. The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986)

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement is grounded in the theoretical framework identified in Gough and Tunmer's (1986) **Simple View of Reading** (see Figure 2). This framework represents the interaction of two broad skill areas required for reading comprehension: word recognition and language comprehension. To support all students in understanding what they read, instruction must emphasize the skills that make up each broad skill component. A foundation in the essential literacy skills represented in the Simple View of Reading is necessary to support secondary students in reading, writing, understanding, interpreting and discussing complex texts.

At the secondary level, the Simple View of Reading can be used as a framework for formulating assessment questions within the collaborative problem-solving model. If a student is not demonstrating reading comprehension with grade-level text, teachers can ask if the student has adequate language comprehension and adequate word recognition skills.

The Essential Adolescent Literacy Skills

Research in secondary literacy supports instruction in **advanced word study, vocabulary reading fluency, reading comprehension and increasing motivation** (Roberts, et. al., 2008). These skills represent what some call the "big ideas" of adolescent literacy. Many students come to middle and high school without the word recognition skills that support

them in reading grade-level text with a level of automaticity that supports reading comprehension. Other students who are accurate and fluent readers may lack background knowledge, vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies that allow them to gain meaning from text. Instruction in these essential literacy components and state standards serves as the backbone for building-level improvement plans. All secondary students need proficiency in these essential skills, in addition to writing, to access complex text across content areas.

The following sections provide an overview of the factors that affect proficient comprehension of text, how to recognize student needs in each area, research-based instructional practices for teaching each skill and what to look for in classroom instruction and supplemental intervention.

Essential Literacy Skill	Definition
Advanced Word Study	Analyzing words using the meaning and structure of their parts.
Vocabulary	Understanding the meaning of the words we speak, hear, read and write, and linguistic comprehension.
Reading Fluency	Reading connected text accurately, fluently and for meaning.
Reading Comprehension	Gaining meaning from text and the ability to reason and draw inferences.
Motivation	The intrinsic motivation to engage in literacy tasks. Motivation is related to a student's perceived probability of success.

ADVANCED WORD STUDY IN ACTION

Along with fluency, advanced word study is a component of word recognition for adolescent learners. The eighth grade teaching team sees value in supporting all learners with word study practices as students need strategies to unpack multisyllabic, content-specific words. Using the Word ID assessment, each discipline has a core set of morphemes to study across a year (Literacy Standards: RH.6-8.4, RST.6-8.4, RI.8.4).

Examples of what an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Interventions to build syllabication awareness
- Bulletin board displays with morpheme matrices
- Portions of lessons dedicated to the study of morphology, including common affixes and roots for the disciplines
- The teacher modeling ways to unpack unknown, multisyllabic words using structural analysis and word parts
- Providing time in class to explore word parts and meaning along with etymology

Advanced Word Study

Why is Advanced Word Study Important?
Accessing the meaning of text begins with decoding words and translating the print into speech. To be a fluent reader, a student must recognize most of the words in a passage as if "by sight." English is complex, rule driven and influenced by multiple languages. Advanced word study addresses strategies needed to automatically decode words found in complex text using letter-sound correspondences and meaningful parts of words. Words become increasingly longer and multisyllabic in middle school and high school courses.

How to Know if Students have Adequate Advanced Word Study Skills?

- Accuracy scores on measures of oral reading fluency provide indication of the level of word recognition required to support reading comprehension. Students should be at least 95% accurate on grade level passages.
- Students accurately decode new words when they encounter them in the text (or the growth of their sight vocabulary will be delayed).
- Students successfully decode multisyllabic words.

How to Teach Advanced Word Study?
Elements of effective word study:

- Attending to syllable types and affixes
- Attending to morphology or the analysis of meaningful parts of words
- Focus on semantic features
- Integration of decoding and encoding
- Using structural analysis to decode unknown words
- Identifying irregular words that do not follow predictable patterns

Advanced Word Study Instruction in the Classroom	Advanced Word Study Instruction in Intervention
❑ Whole group and small group ❑ Building on basic decoding knowledge, the connection of sounds (phonemes) to the orthography (print) ❑ Explicit instruction in syllabication, morphology, and word origin (etymology) connected to both reading and spelling.	❑ Small group ❑ Follows a scope and sequence of skills ❑ Explicit model ❑ Use of manipulatives ❑ Immediate corrective feedback ❑ Practice to automaticity in controlled text (if needed)

Vocabulary

Why is Vocabulary Important? Reading is a language-based skill. Students who experience delays in oral language or who are English learners often have difficulty learning to read and comprehending what they read. Students must have a solid foundation in spoken English so that once they translate printed symbols into oral language, they can extract the meaning. Students also must have the ability to select words for effective oral and written communication. Research has demonstrated that 80% of comprehending informational text is related to understanding the vocabulary.

How to Know if Students have Adequate Vocabulary?

- Evidence of age-appropriate vocabulary and oral language can be observed in students' speaking, reading and writing.
- Students who do not demonstrate age-appropriate vocabulary and language comprehension are at risk of not meeting future reading goals and should receive instructional support.
- Administrators can look for evidence of vocabulary knowledge to be demonstrated in reading comprehension assessments such as oral reading fluency and Maze.

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION IN ACTION

Mrs. Carey uses an explicit vocabulary protocol in grade 10 biology to expose students to key general academic or Tier 2 words like "theory," and "frequency" along with discipline-specific or Tier 3 words like "biomolecule" or "lipid". Once students are engaged in this routine, Mrs. Carey provides ample opportunities to use the vocabulary (Literacy Standard: RST.9-10.4).

Examples of what an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Prompting students to include new vocabulary in their discussion responses and providing a list of required words for discussion
- Restating student responses to include identified Tier 2 or Tier 3 vocabulary. Allowing opportunities for students to restate their responses
- Encouraging word consciousness by discussing nuances found in language
- Along with providing sentence stems as a scaffold for writing, providing required vocabulary list for writing assignments

How to Teach Vocabulary?

Elements of effective vocabulary instruction:

- Intentional read alouds to develop vocabulary and background knowledge
- Direct and explicit instruction
- Word learning strategies, including attention to etymology and morphology
- Pre-teaching and reteaching words

- Opportunities for wide reading and discussion to engage with text
- Attention to academic language and discipline-specific vocabulary

Vocabulary Instruction in the Classroom	Vocabulary Instruction in Intervention
❑ Dedicate a portion of regular classroom time to explicit vocabulary instruction in whole groups and small groups ❑ Word learning strategies through teaching of phonology, orthography, word origin and morphology ❑ Pre-teach before read alouds and independent reading: ○ Words essential to understanding the text ○ Words that will be encountered again and again ○ Academic vocabulary ○ Difficult words, such as those with multiple meanings and idioms ❑ Repeated exposure to and practice of using new words in multiple contexts using reading, writing and discourse	❑ Small group ❑ More explicit instruction ❑ Teaching additional vocabulary from complex, grade level texts, beyond those selected for tier 1 instruction. ❑ Additional practice using words in oral language and writing (20 or more exposures) ❑ Use of additional tools and graphic organizers to connect to meaning of words

Reading Fluency

Why is Reading Fluency Important?
Accurate and fluent reading of text makes reading comprehension possible. Non-fluent readers have less capacity to understand what they read.

How to Know if Students have Adequate Reading Fluency?

- The number of words read correctly in a minute serves as an accurate indicator and predictor of reading comprehension.
- Students who cannot read grade-level text fluently are at risk of not meeting future reading comprehension goals and should receive instructional support.
- Administrators should use the percentage of students who can read grade-level text fluently as an indicator of the effectiveness of classroom reading instruction and as a predictor of future reading comprehension.

How to Teach Reading Fluency?
Elements of effective reading fluency instruction:

- Practice is focused on the text
- Use a combination of decodable texts, grade-level texts and below grade-level passages (as appropriate)
- Immediate corrective feedback of errors

READING FLUENCY IN ACTION

As the school year begins, Mr. Rogan is careful to include opportunities for students to read aloud. Understanding the role fluency plays in comprehension, he uses this opportunity to monitor for students who struggle with key components of fluency like reading rate, prosody and accuracy. This informal screening indicates students who may require additional assessment along with support of fluency practices.

Examples of what an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- The teacher modeling reading with clear pacing, intentional expression and intonation or deliberate phrasing
- Data-driven decision-making tied to Oral Reading Fluency measures
- Opportunities for repeated readings with feedback from the teacher
- Intervention opportunities that include grade-level passages and students tracking their own fluency progress

Reading Fluency Instruction in the Classroom	Reading Fluency Instruction in Intervention
❑ Choral reading ❑ Partner reading ❑ Audio-assisted reading ❑ Cloze reading	❑ Small group and partner practice ❑ Repeated reading orally of decodable and complex, grade level texts with immediate corrective feedback

Reading Comprehension

READING COMPREHENSION IN ACTION

Reading and analyzing complex text in primary and secondary sources is an integral part of Mr. Miller's American history class. To help build students' comprehension and provide scaffolding supports, the use of before, during and after reading strategies is part of the lesson-planning process when using complex texts (Literacy Standard: RH.11-12.1).

Examples of what an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Identifying a purpose for reading
- Pre-teaching vocabulary critical to the text
- Modeling the thinking process throughout reading of the text
- Making connections to background knowledge and other texts as part of a text set
- Checking for understanding through discussion, writing, questioning and evidence from the text

Why Is Reading Comprehension Important?
Reading is the vehicle for learning content in all subject areas. As adolescents encounter increasingly complex texts, access to content becomes critically important. The ability to extract meaning from text is essential.

How to Know if Students Have Adequate Reading Comprehension?

