

# Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement



**A Guide for School Leaders,  
Grades K-5**

**2023**



**Department of  
Education &  
Workforce**

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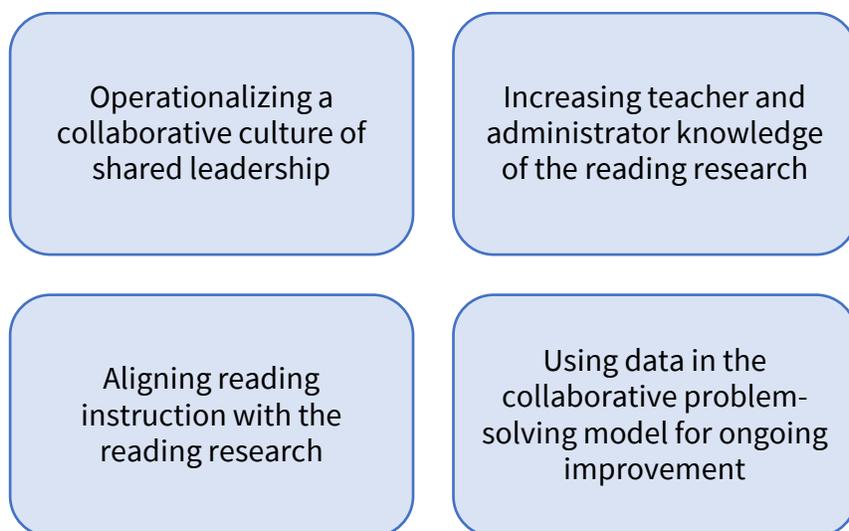
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# Introduction

Schools that are successful in improving literacy outcomes for students often have several factors in place. Teachers of successful readers engage in effective instructional strategies including explicit and systematic instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and writing. Successful educators of readers also take steps to ensure that students are engaged with high-quality texts relevant to them in terms of their interests.

[Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#) calls for district and school leaders to support a partnership between families and educators in the use of technically adequate assessments and standards-aligned curricular materials to implement evidence-based literacy practices and instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Equitable systems that help all learners thrive are grounded in access, opportunity, collaboration and resources efficiently matched to student needs.

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



The purpose of this guide is to provide support for administrators of grades kindergarten through 5 in operationalizing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement. The guide provides direction for district and building leaders in developing knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for identifying causes of low achievement and implementing evidence-based reading strategies.

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

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

Each section outlines practices that should be implemented in Ohio schools and emphasizes what district and building leaders need to know and do. There are multiple references to Ohio's existing tools and supports to help leaders find resources they need. Several graphics, tools and templates are provided to support implementation.

To build educator capacity to deliver instruction that is aligned to the Simple View of Reading and the foundational components of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement will require leaders to provide intensive, sustained, embedded, collaborative and instructionally focused professional learning and coaching that is aligned to the science of reading.

### **Tool 1: District and Building Leadership Team Self-Assessment of Professional Learning Topics**

Use this tool with your district or building leadership team to determine what professional learning topics have already been addressed and what may be needed.

## **Proposed Three-Year Implementation Sequence**

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

### **Year 1**

- Form the District Leadership Team (DLT) and Building Leadership Team(s) (BLT); identify supports including literacy coaching; schedule meetings; establish communication system.
- Train district and building teams in collaborative problem solving.
- Assess staff knowledge of the components of the science of reading and effective literacy instruction and engage in professional learning.
- Conduct an assessment audit.
- Train staff on any new assessments.
- Conduct universal screening three times a year.
- Build consensus and urgency for change.
- Analyze the effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction and plan for improvements, including auditing instructional materials used.
- Analyze current practices for communicating with families about literacy instruction, their child's progress and home supports for literacy aligned with Tier 1 instruction.

### **Year 2**

- Revisit team membership and roles; train new team members; revisit communication plan.
- Review and revise district and building improvement plans to include goals for implementation of improved literacy instruction and communication with families.

- Schedule ongoing professional learning grounded in the five components of reading plus writing.
- Adopt and train on any new programs, products or practices needed to improve Tier 1 instruction.
- Use screening data to determine needs at Tier 2.
- Analyze current practices for communicating with families about Tier 2 and Tier 3 literacy instruction, their child’s progress with Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and home supports for literacy aligned with instruction. Adopt decision-making protocols for assessment and interventions at Tier 2.
- Conduct diagnostic assessments and begin progress monitoring.
- Continue coaching on the collaborative problem-solving process and learn to apply at Tier 3.