- The number of words read correctly in a minute serves as an accurate indicator and predictor of reading comprehension.
- Having students retell what they read provides an additional check on comprehension. Maze assessments are companions to oral reading fluency in which students are asked to silently read a passage where words have been deleted. Students must select words that fit best from three choices.
- Students who are accurate and fluent but cannot read grade-level text for meaning are at risk of not meeting future reading comprehension goals and should receive instructional support.
- Administrators should use the percentage of students who can read grade-level text fluently as a key indicator of the effectiveness of classroom reading instruction and as a predictor of future reading comprehension.

Comprehension is an outcome, not a product. Comprehension occurs when the student is able to read the words accurately and fluently, understand the meaning of the words, has adequate background knowledge and focuses attention on critical content (Archer, 2020).

How to Support Reading Comprehension?

Elements of effective reading comprehension instruction:

- Consistent use of explicit modeling, supported practice and independent practice of comprehension strategies across all subject areas
- Use of text-dependent questions as students are reading text
- Intentional sequencing of content within and across grades
- Explicit instruction in and ongoing application of reading comprehension strategies, which are the mental activities used by accurate and fluent readers, for monitoring comprehension and repairing it when it breaks down (monitoring, adjusting rate, summarizing and repairing)
- Access to complex, grade-level texts for all students with scaffolding supports as necessary
- Use of protocols for extended discussion of text

Reading Comprehension Instruction in the Classroom	Reading Comprehension Instruction in Intervention
❑ Begins as listening comprehension ❑ Follows a purposeful sequence of content knowledge ❑ Explicit modeling of strategies that includes: ○ Purpose of strategy ○ How, when and where to use it ○ Which strategies work best in which instances ○ How to apply to different types of text ○ Guided practice in applying strategies to different texts ❑ Intentional questioning before, during and after reading aloud (such as comprehension monitoring, questioning the author, paragraph shrinking)	❑ Explicit and supportive small group discussion of texts ❑ Instruction in syntax, grammar and word analysis ❑ Comprehension at the sentence, paragraph and text levels

Motivation

Why is Motivation to Read Important? Adolescents have a strong need to understand the rationale for learning activities. Additionally, older students with literacy skill gaps may have a history of failure that causes them to avoid spending time reading.

How to Improve Motivation to Read?

- Setting meaningful and engaging content learning goals
- Communicating, reinforcing and modeling the importance of reading as a necessary life skill
- Clearly communicating the rationale behind learning goals and related learning activities to students
- Establishing a positive learning environment that includes student choice, opportunities for students to affiliate with one another and protection from adverse consequences of initial failures
- Developing authentic learning experiences that connect to student interests, experiences, their communities and/or the greater world
- Helping students set their own performance goals that connect to meaningful outcomes
- Providing explicit teacher feedback that links performance to effort

MOTIVATION IN ACTION

With years of experience teaching at the high school level, Mrs. Hammond is acutely aware of the role motivation plays with students. Years of struggles with reading and failures in learning can impact a learner. To begin the year, Mrs. Hammond asks specific questions to get to know her students. This information, including perceived strengths and weakness in learning and areas of interest, is used to better understand what supports students need to better engage during instruction.

Examples of what an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Creating "hooks" that draw students into content-area learning
- Planning authentic learning experiences that allow students to build interest and background knowledge prior to introducing text
- Modeling behaviors, like word consciousness, that demonstrate how engagement with the content can make learning successful…and fun!

WRITING INSTRUCTION IN ACTION

All secondary students should be engaged in writing tasks daily, including formal and informal writing, short and long writing assignments and writing for varied audiences. Students also should have time for collaborative, structured feedback. There may be varied writing experiences in grade 12 Advanced Placement U.S. History, such as short opinion reflections on current events (WHST.11-12.9), analyzing and synthesizing perspectives across a variety of primary sources (WHST.11-12.7) and the use of scaffolds to support the use of transition and variety in sentence structure (WHST.11-12.2).

Examples of what an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Explicit instruction using the "I do, you do, we do" model as it relates to all elements of the writing process
- Writing as a means for students to process their learning
- A variety of collaborative discourse opportunities tied to writing practice
- Deep exploration and wide reading of content in order to support the knowledge sources needed for quality writing
- The pairing of reading and writing to teach critical-thinking skills

Writing Instruction

Why is Writing Important? Writing is an essential component of the learner's academic experience and, like reading, requires explicit, evidence-based instruction. Effective implementation of writing instruction allows students to better understand what they have read, express themselves orally and think critically about subject-area content.

How to Know if Students Have Adequate Writing Skills?

- Evidence of analytical and critical thinking can be seen in the organization and sequencing of student writing.
- Informal, formative assessments show progress across writing skills and strategies that students have been taught and for which they have received feedback.

How to Support the Writing Development of Students?

Strategies for supporting students' writing development include:

- Embedding explicit writing instruction through a scope and sequence of skills in the content of curriculum across Tier 1 instruction to support academic growth
- Ensuring student access to writing instruction, along with engaging in a variety of writing practices each day across all courses
- Continually increasing how much students write
- Providing intentional writing opportunities connected to text

Writing Instruction in the Classroom	Writing Instruction in Intervention
❑ Teach steps and routines in the writing process ❑ Explicitly teach writing strategies that are used at each step of the writing process ❑ Writing skills are taught via a scope and sequence ❑ Deliberate practice in writing skills ❑ Attention to text structure, including at the following levels: ○ Word structure (such as spelling, morphology) ○ Sentence structure (such as syntax, grammar) ○ Paragraph structure (such as topic and supporting sentences)	❑ Instruction to develop and automatize foundational transcription skills (such as handwriting, spelling) ❑ Scaffolding supports across the steps in the writing process ❑ Guided and independent practice in writing skills ❑ Writing instruction to build translation skills while also building reading comprehension skills ❑ Explicit instruction in syntax and language structures connected to the content in core instruction

Increasing Specialization of Literacy Skill Development

Students' literacy development progresses as skills develop and become more specialized across basic, intermediate and disciplinary literacy (Figure 3).

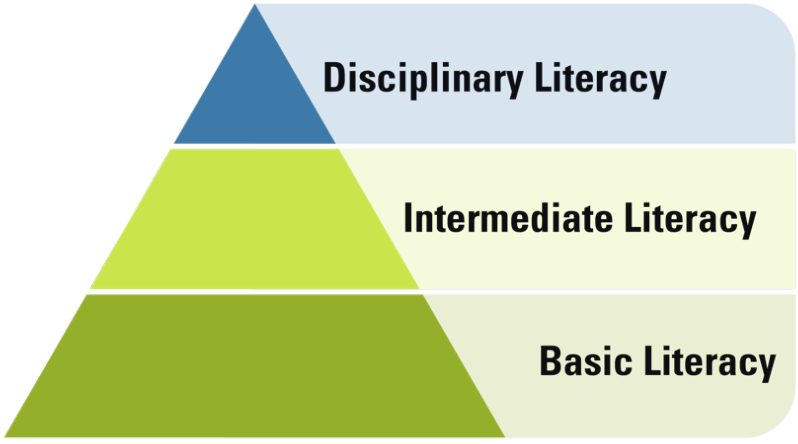
Basic literacy skills consist of the highly generalized skills that underlie most reading tasks, including decoding, understanding literacy conventions and the knowledge of high-frequency words. **Intermediate literacy** begins to incorporate more sophisticated literacy routines, including reading comprehension strategies and practices that can be generalized across reading in all content areas. **Disciplinary literacy** moves beyond generalizable practices to the highly specialized literacy skills needed to create, communicate and evaluate knowledge within a discipline.

Rather than moving from one phase to the next, instruction in these skills is layered. Adolescent learners may require additional support in developing basic literacy skills in addition to receiving instruction to support intermediate and disciplinary literacy skills.

Supporting adolescent learners across this increasing specialization of literacy development requires:

- Reading instruction that is **explicit** and **systematic,** often through **intensive individualized interventions**
- The strategic use of **evidence-based practices** consistent across content areas
- Opportunities for **discipline-specific** literacy instruction

Figure 3. Increasing Specialization of Literacy (Adapted from Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).



Explicit and Systematic Reading Instruction

Effective reading instruction is informed by decades of research on the methods that work best for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, students who are at risk of reading failure and students living in poverty. The type of instruction that works for the largest proportion of students has been described as explicit and systematic and is referred to as **structured literacy instruction**.

Teaching explicitly is essential when:

- Students are learning a new skill
- Students have a history of struggling with a skill
- There is one right answer
- The stakes are high

Reading instruction works best when it is taught directly and explicitly. Teaching methods that focus only on student development or maturation, creating a literacy-rich environment or fostering a love of reading, are insufficient and often leave many students without basic literacy competencies. Explicit instruction supports students with direct models and **scaffolds** to correctly perform the skills that lead to reading comprehension.

Table 1. Explicit and Non-Explicit Literacy Practices Checklist

Essential Skill Area	If these non-explicit practices are currently used…	…consider making these adjustments to a more explicit instructional approach
Phonics and Advanced Word Study	• Taught whole to part (analytic) incidentally as students make mistakes in text or by analogy (word families) • Focus on utilizing context to determine meaning of multisyllabic words • Mini lessons responding to student errors	• Intentional instruction in letter-sound combinations and connection between sound and print • Sequenced from easier to harder for reading and spelling • Application of word reading in print • Attention to word origin and morphology
Vocabulary and Oral Language	• Modeling reading aloud from the leveled books students will read • Nondirective questioning and discussion	• Oral language as the reference point for print • Books used for reading aloud are more challenging than those students read independently • Scripted teacher dialogue
Text Reading Fluency	• Use of leveled or predictable texts that are not controlled for decoding difficulty • Error response focuses on picture cues or the use of context to determine words • High degree of independent silent reading • Miscue analysis	• Young students read text that is controlled to include only those phonics patterns that have been explicitly taught • Fluency building only after accuracy • High degree of teacher-student interaction with immediate corrective feedback
Reading Comprehension	• Emphasis on teacher modeling (think aloud) • Activities such as choral reading and guided reading • Student book choice	• Background knowledge, text structure and strategies overtly modeled and practiced in a planned progression

To understand content across subject areas, students must interact with and gain understanding from complex texts. The inability to read at grade level in the secondary setting may be caused by a variety and combination of factors, such as problems with decoding, academic language, motivation, vocabulary, background knowledge or

comprehension. This inability must be addressed through explicit instruction and interventions. Evidence-based practices that can help teachers meet the needs of students with reading difficulties in grades 4-9 include **multi-syllabic word reading**, **fluency building**, **comprehension building** and **practice with stretch text** (Vaughn, et. al., 2022).
Some adolescent learners will require and must receive **individualized intensive interventions provided by trained specialists**. Educators should guide their choices of interventions by appropriate, diagnostic assessments flexibly designed to identify learning and motivational needs. Specialists then can provide individualized interventions that include explicit instructional focus to meet a learner's needs (Kamil, et al. 2008).
Individualized intensive intervention is meant to **accelerate** learning so learners can make substantial progress toward reading successfully in content area classes and increase their motivation to read.