### **Year 3**

- Revisit team membership and roles; train new team members; revisit communication plan.
- Review and revise district and building action plans.
- Refine Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, including use of high-quality instructional materials.
- Refine Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 practices for communicating with families and supporting literacy practices at home based on impact data from student assessments and teacher and family feedback.
- Continue coaching and professional learning.
- Use direct assessment data in the collaborative problem-solving process to make instructional decisions and analyze response to intervention.

# Section 1: Shared Leadership

## Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. How is literacy leadership distributed in the district and building?
2. How is membership on the Building Leadership Team determined?
3. How are the perspectives of families incorporated in district and building leadership decisions?
4. How do educators in the building work together to plan, implement and evaluate instruction and instructional materials?

School culture is guided by strong and engaged building leadership. The building principal and leadership team provide an environment 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, staff – is given the opportunity and responsibility to participate in building and sustaining the schoolwide literacy model. Family and community partnerships are integrated into the literacy improvement planning process.

## Component A: Creating a Collaborative Culture

A positive school culture ensures that all students, staff and families feel valued and connected. 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, including those with needs for intensive support ([Appendix A](#)). Effective use of assessments, grouping and flexible use of resources support meeting students where they are and moving them forward.

Strong partnerships with families and community members are aligned to student learning outcomes. Student outcomes are enhanced when family members and school staff share responsibility for student learning. Schools can partner with community members, businesses and organizations to increase access to resources and reach common goals on behalf of students and families.

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	Effective communication is required for true engagement of all stakeholders. At all levels of the school system, processes must be in place for the flow of information. In fact, one of the first responsibilities of district and building leaders is to identify how and when information is sought from

process can be found in section three of this implementation guide.

and provided to family members, community partners and district staff.

## VISION AND MISSION

To improve language and literacy, all educators must accept responsibility for meeting the needs of all students, including students with the most complex needs ([Appendix B](#)). It is the role of the district superintendent to establish a vision, mission and set of core beliefs 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 should 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.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

District and building leaders are charged with creating a collaborative culture that makes it possible for all students to have a high-quality education. Every administrator and teacher demonstrates respect for each student's individuality through high expectations, accountability, inclusive instructional practices, a shared vision, and effective collaboration.

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, including the use of high-quality instructional materials.
- Identifying the challenges facing students, families and schools.
- Identifying school policies and practices that create barriers for students, families and staff.
- Articulating the causes of underachievement.
- Generating local solutions.

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

## Component B: Teaming

Implementation of Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement requires the effort of teams of educators, families and community members working collaboratively at multiple levels to support improving student literacy outcomes.

Teams use student data and adult implementation data in the collaborative problem-solving process to create, implement and evaluate district and school improvement plans. **Collaborative problem-solving is a structured decision-making process for using data to answer questions about systems and students.**

Multiple teams work in parallel at the district, building, grade and student levels ([Appendix C](#)).

District and school improvement plans created at each level guide the work of other district, school or grade-level teams. Although each type of team uses different data sources at different levels of the school system, they share several common strategies for operating. Effective team meeting agendas provide an opportunity for team members to use data to engage in collaborative problem-solving.

### Effective teams have:

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

### [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.

## ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS ON TEAMS

School personnel create conditions that promote engagement with the families of all students and community partners. Family engagement is sustained across grade levels, designed to impact student learning and incorporated into the shared leadership. To accomplish this, districts and schools work with families and community partners to analyze the socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic and other barriers to family engagement and consider how district policies may hinder or encourage engagement. These partners are consulted in the design, implementation and evaluation of family engagement practices. Practices for supporting equitable and accessible family engagement include:

- two-way communication with families
- supports for literacy development at home, and

### 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

**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

- community partnerships for enhancing school and home supports for literacy.

Families included in the shared leadership process should be representative of all families. School leaders ensure that families understand the importance of their role and that family representatives are respected and fully included in discussions.

When districts engage community partners, they facilitate opportunities to problem-solve and consult with each other on local planning. This can promote networking

around shared supports and challenges and promote understanding of the efforts of each entity. Examples of community entities that share the goals of school districts include libraries, early childhood education programs, after-school programs, cultural institutions, health care providers, businesses and philanthropic and faith-based institutions.

## **DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAMS (DLT)**

The purpose of the district leadership team 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 leadership team include funding, professional learning, policy, staffing and community engagement. District planning for literacy improvement should be integrated within any state-required improvement plans and local literacy development.