Evidence-based Strategies in Literacy Across Content Areas

Why are evidence-based strategies across content areas important? To meet the needs of all adolescent learners, implementing evidence-based strategies that are used **consistently** across all content areas support learners in acquiring knowledge. Knowledge acquisition takes place through comprehending complex texts and providing integrated scaffolds and accommodations offering access to content area learning and assessment (Kamil, et. al, 2008). This is not meant to turn content area teachers into reading teachers or to focus exclusively on strategy instruction, but rather to ensure learners acquire skills to read, comprehend and interpret content area text even as some learners may still be developing foundational literacy skills (Denton, 2012).

What are evidence-based strategies in literacy across content areas? Several evidence-based practices for improving adolescent literacy (Kamil, 2008) directly address literacy instruction across content areas, including:

- Explicit vocabulary instruction
- Direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- Opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation

Characteristics of effective literacy instruction across content areas includes:

- An emphasis on essential content area literacy skills
- Active engagement and participation
- Evidence of a basis in language structures
- Elements of explicit instruction including:
    - Breaking tasks into small steps
    - Providing explicit models
    - Using clear examples and non-examples
    - Providing immediate corrective feedback
    - Practicing to automaticity

The **instructional routine** for literacy strategies across content areas includes all of the following:

- Clear and concise language
- New material presented in small steps with student practice occurring after each step
- Teacher modeling
- Guided practice
- Frequent checking for understanding to obtain a high success rate
- Error correction procedures
- Scaffolding for difficult tasks
- Monitored independent practice
- Opportunities for cumulative and distributed review

Literacy instruction across content areas using the principles of explicit teaching supports more students in achieving content area literacy goals. When schools apply the principles of explicit instruction, they reduce the percentage of students who need intervention and increase the percentage of students who read for meaning across content areas. **Explicit instruction is one element of an effective schoolwide literacy model that can help close the gap.**

Disciplinary Literacy Instruction

What is Disciplinary Literacy? Disciplinary literacy instruction is a theory based in the belief that secondary students should use specialized strategies to engage with authentic literacy experiences. Based on observations of how experts in a discipline create, communicate and evaluate information, there is value in supporting students in differentiating their approach to reading text and interacting with real-world artifacts. In addition to evidence-based instruction in content areas and intensive interventions for students who need additional support, disciplinary literacy instruction may provide a promising framework for rigorous literacy instruction at the secondary level.

Why is Disciplinary Literacy Important? Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts include the strand, "Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects 6-12." These standards require the learner to use common literacy strategies and develop a keen sense of specific strategies used to convey knowledge in that discipline. Discipline-specific literacy practices can be an effective vehicle to content, and they can allow students to consider the ways in which experts in the field create, communicate and evaluate content.

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN ACTION

When considering real-world literacy practices used in mathematics, there are many strategies, practices and habits of mind that can be used in the classroom to apprentice students into mathematical thinking. There are general considerations to keep in mind when observing disciplinary literacy in action, like the use of a variety of text types, opportunities for short and long writing assignments and the use of discourse protocols where academic language is used.

In a math class, an administrator might notice:

- Precision in reading that focuses on symbols in equations or vocabulary and its function in word problems (RST.9-10.4)
- The use of texts beyond the textbook, like journal articles, book excerpts or sources with mathematical applications like technical manuals or directions (RST.9-10.9)
- Opportunities for discussion that allow students to clarify and correct mathematical processes, ask questions and accurately use mathematical terminology (RST.9-10.6)
- The use of sentence stems and other scaffolds to support writing practices, like making an argument for a mathematical theorem or process, communicating with peers or clarifying errors in problems (WHST.9-10.1)

How to Support Disciplinary Literacy Instruction?

Practices that support disciplinary literacy instruction can include:

- Creating and maintaining a culture of literacy that recognizes specializations within disciplines
- Supporting the use of Ohio's Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and the Technical Subjects 6-12 as a means of embedding disciplinary practices across content areas
- Highlighting the differences among text types and purposes in each discipline
- Developing students' understanding of how experts use reading, writing and discourse to engage in the practice of disciplines
- Identifying essential vocabulary words and morphemes for disciplines that support students' knowledge, reading and writing using vocabulary in the context of each discipline

Disciplinary Literacy Instruction in the Classroom
❑ Reading authentic, discipline-specific texts that model those used by experts in the field
❑ Focus on the "how" of the discipline as a way of apprenticing students into learning
❑ Incorporate inquiry and collaboration in discipline-specific ways that mirror the work of the field
❑ Use multimodal text sets that build both student knowledge and interest in themes central to a discipline
❑ Use discourse protocols that allow students to communicate using content knowledge, terminology and the habits of mind specific to the discipline

Quality Literacy Instruction for Adolescents

In addition to ensuring students receive instruction in the components of adolescent literacy, it is important to provide quality literacy instruction for adolescents that includes **high-quality** instructional resources and is **culturally responsive** and reflective.

SELECTING HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Access to high-quality instructional materials is critical for equity and ensures that each student acquires the knowledge and skills to be successful through a standards-aligned instructional foundation. Research has found that stronger student learning occurs when educators engage in job-embedded, sustained professional learning that is grounded in quality content. High-quality instructional materials act as a common language and platform for engaging all partners in students' educational experience.

Access to Grade-Level Text

All students should be provided access to complex, grade-level texts that support the building of background knowledge, vocabulary and language structures. Being able to read complex text independently and proficiently is essential for successful postsecondary educational experiences and the workforce, making it a critical component for instruction at the adolescent level. Consider the careful selection of texts across all content areas to build reading comprehension and develop students' understanding of essential content.

Well-constructed text sets include the following elements:

- One single, specific focus topic
- A variety of resources of varying complexity to build interest and motivation
- Careful ordering of resources to support building of knowledge and vocabulary
- Opportunities to demonstrate understanding after each resource

The use of **texts sets** to support comprehension can build students' content knowledge, accelerate the rate of learning new vocabulary and offer scaffolding support for some students.

Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials

Careful selection of high-quality instructional materials and programs to support literacy instruction across all content areas allows for clear alignment of instructional focus. When selecting core or supplemental literacy instruction programs and core instructional materials across all content areas consider the following, in addition to reviewing for quality and alignment to state standards:

- ❑ Do all students have access to high-quality grade-level texts?
- ❑ Are opportunities provided for students to write and talk about the content to build comprehension?

- ❑ Are students provided explicit instruction in writing skills and provided opportunities to write about content as part of explicit instruction?
- ❑ Do all students have access to content-specific grade-level texts and multimedia?
- ❑ Do the materials include texts with a wide range of genres – especially informational texts?
- ❑ Do materials build knowledge systematically through reading, writing, speaking and listening?
- ❑ Do the materials support students in finding and producing text evidence and developing grade-level academic language?
- ❑ Are vocabulary words carefully selected for instruction and related to the theme, topic, text or content knowledge?

Engaging All Students in Literacy Instruction

It is important to consider students' ethnic, linguistic, community and cultural backgrounds when planning and delivering literacy instruction. As part of a research-based approach to reading instruction, accounting for students' unique experiences and needs can help to ensure that all students receive the level and type of support they need to become successful readers.

There are several ways to include and account for students' unique backgrounds when planning reading instruction, assessment, and intervention. These include:

- **Ensure that students' ethnic, community and cultural backgrounds are represented in the texts used for classroom instruction.** Students should have access to texts that reflect their cultures, communities, linguistic and family backgrounds.
- **Build knowledge and connections to students with text sets.** Educators can use sets of texts to introduce a new topic or concept to students. When supporting ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse students, educators should consider ways to include texts on the topic that are relevant to students' backgrounds.
- **Account for the effect of student dialect in instruction, intervention, and assessment.** In an increasingly diversifying society, even individual classrooms will likely exhibit a high level of language variation. This is especially true for dialects of English language. Students who have dialects could be English Learners but will often be speakers of dialects such as African American English or Appalachian English. Educators should consider dialects in their classroom when assessing for reading difficulties. If left unchecked, some assessments may confound a student's dialect

It is important to remember that dialects are not language disorders and have no relationship to a child's intelligence or capability. Dialects should have no bearing on educators' expectations for students, grade level of texts they receive, or the level of rigor in lessons.

with a reading difficulty. Therefore, it is important to have strategies in place to ensure that assessments provide accurate data.

- **Engage family and community in designing and delivering instruction.** Educators should engage with families and communities to learn more about texts that might interest students and how families engage their children when reading at home. Cultures and communities have unique foundational stories and different approaches to reading. Informal conversations, open houses, surveys, and focus groups can help educators to better understand their diverse students' needs.
- **Draw on existing funds of knowledge to build bridges to new learning.** It is important to learn what students already know and to consider how to use existing knowledge as a bridge for building new knowledge. This is especially important for recent immigrant students who may be new to the country. For example, a biology teacher beginning a study of plant types could include texts and information on plants from Latin America if they have students who are recent immigrants from that region.
- **Maintain high academic standards for every student.** Educators should maintain and communicate high academic expectations for every student. Even when a student struggles to read and may need additional support, educators should communicate that the student can succeed. It is also important to connect students with complex grade-level texts, with appropriate supports. Educators should avoid providing texts that are significantly below students' grade level and ensure that text content is age-appropriate and interesting for students.