The district leadership team is not just about creating a vision of the work but must also 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 to remove barriers to implementation of evidence-based practices at the building level. Clear communication is essential between the district team and the building teams. District teams must have a plan for collecting information from the building staff, from families and from the community and for communicating the district’s vision, improvement plan and accountability data to all stakeholders.

Effective district leadership teams engage in the following actions to improve reading outcomes:

1. Receive training and coaching in collaborative problem solving, effective reading instruction, assessment, multi-tiered system of support
2. Collaborate in the identification and selection of high-quality instructional materials
3. Create a comprehensive assessment system that is implemented within and across buildings

4. Use assessment data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate a district improvement plan aligned to the state plan for improving literacy
5. Coordinate the delivery of district-wide professional development and coaching
6. Communicate district school improvement goals and actions to buildings and hold them accountable for aligning building plans to these
7. Align district policies and budget to reading improvement plans
8. Align district policies and resources to support family engagement to support literacy, and
9. Gather information from and communicate with building teams and the community.

The district leadership team includes representation from all levels of the district and may include:

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

**District leadership team members are responsible for providing their perspective to shape district processes and procedures that will be used across all schools.**

Each team member's voice represents their own perspective and that of the stakeholder group they represent, while at the same time recognizing that the goal is supporting all students, not just the specific student, class or building each individual represents.

## **BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAMS (BLT)**

**The Building Leadership Team is the driving force behind literacy improvement.** Team members have the most direct contact with the educators implementing improvement processes and practices. The purpose of the building leadership team is to share collaborative responsibility in guiding the development and implementation of building improvement plans and ensure the improvement process yields sustainable improvements in student reading outcomes. These efforts must be integrated at the building level across initiatives.

The 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 improvement plan. Building plans must be aligned to district improvement plans. The building leadership team is responsible for developing the capacity of the school to implement and sustain literacy improvement by coordinating and guiding design of the three tiers of instructional supports and removing barriers to implementing instruction. This team is also responsible for developing family engagement strategies that are aligned with district goals and integrated in the building improvement plan.

### **Tool 3: Sample Building Leadership Team Problem-Solving Template**

Use this tool to support the collaborative problem-solving process at the building level to determine the effectiveness of Tier 1 literacy instruction.

The building leadership team analyzes universal screening data to measure the effectiveness of the system. The goal is for 100% of students to meet grade level benchmarks, but an indicator of a healthy Tier 1 system is when at least 80% of students achieve or are above the benchmark through differentiated core instruction. If fewer than 80% of students are performing at or above benchmark on universal screeners at each grade level, the building leadership team will plan for grade level universal instructional changes that should include professional development for teachers and use of high-quality instructional materials. Adult implementation data should also be analyzed to determine necessary systemic changes.

Effective elementary building leadership teams engage in the following actions to improve reading outcomes:

1. Receive training and coaching in collaborative problem-solving, effective reading instruction, assessment, multi-tiered system of support
2. Support the identification and selection of high-quality instructional materials
3. Implement the district's comprehensive assessment system
4. Use assessment data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate a building improvement plan aligned to the district plan
5. Analyze and guide implementation of three tiers, including analyzing, implementing and purchasing instructional materials
6. Coordinate the delivery of schoolwide professional learning and coaching
7. Communicate building reading improvement goals and actions to the staff and community, and share building needs with the district team
8. Align building policies and budget to the building improvement plan
9. Engage caregivers and community members in reciprocal communication
10. Implement schoolwide procedures to provide families with timely information about their child's literacy progress in an understandable format
11. Support schoolwide practices for providing families with guidance and resources support for literacy aligned with their child's literacy development
12. Connect teachers and families with community resources that support the needs of the school and families for supporting literacy for all students

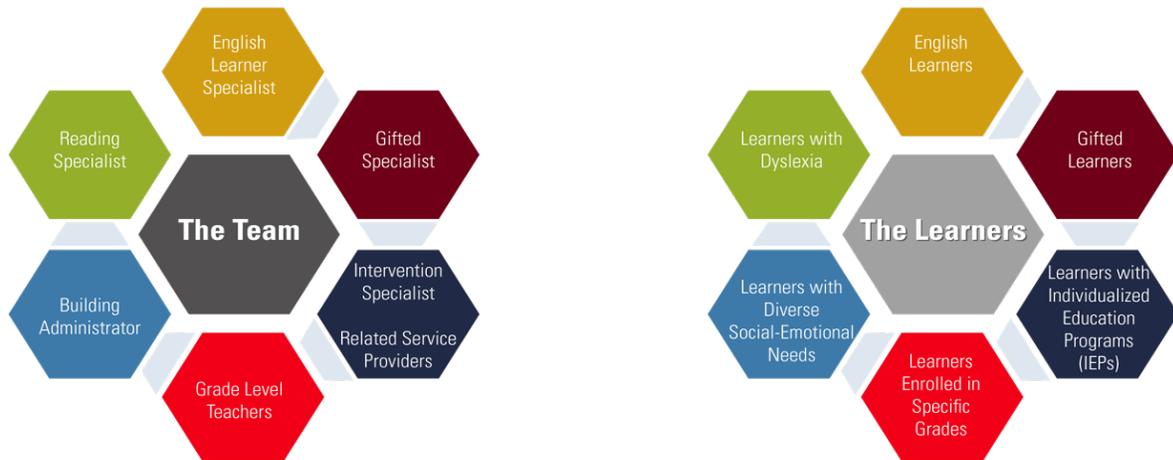
The building leadership team includes representation from all stakeholders in the building and mirrors the population of students served.

The building leadership team may include:

- The building principal and/or assistant principal
- A reading specialist
- A teacher representative from each grade
- Representatives from related service staff
- Representatives from special education and reading intervention support staff

- A union representative
- 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 are needed to implement two critical functions of a multi-tiered system of support:

1. Using collaborative problem-solving to assess system needs, analyze data and plan support at all three tiers of instruction in each grade
2. Using individual student data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate interventions for individual students who receive intensive reading intervention

### *FUNCTION 1: GRADE-LEVEL OR MULTI-GRADE-LEVEL PLANNING TEAMS*

The first critical function of teacher-based teams, performed by grade-level or multi-grade level planning 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 improvement plan for the needs of students in their grade level. Specifically, teacher-based teams use universal screening data to design, implement and evaluate instruction in core instruction (Tier 1) and targeted intervention (Tier 2). Planning instruction for individual students is not done by these teams. Effective teacher 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 the parents and community.

Teacher-based teams forming for the purpose of system-level planning might be comprised of all teachers at a grade level in larger schools, or representatives of adjacent grades in smaller schools. Team membership for this purpose should include:

- All general and special education teachers who work with students at each grade level represented
- Building leadership representatives
- Paraprofessionals
- Representatives from related service personnel, including teachers of gifted students and English learners
- Building, district and regional coaches

### *FUNCTION 2: STUDENT-LEVEL TEAMS*

The second critical function of teacher-based teams, performed by student-level teams, is to use student screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring data in the collaborative problem-solving process to design, implement and evaluate instruction designed to catch students up to grade level. Student-level teams plan the individualized instructional support that characterizes intensive 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 form when a student has received Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction that has been effective for other students but not for the individual, or screening data indicates the child will need immediate access to intensive intervention (Tier 3) in addition to Tier 1 instruction. Student teams may form, change membership and/or dissolve over time as the needs of the student change. Meaningful engagement of family members is critical at all tiers of instruction but is particularly important to tailor supports to student learning needs at Tier 2 and Tier 3. Student teams for students receiving individualized, Tier 3 supports and services must include parents and caregivers for the valuable perspectives they have of their child's strengths and needs.

Teacher-based teams forming for the purpose of student-level planning should include:

- The multi-disciplinary school staff engaged in supporting the student (classroom teacher, intervention specialist, support staff, related service 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 child's progress in a timely manner
- Communicating and modeling high expectations for all students.
- Supporting families to understand information about literacy skills, assessments and instruction
- Supporting two-way communication through listening to families and providing understandable information
- Providing families with resources to support literacy at home in the language they speak at home

- Providing more frequent communication and tailoring literacy supports for families of students receiving instructional interventions,
- Offering research-based, family-friendly resources for families to support their child’s language and literacy skill development at home

## Component C: Role of the Principal

The role of the building principal is to lead the building leadership team and lead the implementation of the school reading improvement plan. In their role as the leader of the building leadership team, the principal performs the following roles:

- Model the use of the collaborative problem-solving process in all meetings
- Communicate and reinforce expectations by setting meeting agendas
- Schedule building and grade-level team meetings, assigns roles on teams and ensures team members are held accountable for attendance and participation
- Ensure the results of meetings are communicated to all stakeholders

The principal also serves as an inclusive instructional leader, which involves the following actions described by the Ohio Leadership for Inclusion, Implementation, & Instructional Improvement (OLi<sup>4</sup>):

- **Using Data Well:** The principal uses data to make effective decisions.
- **Using Research and Evidence to Guide Instruction:** The principal guides teachers in their selection of evidence-based instructional practices for all learners.
- **Sharing Leadership:** The principal shares leadership with teachers based on their expertise.
- **Reflecting on Practice:** The principal reflects on his or her own practice.