Supports for Literacy at Home

To support students' literacy development at home, a collaborative approach should be implemented to ensure families and caregivers are stakeholders in ensuring student success. This support also recognizes that learning occurs everywhere and includes a focus on learning in all content areas, as well as learning that occurs outside of school (Global Family Research Project, 2018). Schools should use a partnership approach to maintain clear lines of communication between school and home.

Families can support students' development of literacy skills at home by:

- Supporting students' active use of reading strategies, such as previewing the text
- Supporting reading of academic text and engaging in reading with the student
- Asking the student to find key evidence and details in the text to support their work
- Having conversations or discussions related to academic content or text

In addition, schools can support families in:

- Creating a learning zone for students to complete at-home assignments
- Maintaining a routine to support students while they complete assignments independently
- Supporting the creation of a literacy-rich environment at home through wide reading and regular discussion

- Supporting the continuation of literacy development in their native language through reading
- Supporting students at critical academic transition points, such as middle and high school entrance

Want to Learn More?
Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement: Resources for School Leaders provides more supports for **effective literacy instruction.**

Post-Reading Self-Reflection

Component	Use the "traffic light scale" to evaluate the current level of implementation in the building. **Red** – Exploration **Orange** – Installation **Yellow** – Initial Implementation **Green** – Full implementation	Using the scale below, determine the importance of the component. **Red** – Not at All **Orange** – Somewhat **Yellow** – Very **Green** – Extremely
The Simple View of Reading		
Ohio's Learning Standards for Literacy		
Essential Literacy Skills for Adolescents		
Advanced Word Study		
Vocabulary		
Reading Fluency		
Reading Comprehension		
Motivation		
Writing Instruction		
Explicit and Systematic Reading Instruction		
Evidence-Based Practices Across Content Areas		
Disciplinary Literacy Instructions		
Selecting Instructional Materials and Texts		
Engaging All Students in Literacy Instruction		
Supports for Literacy at Home		

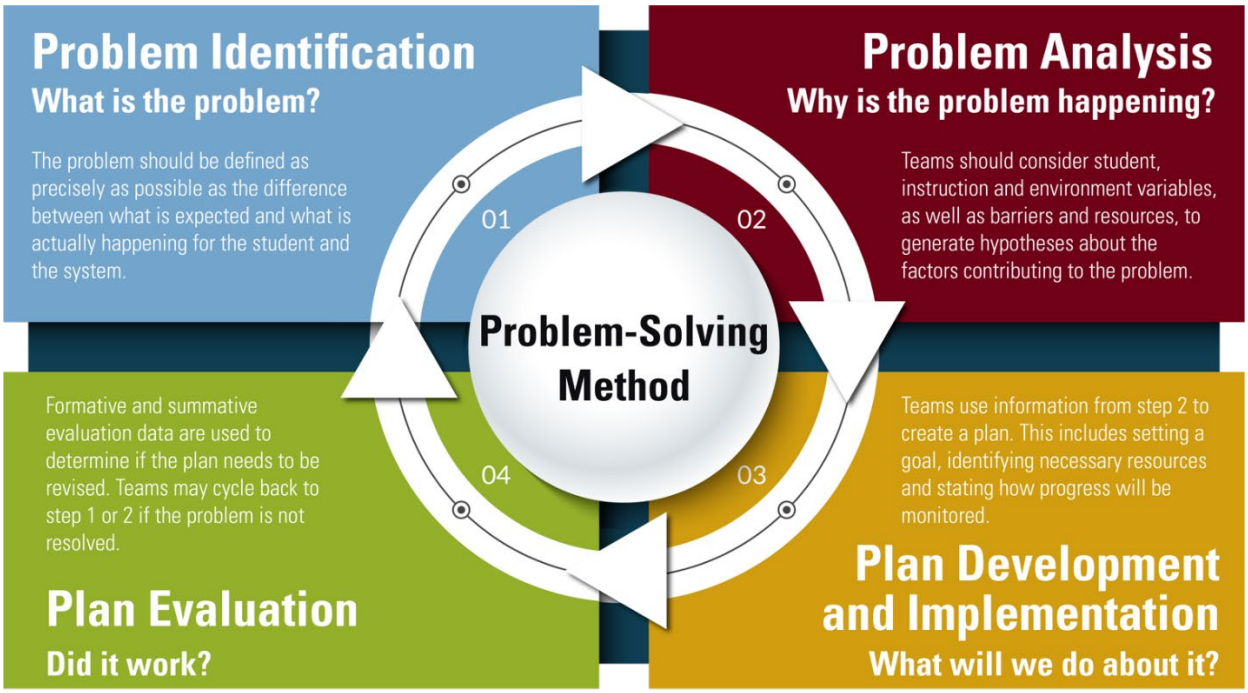
Section 3: Collaborative Problem-Solving

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. What data currently is collected by the building or district to assess implementation at the system level?
2. What student-level assessments are used to determine instruction or intervention needs?
3. What data processes or protocols does the building or district use to make decisions regarding literacy instruction?

Teams can be more effective and efficient if they all use a collaborative problem-solving process, sometimes referred to as **data-based decision-making.** When all members of the school community use the common structure of **collaborative problem-solving**, in all levels of teaming, results can be obtained for students more efficiently. Collaborative problem-solving provides a common routine and way of thinking about problems, which provides more time to focus on resolving them. Several examples exist in the educational literature – most follow a "plan, do, study, act" cycle.

Figure 4. The common steps and questions asked at each step in the iterative cycle of collaborative problem-solving



Schoolwide Assessment System

District leadership teams are responsible for creating an assessment system that includes tools for decision-making for each school to implement at the systems and student levels. Multiple sources of data are needed in a schoolwide literacy model, including student data, implementation data and input from stakeholders. Assessments are used to make decisions in the collaborative problem-solving model at two levels:

System	Student
• Information about literacy systems, operations and processes that can either support or hinder effective instruction (such as schedule, grouping practices, district policies) • Information about adult implementation (such as walk-throughs)	• Information about individuals and groups of students

SYSTEM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

The Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory (R-TFI) for Secondary Schools is used by building leadership teams to assess the fidelity of implementation of their schoolwide literacy improvement plans. It helps teams identify practices already in place, practices that need to be improved and those that need to be implemented in the future. Although student data are used in completing the R-TFI, items are focused on elements of effective systems that support best-practice literacy outcomes. Data from the R-TFI, combined with adult implementation data and student outcome data, are used within the collaborative problem-solving process to develop schoolwide plans aimed at increasing student reading outcomes.

ADULT IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

The behaviors of adults in the school may be the single most important factor influencing changes in student reading outcomes. Administrators and coaches are charged with being instructional leaders in their schools and districts. Therefore, they must be knowledgeable about the reading research, create the structure for student data to be used in the collaborative problem-solving process and hold teachers and other administrators accountable for implementing evidence-based practices. Instructional observation assessments, often called **"walk-through" tools**, can be used by administrators for providing feedback to teachers about the effectiveness of their instruction. These tools offer an opportunity for teachers and administrators to collaborate on increased implementation of adult behaviors that are more likely to improve literacy outcomes.

STUDENT-LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

All districts and schools need data on students from four types of assessments to implement literacy improvement efforts:

1. universal screening
2. diagnostic assessment
3. progress monitoring
4. outcome evaluation

These assessments are efficient because they provide data on both students and systems (Appendix D).

Universal Screening

Universal screening answers the question: **Which students and systems are at risk?**

Universal screening assessments are brief, standardized, technically adequate, direct measures of essential literacy skills that both indicate and predict overall reading health. Effective universal screening assessments are direct measures of essential literacy skills. The goal is to identify the level of skill in these key domains that predicts future reading comprehension. Running records and other assessments designed to match students to text levels do not meet the characteristics of universal screeners. The goal of universal screening is to identify students who may not be on track to reach literacy outcomes early enough that they can be supported and the predicted outcomes changed.

All students in a school building who have the response capabilities required by the assessment should be screened with materials that match the grade to which they are assigned. However, due to the unique configurations of high school buildings, as well as the individual needs of learners, some buildings may collect literacy screening data at fewer points in time. Individual decisions should be made about the appropriateness of screening students with hearing impairments, students who stutter, English learners and students with significant cognitive and sensory impairments.

Screening assessments can be conducted efficiently by teams of educators that include administrators, related services personnel, reading support staff, general and special education teachers and paraprofessionals.

Screening assessment data are used by district, building and teacher-based teams to identify the problem at step 1 of the collaborative problem-solving process. Universal screening may be conducted between one and three times per year, depending on building configuration, data needed to make instructional decisions and existing data points available to identify students at risk for reading difficulty.

Variations in universal screening as part of a schoolwide assessment system may occur due to building configurations and grade levels served. Additional considerations for both middle and high schools are below:

	Middle School	High School
Who Should Be Screened?	• Consider collecting screening data from all students in grades 6, 7 and 8.	• Consider collecting screening data from all students in grade 9 or upon entry into the high school building. • Consider the unique configuration of the high school building(s) to determine which grades should be screened. For example, a 9-12 building may decide to only screen ninth grade students and use other incoming risk indicators in grades 10-12.
When Should Universal Screening Occur?	• Consider scheduling universal screening at the beginning of the school year for all students in grades 6, 7 and 8. • Scheduling middle of the year and end-of-year screening also should be considered. However, the building configuration and how the screening data will be used should be considered.	• Consider scheduling universal screening at the beginning of the school year for all students in grade 9. • Once a district has screening data on students in grades 6-9, it may decide to continue screening all students once a year in grades 10-12, or use existing data points or incoming risk indicators to plan instruction in grades 10-12.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessments answers the question: **What does each student need to be taught next?**

Diagnostic assessments are in-depth, dynamic measures of essential literacy skills linked directly to instruction. Diagnostic assessments typically are untimed and can be formal or informal. Informal diagnostic assessments can be administered by classroom teachers with minimal training, while formal diagnostic assessments must be administered by trained individuals. The goal of diagnostic assessment is to determine the reason a student is not understanding grade-level text by finding the next skill in the instructional sequence the student needs to be taught.