### SPECIFIC SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL

To accomplish the above actions, building principals must have or acquire the skills needed to effectively facilitate team meetings. They must learn to analyze data and use it in the problem-solving model. They must also be able to keep focus on improving student outcomes and not on what is easiest for or preferred by adults. As building leaders, principals need effective verbal and written communication skills to articulate the goals of the school and persuade others to join them in moving toward those goals.

Building leaders must value and engage all stakeholders. They need interpersonal skills to listen to opposing viewpoints and negotiate agreements. Principals must motivate those around them to work together on behalf of students. Principals must also set schoolwide, goal-linked family engagement as a priority for all staff.

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 literacy achievement as a 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

## Component D: Role of 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 evidence-based instructional practices. Teams need access to training and support in each of these areas, whether or not there is a person in the building whose title is “coach.”

In a schoolwide literacy improvement model, educators with coaching roles have the primary responsibility of building the knowledge and skills of the school community and supporting it to implement building and district improvement plans with fidelity. Strengthening knowledge and skills can take the form of training and coaching. District and school staff, family members and community partners should provide input on topics for training and coaching and have access to participate in them directly. 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. The purpose of coaching is to support deep implementation and sustained use of evidence-based strategies.

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 4: 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 and materials, implementing 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.

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

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 reading improvement will shift from the person who has been doing the coaching to administrators, classroom teachers,

families and community members.

## Component E: Families as Partners

Family engagement is an interdependent partnership between schools, communities and families. This partnership involves listening to and including the voices of families in policy making. It entails engaging in two-way communication and supporting participation of families in their child's learning and development.

District leaders create policies, dedicate resources, develop community partnerships and prioritize school environments for sustained family partnerships. Building leaders ensure that quality family engagement strategies that are linked to student learning outcomes are included in the school improvement plan. They lead the inclusion of family representatives in shared leadership, and prioritize school-wide practices for ongoing, reciprocal communication with families. Principals set expectations for sustained effective practices that support parents and caregivers in active roles supporting their child's literacy development at home. Most importantly, principals lead the design, evaluation and improvement of schoolwide family engagement practices. They ensure all families are provided with access to supports for engaging in their child's education.

**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 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
Collaborative Culture		
District Leadership Team		
Building Leadership Team		
Teacher-Based Teams		
Principal as an Inclusive Instructional Leader		
Coaching		
Families as Partners		

## Section 2: Effective Literacy Instruction

### Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. What previous experiences have served as preparation to support educators in teaching reading?
2. What difficulties in learning to read have been experienced, seen in the experiences of student or heard described by colleagues?

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

### Component A: The Simple View of Reading

Figure 2. (Gough & Tunmer, 1986)



In 1986, Gough and Tunmer proposed a formula known as the Simple View of Reading. This theoretical framework represents the interaction of two broad skill areas that are required for reading comprehension: word recognition and language comprehension. Reading comprehension is impaired when students are lacking in one or both broad skill areas. To support all students in understanding what they read, instruction must emphasize the skills that make up each broad component. Those skills were summarized in the Report of the National Reading Panel and have been confirmed and elaborated upon since its publication in 2000.

## Component B: Ohio’s Learning Standards

Effective 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, as well as being read to by another person
- Reading, writing, speaking and listening grounded in **evidence from the text**, including both literacy and informational texts
- **Building knowledge** through content-rich nonfiction
- Learning to decode accurately and fluently through **explicit and systematic foundational skill instruction** in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and handwriting

**Figure 3.** Elements of Effective K-5 Literacy Instruction

<b>Accurate and Fluent Decoding</b> (English Language Arts Standards for Foundational Skills)	<b>Read, Write, Speak and Listen to Build Vocabulary, Knowledge and Motivation</b> (Integration of English Language Arts, History/Social Studies, World Languages and Fine Arts Standards)
<p>Explicit and systematic instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, and provides ample time for practice in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Print concepts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Phonics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fluency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Handwriting</li> </ul>	<p>Integrated content instruction is designed to build vocabulary and knowledge in specific subject areas as determined by the local education agency whereby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Texts are intentionally selected to build specific knowledge and vocabulary across content areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers read aloud challenging texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In second grade and higher, students read texts at grade level, with scaffolded instructional supports to access complex texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary instruction is explicit and connected to texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing instruction is connected to texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussion of texts builds language comprehension, practices vocabulary and connects to learning standards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension strategy instruction is embedded in lessons focused on learning curricular content</li> </ul>

## Component C: The Essential Early Literacy Skills

Research supports instruction in vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and comprehension in K-5 classrooms. Many students come into kindergarten with oral language which serves as the basis for learning to read. Instruction in learning new words is a constant focus as students move from kindergarten to fifth grade. Kindergarten students should be supported to attend to the individual sounds or phonemes in spoken English. They learn to map those sounds to printed letters and letter combinations called graphemes. Once accurate word-level reading is achieved, students build the fluency in reading connected text that is necessary, but not sufficient, for reading comprehension. Instruction in these five essential early literacy skills serves as the backbone for a comprehensive schoolwide literacy plan.

Although all grades from kindergarten through grade 5 contain standards addressing each component of reading, the emphasis of instruction shifts throughout the grade levels as students progress toward proficiency. The table below depicts the general subskills, highlighted in orange, in each of the five components of reading that are emphasized as learners move through the elementary grades. **This is not about balance, or even the amount of time spent on each component, but rather a changing emphasis on specific skill progressions.** Educators must be aware that students who are not progressing in a typical manner will continue to need support targeting the earlier subskills. Mastering these components will lead to greater success in a learner’s adolescent years.

**Table 1.** Changing Emphasis of the Subskills of the Five Components of Reading (adapted from Michigan’s Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative, 2017):

Component	K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> and Beyond
Phonemic Awareness	Blend & Segment	Phoneme Analysis: Addition, Deletion & Substitution; Spelling Dictation				
Phonics	Sounds/Basic Phonics	Advanced Phonics & Multisyllabic			Multisyllabic & Word Study	
Fluency	Sounds and Words	Words & Connected Text			Connected Text	
Vocabulary	Speaking & Listening		Listening, Reading & Writing		Reading & Writing	
Comprehension	Speaking & Listening		Listening, Reading & Writing		Reading & Writing	

The following sections provide an overview of each essential early literacy skill and writing instruction, how to recognize student needs in each skill area, research-based instructional practices for teaching each skill, and what to look for in classroom instruction and supplemental intervention.

<b>Essential Early Literacy Skill</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Phonemic Awareness</b>	Noticing, thinking about and working with the smallest units of spoken language, which are called phonemes.
<b>Phonics</b>	Knowing relationships between sounds (phonemes) and letters (graphemes).
<b>Reading Fluency</b>	Reading connected text accurately, fluently and for meaning.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Understanding the meaning of words we speak, hear, read and write.
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	A process, not a product, of understanding, extracting meaning from and making sense of what we have read

## PHONEMIC AWARENESS

### Why Is Phonemic Awareness Important?

English orthography is described as morpho-phonemic, which means the print represents the sounds and meaning of the words we speak. For students to learn the code of how letters represent sounds, they must become aware of the sounds in spoken English. Students who can manipulate sounds at the level of individual phonemes are more likely to become readers. Older struggling readers are often missing this skill, which impairs their ability to decode.

### How to Know if Students Have Adequate Phonemic Awareness?

- Assessments of phonemic awareness are done without print. The ability to isolate initial sounds in spoken words is a critical predictor of future reading success when given at the beginning of kindergarten.
- Students who cannot isolate the beginning sounds in spoken words at the beginning of kindergarten and those who cannot segment all sounds in spoken words are at risk of not reading at the end of first grade. They should receive instructional support.
- Administrators should use the percentage of kindergarten students who can segment spoken words into phonemes by the end of kindergarten as a critical indicator of the effectiveness of classroom reading instruction and as a predictor of who will be successful readers at the end of first grade.
- Assessments of phonemic proficiency (segmenting, blending and manipulating phonemes) can be part of an assessment system to determine both accuracy and automaticity with phonemic awareness.

### Phonemic Awareness in Action

Mr. Guzman follows a scope and sequence in phonology for his first-grade students. As the school year begins, a baseline assessment was administered to his students to inform him of what concepts needed review and inform him on where to begin instruction in new concepts (Literacy Standard: RF. 1.2, a-d).