Diagnostic assessments are given to some students, not all. Diagnostic assessments are given to students whose screening data indicate a need for additional support. Based on initial screening data, additional information is needed to determine appropriate intervention support.

Diagnostic assessments may be given by related services personnel, reading support staff, general education

MULTIPLE-GATING SCREENING PROCESS

When planning for assessment of older students, consider implementing a **multiple-gating screening process.** This process starts with efficient, **group-administered screening** of students or uses incoming risk indicators, such as the previous year's assessment data and includes time-intensive, individual assessment only with the most at-risk students. **Using a multiple-gating process or system for reviewing incoming data may take the place of universal screening in reading for all students.**

Consider using early warning indicators such as attendance, behavior and course performance to identify students at risk and in need of further screening in a high school building.

Consider the student:
A ninth grade student enrolled in advanced coursework with no signs of risk based on incoming indicators or previous year assessment results may not require additional universal screening in reading. A review of indicators – such as attendance, behavior, course performance and incoming assessment data – may take the place of time-intensive individual assessments.

Consider the student:
A ninth grade student scored below proficiency on the eighth grade Ohio State Test for English Language Arts. This incoming indicator of risk signals that additional screening in reading is needed. The next step in the multiple-gating screening process could be the administration of a group-administered MAZE assessment, followed by additional diagnostics in reading as necessary.

teachers and special education teachers. Diagnostic assessments are used by teacher-based teams to refine literacy instruction across all content areas and plan individual intervention.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring answers the question: **Is progress being made by the student and system?**

Progress monitoring is the repeated measurement of students over time to evaluate instructional effectiveness. Progress monitoring of students involves repeat measurement with alternate forms of the same task to measure growth over time. Progress monitoring for systems can involve measuring growth on implementation and adult behaviors. Examples of progress monitoring assessments may include teacher-created assessments based on intervention provided, embedded progress monitoring assessments within intervention programs and curriculum-based measures. The goal is to have data that allow decisions to be made with multiple data points so instruction and implementation can be adjusted in real-time rather than waiting until the end of the year.

Progress Monitoring versus Monitoring Progress

There are important distinctions between **progress monitoring** and **monitoring progress.** Progress monitoring supports sound instructional and programmatic decision-making, while monitoring progress supports keeping students actively engaged and checking their processing to determine if a change in instruction is needed. Monitoring progress may be a source of informal diagnostic data when progress monitoring shows slow or no growth.

Progress monitoring is given to students whose instruction has been changed to improve reading performance. These assessments may be given by related services personnel, reading support staff and general and special education teachers. Progress monitoring is used by district and building teams to monitor implementation of improvement plans. It is used by student teams to monitor the effectiveness of instruction for students.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluations answers the question: **Did we meet our goals for students and systems?**

Outcome evaluation assessments are summative measures of attaining grade-level standards and expectations. The goal is to know if grade-level expectations have been met. For students, these are achievement tests, typically given at the end of the school year.

All students should be given outcome evaluation assessments at the end of each grade and/or course. Classroom teachers give outcome evaluations. District, building and teacher-based teams can use screening assessments as outcome measures when data are aggregated and trends are examined over time. In addition, state accountability measures of English

language arts in grades 3-8 and high school end-of-course exams, reading achievement tests and high school tests such as the ACT can function as outcome measures.

Considerations for Implementation

Leading the implementation of a schoolwide assessment system is the responsibility of the building principal. However, district leadership teams and building leadership teams provide guidance, funding and time to make this possible. In developing a schoolwide assessment plan, consider the role **each assessment** type plays in supporting data-driven decision-making. In grades 6-12, assessment plays a role in monitoring student progress, as well as in identifying causes of student reading difficulties.

High Schools: Consider using outcome evaluation data as part of the multi-gating screening process for high school students.

District leadership teams are responsible for conducting an audit of the assessment system. One assessment is needed for each purpose at each grade level. When district teams discover multiple assessments used for the same purpose, they should make decisions to discontinue one of them. When there is no assessment for a purpose or at a grade level, they should select an assessment to fill the gap. Some assessments, like curriculum-based measures, can be used for multiple purposes, but it is important to consider the reliability and validity of the assessment for these multiple purposes. For example, curriculum-based measures can be used for both universal screening and progress monitoring.

Tool 7: Assessment Audit - What Tests Do We Need?
Use this tool to conduct an audit of the schoolwide assessment system, including assessments in place at grades 6-12, and determine if assessments need to be selected or de-selected.

Communicating with Families

Communication with families of middle and high school students is a critical component of the collaborative problem-solving model. An effective feedback loop and established communication practices ensure two-way communication with families about students' academic performance and well-being. Consider how teams will communicate regularly with families and caregivers regarding student-level assessment data and progress in reading.

Improvement messages are a particularly effective type of school-to-family communication for middle and high school students. Improvement messages equip families with specific information about what students can do better, and an affirmation that they can improve (Bachman, et. al., 2019). Improvement messages specific to reading can provide additional support and information to families regarding reading progress with intervention supports.

Want to Learn More?
Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement: Resources for School Leaders provides more supports for **collaborative problem-solving.**

Post-Reading Self-Reflection

Component	Use the "traffic light scale" to evaluate the current level of implementation in the district or building. **Red** – Exploration **Orange** – Installation **Yellow** – Initial Implementation **Green** – Full implementation	Using the scale below, determine the importance of this component. **Red** – Not at All **Orange** – Somewhat **Yellow** – Very **Green** – Extremely
Schoolwide Assessment System		
System-Level Assessments		
Student-Level Assessments		
Communicating with Families and Caregivers		

Section 4: Tiered Systems of Instructional Support

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. What supports are available in the building across all three tiers of instruction for students who struggle with reading? Is time built into the master schedule for intervention and support?
2. How is literacy instruction planned for and implemented in core instruction across all content areas? How is fidelity monitored?
3. How are students receiving intervention supported in transferring their learning to content area classrooms?

Three-Tiered Model

Although there are no shortcuts to accelerating the literacy growth of older students with literacy skill gaps, the following fundamental components are included in coordinated secondary schoolwide literacy improvement models. The following practices increase the amount of time, teaching and practice available to all students who struggle with reading based on student needs rather than age, grade, ethnicity, language or special education label.

The most efficient approach to providing effective literacy instruction is a system of three tiers of support in which all students can access the type and amount of instruction they need to be skilled readers. Such models use student data in the collaborative problem-solving process to match student needs to instruction, using the fewest resources possible to get the desired outcome for the largest number of students (Appendix E).

The three-tiered model originated in public health and has been applied to changing reading outcomes in a variety of schools, districts and states. Each tier represents an increasingly intensive and supportive system of instruction designed to get all students to grade-level standards.

Figure 5. Three tiers of instruction and intervention

TIER 1 (CORE) INSTRUCTION IN LITERACY SKILLS

Tier 1 is described as universal instruction. All students receive this instruction in literacy skills across their content-area classes. Tier 1 is characterized by research-based instruction and high-quality instructional materials that match the needs of students in each grade. Literacy instruction across all content areas should focus on the essential skills, or "big ideas," of adolescent literacy and state standards for literacy. **Tier 1 instruction in literacy skills includes the grade-level high-quality instructional materials in core curricula across all content areas and the adoption of evidence-based literacy strategies and instructional routines across content areas.** Explicit instructional routines provide a logical sequence and procedure that facilitates knowing what comes next, thus allowing students and teachers to focus on content.

Tier 1 instruction is planned by building leadership teams and department teams. Parents and caregivers are informed of the goals and methods of instruction and engaged as partners in providing sufficient practice to achieve skill mastery. The goal of an effective multi-tiered system of support is for all students to achieve grade-level expectations. Within this system of supports, effective Tier 1 instruction is designed to meet the needs of all learners by integrating supports and services required to access content and develop literacy skills.

Secondary schools should consider the implementation of an instructional framework to support literacy practices across all content areas.

Secondary schools should use a formal procedure for selecting evidence-based strategies and high-quality instructional materials to be used in language and literacy instruction across content areas. Instructional routines should be available for each evidence-based strategy that has been adopted for use schoolwide. Student data are used in the selection of literacy strategies and instructional routines.

TIER 2 INSTRUCTION IN LITERACY SKILLS

Tier 2 is described as strategic and targeted instruction provided in addition to Tier 1 universal instruction. Students may receive this targeted literacy instruction in addition to Tier 1 universal literacy instruction across content areas. **The term "Tier 2" is not used to refer to a group of students or an individual student.** Tutoring support that includes homework help and study skills in content areas is not an example of a Tier 2 reading intervention. Instead, Tier 2 reading interventions explicitly teach specific skills that will enable the developing reader to read and comprehend grade-level content. Knowledge of

By middle school, intervention for students who struggle with reading may be multifaceted. Support for more than literacy skills may be needed; support is no longer one-dimensional. Consider using a **multi-dimensional program** (for example, instruction in advanced decoding or vocabulary in addition to reading comprehension) for students with multiple skill needs.

the progression of skills from novice to skilled reader will be critical in determining the instruction necessary.