Examples of explicit teaching that an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Isolating the onset phoneme (initial sound) in spoken words
- Blending individual words into compound words
- Blending onset with rime into spoken words
- Isolating final phonemes in spoken words
- Segmenting spoken words into syllables

## How to Teach Phonemic Awareness?

Elements of effective phonemic awareness instruction:

- Small group or whole group
- Matched to where students are on the continuum of skills (in interventions)
- Follows a grade level scope and sequence in core instruction (K-2) ([Appendix D](#))
- Use of manipulatives
- Start with continuant sounds
- Make connection to the manner and placement of articulation of sounds
- Connected to spelling instruction in all grade levels K-5

Differentiated Universal Phonemic Awareness Instruction	Phonemic Awareness Instruction in Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Whole group and small group</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sequence from larger to smaller linguistic units</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Include judicious practice with phoneme blending, segmenting and manipulating</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Included as a component of spelling instruction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Small group</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Students all have the same need</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit model</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of manipulatives</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on two types of activities during a lesson</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Multiple practice opportunities</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Immediate corrective feedback</li></ul>

## PHONICS

**Why is Phonics Important?** Accessing the meaning of text begins with decoding the words and translating print into speech.

### **How to Know if Students Have Adequate Decoding Skills?**

- Reading non-words accurately and fluently is an excellent indicator of students' ability to match sounds to letters.
- Accuracy scores on measures of oral reading fluency provide indication of the level of word recognition required to support reading comprehension.
- Students in kindergarten through first grade who cannot read CVC words instantly and those in first through fifth grade who cannot read text accurately are at risk of not meeting future reading comprehension goals. They should receive instructional support.
- Administrators should use the percentage of first grade students who can read CVC non-words and the percentage of second through fifth grade students who can read grade level text accurately as indicators of the effectiveness of classroom reading instruction and predictors of future reading comprehension.

### **Phonics Instruction in Action**

Ms. Li follows a systematic phonics scope and sequence that she teaches in daily whole group and small group settings. For her kindergarten students, she administers pre and post short assessments to track their data. She re-teaches concepts to students who did not secure their learning and re-assesses them (Literacy Standard: RF.K.3).

Examples of explicit teaching that an administrator might observe in a class include the following:

- Sequencing letters of the alphabet
- Sound recognition of consonants and short vowels
- Segmenting, reading and spelling three-sound short vowel words
- Segmenting, reading and spelling three-sound words with digraphs

## How to Teach Phonics?

Elements of effective phonics instruction:

- Small group or whole group
- Matched to where students are on the continuum of skills (in interventions)
- Follows a grade level scope and sequence in core instruction ([Appendix E](#))
- Phonological warm up
- Phoneme-grapheme mapping
- Blending drills
- Dictation of words, sentences and phrases
- Practicing reading to automaticity/mastery in word lists, phrases, sentences and controlled decodable text
- Attending to syllable type and affixes
- Integration of decoding and encoding

<b>Differentiated Universal Phonics Instruction</b>	<b>Phonics Instruction in Intervention</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Whole group and small group</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows a purposeful sequence of instruction</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses a scope of sequence of skills</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Word learning strategies through teaching phonology, orthography, word origin and morphology</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit instruction</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Includes blending, dictation and use of connected (decodable) texts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Small group</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Students all have the same need</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows a scope and sequence of skills</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit model</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of manipulatives</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Immediate corrective feedback</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice to automaticity in controlled decodable text</li></ul>

## READING FLUENCY

### Reading Fluency in Action

Mrs. Frontera builds daily text-reading routines for her third graders to improve their fluency. Understanding the role fluency plays in comprehension, she continually monitors for students who need support with key components of fluency like reading rate, prosody and accuracy (Literacy Standard: RF. 3.4 a-b).

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

- Teacher modeling reading with clear pacing, intentional expression and intonation or deliberate phrasing
- Data-driven decision making tied to Oral Reading Fluency measures.
- Activities in whole group or small group to help students pay attention to punctuation marks and learn what those marks represent

**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 in second through fifth grade 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 second through fifth grade 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

Differentiated Universal Reading Fluency Instruction	Reading Fluency Instruction in Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choral reading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partner reading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Audio-assisted reading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Independent practice for students reading accurately</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on prosody, rate and reading for understanding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated reading of decodable passages and complex (grade level) passages with a teacher or partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice reading words with previously taught phonics concepts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Move to reading controlled phrases, sentences and passages</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated reading of decodable passages</li> </ul>

## VOCABULARY

### Why Is Vocabulary Important?

Reading is a language-based skill. Students who experience delays in language or who are English learners may have difficulty learning to read and comprehending what they read. Students must have a foundation in spoken English so that once they translate printed symbols into oral language, they can extract meaning. Students also must have the ability to select words for effective communication.