Tier 2 instruction can include practices and programs targeted to specific skills and needs in reading based on diagnostic reading data. Specific skills for instruction can include decoding, vocabulary, language structures, background knowledge, listening comprehension and reading comprehension. Consider implementing an "**intervention platform**," or a collection of practices, professional development for teachers and programs intentionally selected for the interventions. This allows practitioners to customize interventions based on the unique combination of needs students may have. At the secondary level, students often possess multiple skill needs that will require intervention. Therefore, professional learning in reading development combined with access to high-quality materials are critical to ensuring students are taught all necessary skills for reading.

Tier 2 instruction can be provided by English language arts teachers, content area teachers and other instructors and can be delivered as small-group instruction that specifically is tailored to the needs of students in the group. These groups are provided in addition to and aligned with literacy instruction all students receive. Intervention groups should include students with similar needs and consider the intensity of their needs. These groups are formed based on the results of diagnostic assessments or from placement tests from an intervention program.

A purpose of Tier 2 is to provide more instructional time, repetitive practice and support for readers to help them reach grade-level expectations.

Tier 2 instruction is planned by the building leadership team or department team. Parents and caregivers are informed of the goals and methods of instruction, receive progress reports and are engaged as partners in providing sufficient practice to achieve skill mastery.

Each building leadership team should define a formal process for how students with literacy skill gaps will access intervention. The process should include:

- How students will be identified as having skill gaps
- How students will be matched to available interventions
- How student progress will be monitored
- How decisions will be made about intensifying support
- How schoolwide resources will be identified and allocated

TIER 3 INSTRUCTION IN LITERACY SKILLS

Tier 3 is described as **intensive** and **individualized** literacy instruction for students who are reading far below grade level. A purpose of Tier 3 instruction is to address severe and persistent learning difficulties. Only a few students receive Tier 3 support. This support is in addition to Tier 1 instruction and may be in addition or in place of Tier 2 instruction, depending on the needs of the student. Tier 3 is characterized by explicit and intensive, research-based instruction that matches the specific needs of students in small groups or one-on-one and is provided by trained specialists. Universal screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments are used to articulate the needs of each student. High-quality instructional materials used in Tier 3 must break tasks into smaller units, provide an explicit model of new skills, scaffold the production of correct responses and provide enough opportunities to practice.

The goal of intensive Tier 3 instruction is to accelerate learning so students can make progress in content area classes and increase their motivation to read. Tier 3 instruction is planned by a student-level team that forms around the needs of each student. Parents and caregivers are members of the student team.

Tier 3 instruction often is not a different program but rather an increase in intensity in terms of smaller group size, increased instructional time, more opportunities to practice and more frequent progress monitoring.

Addressing reading intervention and support challenges at the secondary level requires integration of various support programs such as Title 1, special education and English learner supports. This integration is required for a coordinated and efficient use of resources. The result will be that the reading classes include students who have similar instructional needs. Likewise, teachers work across categories, matching the strengths of the teacher to the needs of students. Most schools find that integrating special education, Title 1, English learner supports, and general education makes it possible to lower group sizes.

Ensuring there is adequate instructional time allotted to reading intervention is a critical challenge at the middle and high school levels. When designing building schedules (Appendix F), consider how time for intervention supports will be provided to students outside of Tier 1 instruction during a designated time for support. Although there is no single approach to structuring time and supports, some approaches to designing a master schedule providing credit-based reading intervention classes, in addition to Tier 1 instruction, include:

1. Creating a schoolwide reading class for all students, one period per day, that is differentiated according to student needs
2. Designating a certain number of English language arts classes as targeted intervention classes
3. Adding a schoolwide core class (usually combining English language arts and history) where students are grouped by their needs and teachers adjust the content or emphasis based on those needs
4. Scheduling several reading classes in various elective slots and placing students in those

Data-Driven Access to Tiers of Support

INTENSIFYING SUPPORT

One goal of the three-tiered model is getting students to grade-level expectations through the least intensive instructional support possible. Tier 1 instruction should be so well matched to the needs of students that the number of students who do not reach grade-level goals is significantly reduced. However, some students will need additional support at Tier 2 to reach those goals. A small number of students will need the most intensive support at Tier 3. Decisions about intensifying instruction can be made by student-level teams. The most intensive instruction should be provided to students who have not made progress with instruction that has worked for the majority of other students, and this should be delivered by trained specialists.

Intensification should be thought of in terms of the type and amount of instruction rather than as layering on a different program (although sometimes that is necessary). Table 5 provides examples of organizational and instructional delivery intensification models. The most intensive instruction should be reserved for students with the most need – those who have not made progress with instruction that has worked for most other students.

Instruction is thought to be more **individualized** and **intensive** when it includes:

- More frequent instructional sessions
- Longer instructional sessions
- Smaller, more homogenous groups
- More practice opportunities
- More immediate corrective feedback

Table 5. Organizational versus Instructional Delivery Intensifications (Wanzek, et al, 2020)

Organizational Intensifications	Instructional Delivery Intensifications
More time in intervention (increasing length of intervention session and/or increasing the number of sessions a week)	Increasing the explicitness of instruction (providing additional models or presenting material in a more concrete way)
Decreasing group size	Making instruction more systematic (breaking a task or practice into smaller steps)
Decreasing group size	Increasing specificity and amount of feedback
Support	Embedding cognitive processing strategies (for example, setting and monitoring goals and using strategies to assist with memory load like graphic organizers or mnemonics)
Support	Planned transfer instruction and practice

Tool 8: Intervention Intensity Checklist

Use this tool to identify alterable instructional variables to consider when a student is not making progress and instruction needs to be "intensified." The goal is to provide educators with concrete and actionable ideas about how to operationalize more intensive support.

FADING SUPPORT

Some students will benefit from a short-term experience with intensive instructional support, while others have an ongoing need for intensive support. Not all students who need intensive support in reading are students with disabilities, and not all students with disabilities need intensive support in reading. Student teams can use progress monitoring data to test the possibility of fading support. Decisions about intensifying and fading support can be guided by districtwide decision rules that are grounded in data.

Decision Rules

Building leadership teams, department teams and student-level teams benefit greatly from having clear and consistent decision rules about how data are used at key points in the collaborative problem-solving process. **Decision rule frameworks** may be established at the district or building level (Appendix G). It is important for all schools in a district to have the same decision rules, as teachers and students may travel across buildings. Specific decisions and consistent parameters for making the rules may evolve over time. Listed below are a few key decisions that arise when districts work to improve reading outcomes, along with a few sample "rules."

Table 2. Sample decision rules

Tier of Instruction	Sample Decision Rules
Tier 1	• Effectiveness of instruction, judged by percentage at benchmark at each grade level • Fidelity of assessment, judged by percentage of assessors trained to criterion
Tier 2	• When to consider a change in instruction, judged by number of data points below aim line? (This requires a valid and reliable curriculum-based measure to measure progress and set goals.) • Was instruction implemented with integrity?
Tier 3	• Was instruction changed after progress monitoring indicated need? • When to move to Tier 2, back to Tier 1, to Tier 3, back to Tier 2, refer for special education evaluation? • When to fade support? • When to exit special education?

Integrated Systems of Support

Support for students in reading should be part of an integrated system of support that meets the needs of all learners. An **integrated multi-tiered system of support** can provide students with the best opportunities for behavioral and academic success. The practices that support student success should be integrated across all tiers to ensure instructional materials, resources, time, interventions and strategies are implemented efficiently and lead to improved outcomes for students.

Integrating behavioral supports and reading instruction aligns the teaming structures, resources, data systems, collaborative problem-solving practices and evidence-based interventions that support the needs of all learners. This integration is contingent upon collaboration between all members of the student level team to ensure the **student can generalize his or her developing literacy skills to each content area classroom**. It also is contingent upon collaborative conversations and planning for the integration of aligned supports and services within all Tier 1 courses. This serves as a mechanism to provide access to content-specific topics and materials presented via text-based materials requiring grade-level literacy skills. The integration and alignment of instruction and supports across tiers can support learners to prevent them from falling further behind and experience frustration and a disconnect between themselves and grade-level content.

Want to Learn More?
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Post-Reading Self-Reflection

Component	Use the "traffic light scale" to evaluate the current level of implementation in the district or building. **Red** – Exploration **Orange** – Installation **Yellow** – Initial Implementation **Green** – Full implementation	Using the scale below, determine the importance of this component. **Red** – Not at All **Orange** – Somewhat **Yellow** – Very **Green** – Extremely
Core Instruction in Literacy Skills		
Strategic and Targeted Intervention in Literacy Skills		
Intensive Intervention		
Intensifying and Fading Support		
Decision Rules		
Integrated Systems of Support		

Conclusion

Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement at the secondary level will require collaboration between schools and communities. District and building administrators are key leaders of the problem-solving, planning and ongoing implementation needed to improve literacy outcomes for all students. When administrators are knowledgeable about the science of reading and have the skills to lead their staff members through the collaborative problem-solving process, they are able to use a system of assessments and instruction to create equitable learning environments supporting all students in becoming proficient and successful readers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Educator Actions That Communicate Equitable Expectations of All Students

1. Greet students by name as they enter the classroom. Ask students for the correct pronunciation of their name and if they prefer a nickname.
2. Be conscious of body language and use of eye contact.
3. Use proximity with all students equally to support classroom management, attention, feedback and building relationships.
4. Use body language, gestures and facial expressions to acknowledge and communicate the importance of all students' questions and opinions.
5. Vary the arrangement of the physical environment based on the lesson purpose.
6. Ensure classroom visuals and instructional materials reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented by students.
7. Try to use and learn words and phrases from students' native language.
8. Design collaborative learning tasks that foster social cohesiveness.
9. Use random response and grouping strategies.
10. Seek multiple perspectives.
11. Incorporate and connect students' real-life experiences in classroom learning.
12. Ask higher-order questions equally of all students.
13. Provide assistance equally.

Appendix B: Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs

EXAMPLE 1

Our Vision

Every student will have equitable access to engaging learning that prepares them to be **C**ollaborative, **C**ompetitive and **S**uccessful in our global world.

Our Mission

Cumberland County Schools will provide a safe, positive and rigorous learning environment to prepare lifelong learners to reach their maximum potential.

Our Core Values | Shared beliefs that guide our work

EXCELLENCE	We pursue and maintain the highest standards
INNOVATION	We develop new and emerging solutions
COLLABORATION	We work together to produce the best results
EQUITY	We provide every student a fair opportunity for success
INTEGRITY	We speak and act honestly and truthfully
COMPASSION	We treat everyone with concern and understanding

Our Strategic Priorities | major priorities that enable our vision and mission

1. SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS
   Graduate every student confident, competitive and ready for a career, college and life.
2. PREMIER PROFESSIONALS
   Recruit, support, and retain impactful teachers, leaders and support staff.
3. EXCEPTIONAL ENVIRONMENT
   Integrate resources, facilities, and staff to maintain a safe, inviting learning environment for students to grow academically, socially and emotionally.
4. COMMITTED COMMUNITY
   Collectively engage schools, families and community in building student success.

EXAMPLE 2

The vision of the Bellevue School District is to affirm and inspire each and every student to learn and thrive as creators of their future world.

The mission of the Bellevue School District is to serve each and every student academically, socially and emotionally through a rigorous and relevant education that is innovative and individualized. As a learning community that values one another's humanity, we provide courageous support for an equitable and exceptional education for all students.

Appendix C: Teaming Overview

Type	Who	Meeting Frequency	Tasks
District Leadership Team (DLT)	• District and building administrators • Teacher and staff representatives from each building • Family and community representatives	Quarterly (more often at first)	• Set a vision, priorities and expectations • Review district data to develop, implement and evaluate the action plan • Review and establish district policies so they are supportive of, not barriers to, implementation of the plan • Provide support for implementation (funding, PD, coaching) • Guide building leadership teams
Building Leadership Team (BLT)	• Principal • Teacher representative from each grade, related service staff, union representative • Representative from non-certificated staff • Family, community representative • Coach (district, regional) • District office representative	Monthly	• Review building data to develop, implement and evaluate action plan • Develop knowledge and skills of building staff to implement • Plan and conduct professional learning and coaching • Set a vision, priorities and expectations • Review district data to develop, implement and evaluate action plan • Review and establish district policies so they are supportive of, not barriers to, implementation of the model • Provide support for implementation (funding, PD, coaching) • Guide building leadership teams

Department Teacher-Based Teams (TBT)	• All general and special education teachers at each grade level • Building principal or assistant principal • Paraprofessionals • representatives from related service personnel • Building, district and regional coaches	Monthly	• Support implementation of strategic evidence-based practices in literacy across all content areas
Cross-Department	• Teachers • Parents and caregivers • Student when appropriate	Every other week	• Support students who are not making adequate progress • Review student data to develop, implement and evaluate student intervention plan
Student-Level Team	• Teachers • Parents • Student when appropriate	Yearly or more frequently at first	• Review student data to develop, implement and evaluate student intervention plan

Appendix D: Four Purposes of Assessment

Purpose Question Answered Characteristics Example Non-Example				
Screening	Who needs support?	• Brief • Standardized • Predictive • Indicators	Acadience Reading 7-8	CTOPP-2
Diagnostic	What support is needed?	• Standardized or not • Specific and detailed • Closely linked to instruction	Decoding Survey	Developmental Reading Assessment
Progress Monitoring	Is the support working?	• Brief • Standardized • Sensitive to change • Alternate forms at same difficulty level	Acadience Reading 7-8	Acadience Reading Diagnostic: CFOL
Outcome Evaluation	Did the support work?	• Standardized • Norm-referenced	Ohio's State Test in English Language Arts	Benchmark Assessment System

Appendix E: Data Team Meetings at all Three Tiers

Tier	Who	Data Source	Decisions
1	District Team Building Team Grade-Level Team	• Grade-Level Universal Screening • State Outcome Measure	• Tier 1, class-wide instruction review, implementation and improvement • Professional development and coaching needs • Planning strategic instruction
2	Grade-Level Team	• Grade-Level Universal Screening • Student Diagnostic • Student and Group Progress Monitoring	• Tier 2 small group instruction review, implementation and improvement • Moving to intensive instruction
3	Student Team	• Student Diagnostic • Student and Group Progress Monitoring	• Tier 3 student instruction review, implementation and improvement • Special education eligibility referrals

Appendix F: Sample Building Schedules

EXAMPLE 1: MIDDLE SCHOOL EXAMPLE (40 MINUTE PERIODS)

Grades 5 and 6		Grades 7 and 8	
Class	**Description**	**Class**	**Description**
Homeroom/PBIS	Attendance and Small Groups	Homeroom/PBIS	Attendance and Small Groups
ELA	Tier 1 core instruction for all students	ELA	Tier 1 core instruction for all students
Science	Tier 1 core instruction for all students	Science	Tier 1 core instruction for all students
Social Studies	Tier 1 core instruction for all students	Social Studies	Tier 1 core instruction for all students
Math	Tier 1 core instruction for all students	Math	Tier 1 core instruction for all students
Literacy Lab	Tier 2 instruction or Literacy Enrichment (based on decision rules)	Literacy Lab	Tier 2 instruction or Literacy Enrichment (based on decision rules)
Math Lab	Tier 2 instruction or Math Enrichment	STEM Lab	Tier 2 instruction or Math Enrichment
Lunch and Recess			
Fine Arts and Electives	Art, Computers, Physical Education, Music	Fine Arts and Electives	Independent Living, Computers, Art, Physical Education
Academic Coaching and Skills	Skills period and academic coaching for those at risk of failure	Academic Coaching and Skills	Skills period and academic coaching for those at risk of failure

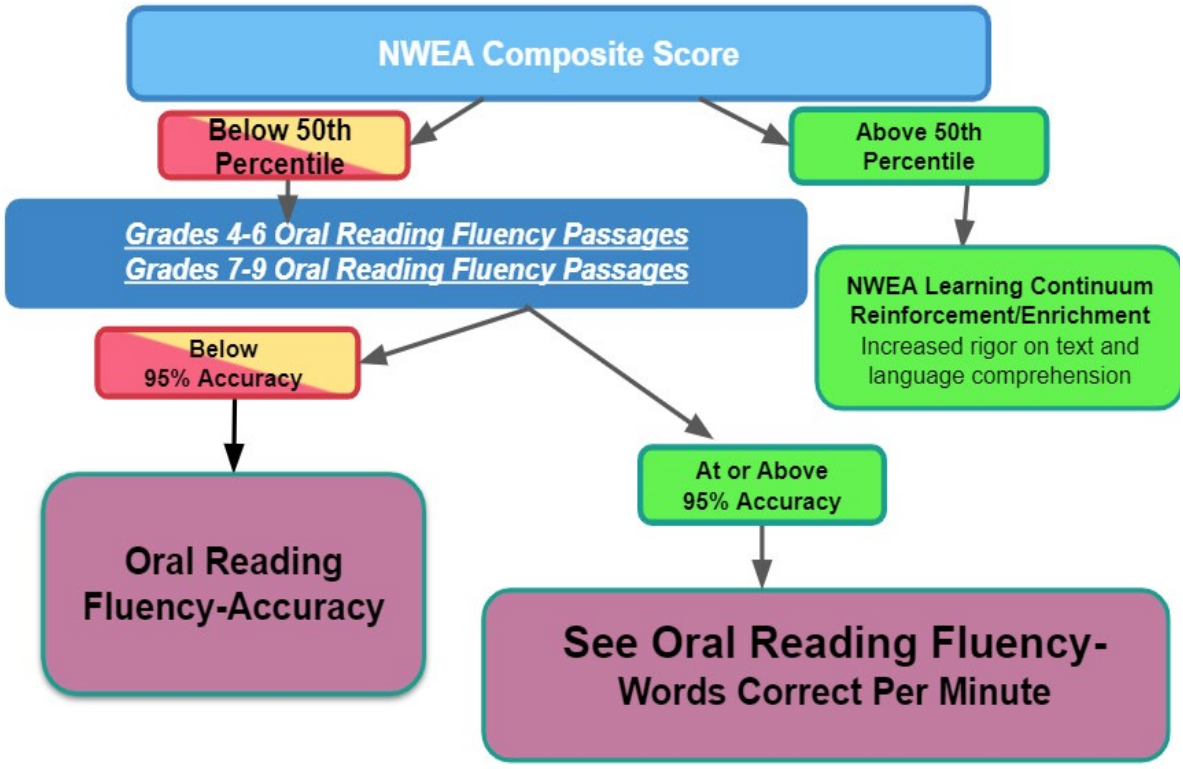
EXAMPLE 2: HIGH SCHOOL EXAMPLE (BLOCK SCHEDULE)

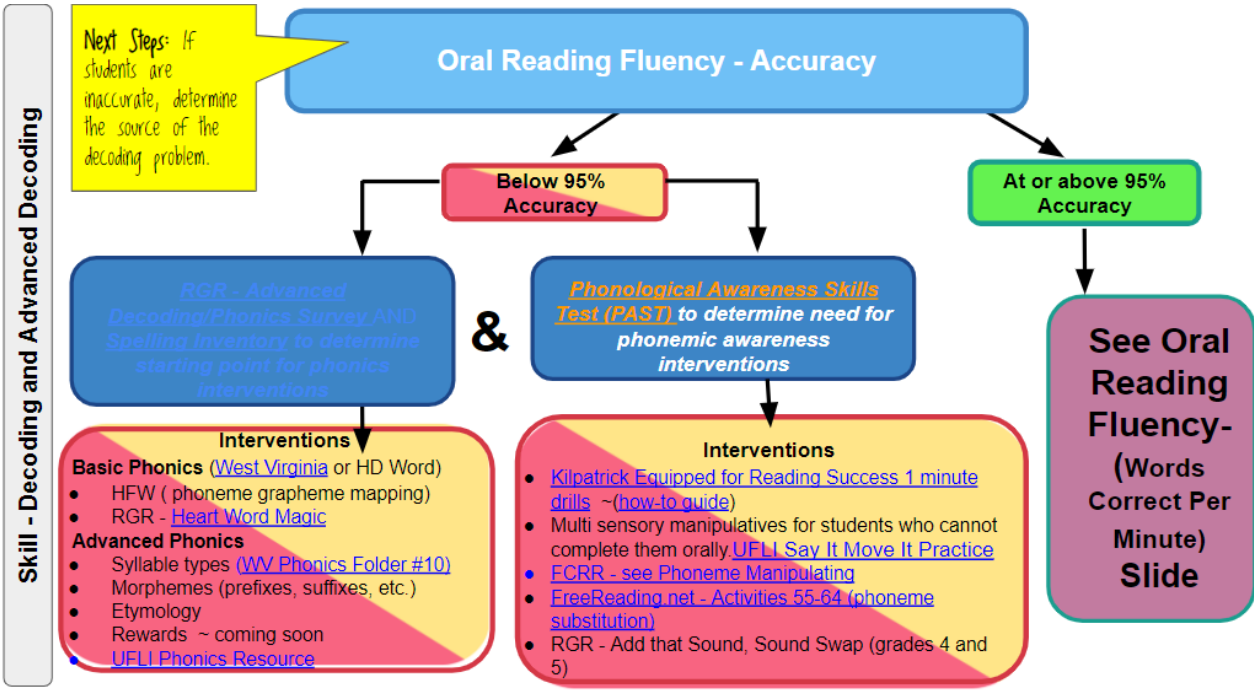
Block	Time
Block 1	7:52 - 9:18 a.m. (86 min)
Block 2	9:22 - 10:48 a.m. (86 min)
Lunch/Advisory	Lunch 1: 10:48 - 11:20 a.m. Advisory 1: 10:48 - 11:24 a.m. Advisory 2: 11:24 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lunch 2: 11:28 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
Block 3	12:04 - 1:30 p.m. (86 min)
Block 4	1:34 - 3:00 p.m. (86 min)

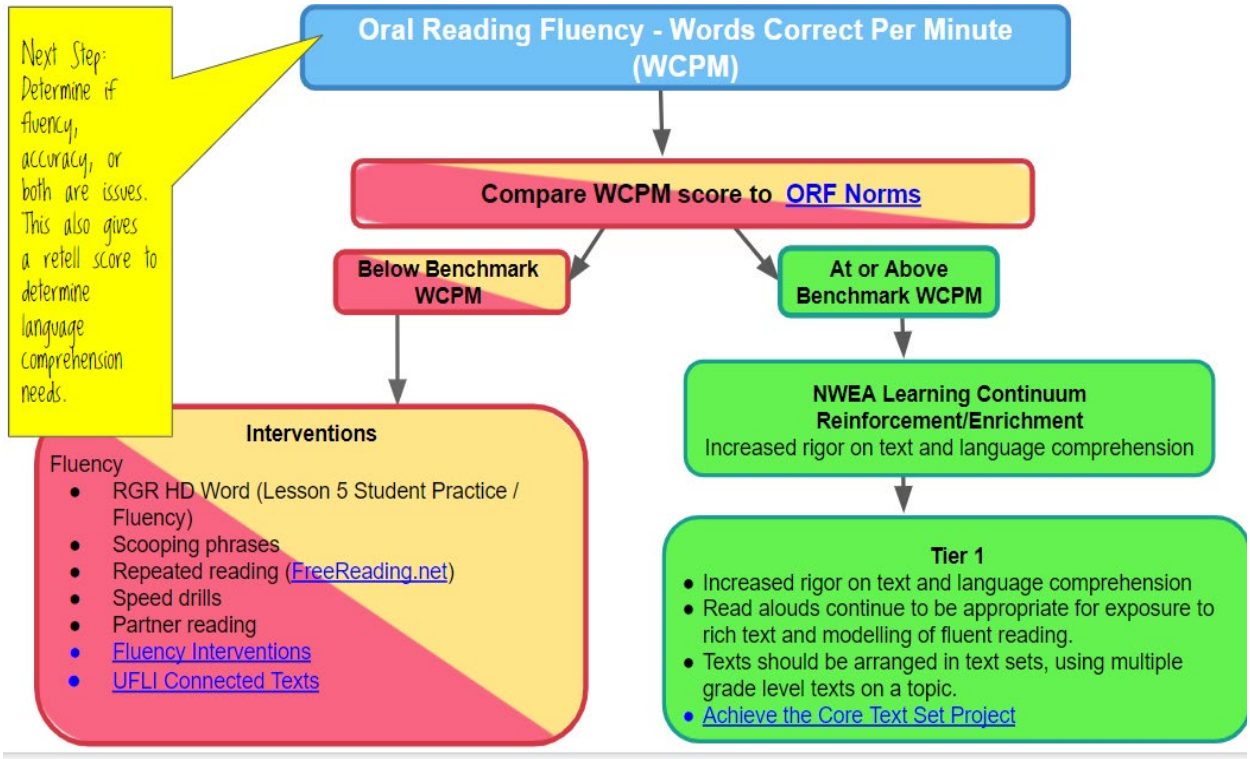
In this example. intervention is built into extended blocks. Additionally, students may be scheduled into a focused block where they meet with different interventionists during that time.

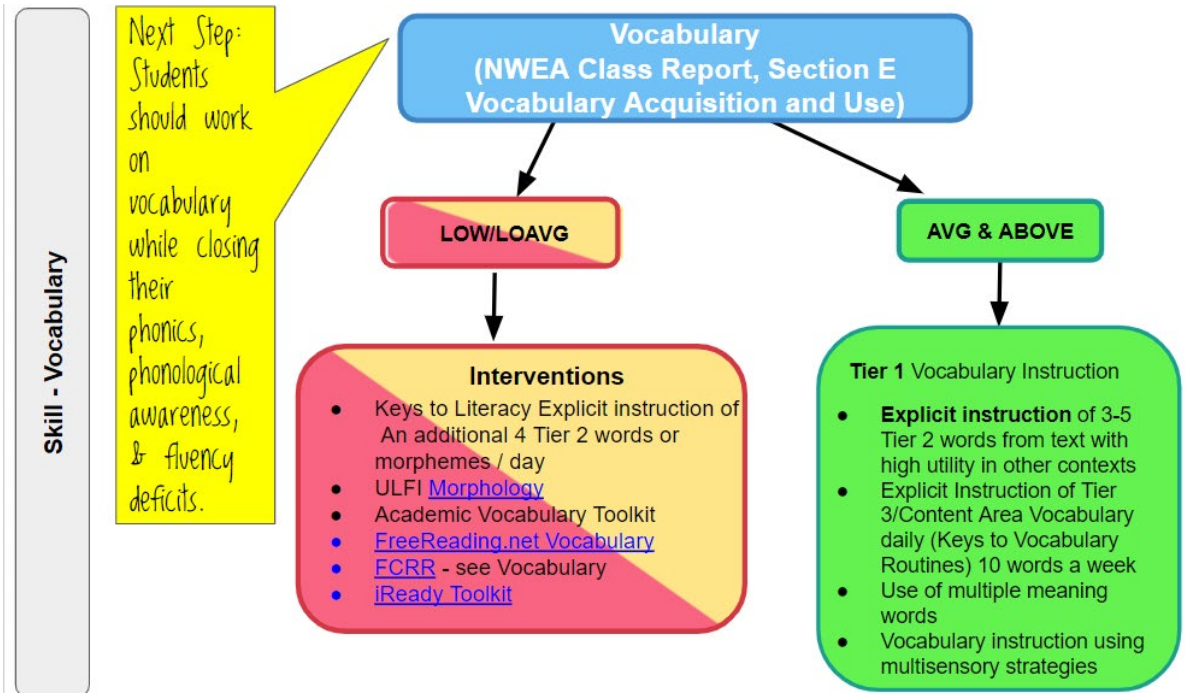
Appendix G: Sample Decision Rules Framework

LITERACY DECISION RULES FOR GRADES 4-9 (YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOLS)






Next Step: Determine if fluency, accuracy, or both are issues. This also gives a retell score to determine language comprehension needs.
Oral Reading Fluency - Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)
Compare WCPM score to ORF Norms
Below Benchmark WCPM
At or Above Benchmark WCPM
Interventions
Fluency
RGR HD Word (Lesson 5 Student Practice / Fluency)
Scooping phrases
Repeated reading (FreeReading.net)
Speed drills
Partner reading
Fluency Interventions
UFLI Connected Texts
NWEA Learning Continuum Reinforcement/Enrichment
Increased rigor on text and language comprehension
Tier 1
Increased rigor on text and language comprehension
Read alouds continue to be appropriate for exposure to rich text and modelling of fluent reading.
Texts should be arranged in text sets, using multiple grade level texts on a topic.
Achieve the Core Text Set Project


Skill - Vocabulary
Next Step: Students should work on vocabulary while closing their phonics, phonological awareness, & fluency deficits.
Vocabulary (NWEA Class Report, Section E Vocabulary Acquisition and Use)
LOW/LOAVG
AVG & ABOVE
Interventions
Keys to Literacy Explicit instruction of An additional 4 Tier 2 words or morphemes / day
ULFI Morphology
Academic Vocabulary Toolkit
FreeReading.net Vocabulary
FCRR - see Vocabulary
iReady Toolkit
Tier 1 Vocabulary Instruction
Explicit instruction of 3-5 Tier 2 words from text with high utility in other contexts
Explicit Instruction of Tier 3/Content Area Vocabulary daily (Keys to Vocabulary Routines) 10 words a week
Use of multiple meaning words
Vocabulary instruction using multisensory strategies