### How to Know If Students Have Adequate Vocabulary

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

### Vocabulary in Action

Third grade teacher, Mrs. Taylor, follows daily explicit vocabulary instruction and connects her instruction to morphology and classroom texts on a frequent basis. Her teaching of Tier 2 and Tier 3 words is clear and focused, not incidental. She analyzes her word lists to decide what essential activities may help her English learners (Literacy Standard: RL. 3.4).

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

- Pronouncing the word, reading the word and writing the word
- Using student-friendly definitions with kinesthetic or visual supports
- Asking questions about the meaning of words that can be answered with a "yes" or "no"
- Prompting students to include new vocabulary in their discussion responses
- Restating student responses to include the identified Tier 2 or Tier 3 vocabulary

## How to Teach Vocabulary Knowledge?

Elements of effective vocabulary instruction:

- Intentional read alouds
- Explicit instruction
- Word learning strategies
- Engage in wide reading
- Pre-teaching and reteaching words
- Attention to morphemes; create vertical alignment with morphology teaching in grades 3-5
- Interweaving review and application of previously taught words
- Using vocabulary in reading and writing, and discussion

Differentiated Universal Vocabulary Instruction	Vocabulary Instruction in Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whole group and small group</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Word learning strategies through teaching orthography, word origin and morphology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pre-teach before read alouds and independent reading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teach words that are essential to understanding the text</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teach words that will be encountered again and again</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teach difficult words such as those with multiple meanings and idioms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teach both academic (Tier 2) and content area (Tier 3) vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small group</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More explicit instruction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional opportunities for guided practice and application of previously taught vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit instruction of additional vocabulary words or affixes to build overall vocabulary knowledge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of dual coding – both images and gestures – to reinforce the meaning of new vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction of common vocabulary (Tier 1 words) for English Learners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Semantic maps</li> </ul>

## READING COMPREHENSION

### Why is Reading Comprehension Important?

Reading comprehension is an outcome. “Reading comprehension is not a single entity that can be explained by a unified cognitive model. Instead, it is the orchestrated product of a set of linguistic and cognitive processes operating on text and interacting with background knowledge, features of a text, and the purpose and goals of the reading situation” (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018, p. 28).

Comprehension consists of a series of processes the reader engages in to pull and build meaning from the text. Students may construct products to show their comprehension, but these products are the result of using simultaneous language and cognitive processes (Hennessy, 2021).

### Reading Comprehension in Action

In his fourth-grade class, Mr. Gupta provides his students with extensive support in understanding what they read by helping them construct a mental model of the text using appropriate strategies. He continually monitors where a breakdown in comprehension may occur: word level, sentence level, understanding how a series of words are linked or understanding the logical flow of the passage (Literacy Standard: RI., 4.2 & 4.3).

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

- Sort main ideas and supporting details in two columns
- Students engaged in structured academic conversation where they retell what they have read
- Discussion of mental images gleaned from the passage

### 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 that has words deleted, then select the word that fits best.
- Students in second through fifth grade who are accurate and fluent but cannot read grade-level text for meaning are at risk of not meeting future reading comprehension goals. They should receive instructional support.
- Administrators should use the percentage of second through fifth grade students who can read grade level text fluently as a key indicator of the effectiveness of early reading instruction and as a predictor of future reading comprehension.

## How to Instruct to Support Reading Comprehension?

Elements of effective instruction to support reading comprehension:

- Use of explicit modeling, supported practice and independent practice of comprehension strategies
- Intentional sequence of content within and across grades

Differentiated Universal Reading Comprehension Instruction	Reading Comprehension Instruction in Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begins as listening comprehension</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows a purposeful sequence of content knowledge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit modeling of strategies that includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Purpose of strategy</li> <li>○ How, when and where to use it</li> <li>○ Which strategies work best in which instances</li> <li>○ How to apply to different types of text</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Intentional questioning before, during and after reading aloud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small group discussion of texts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction in syntax, grammar and word analysis</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension at the sentence, paragraph and text levels</li> </ul>

## WRITING

### Writing in Action

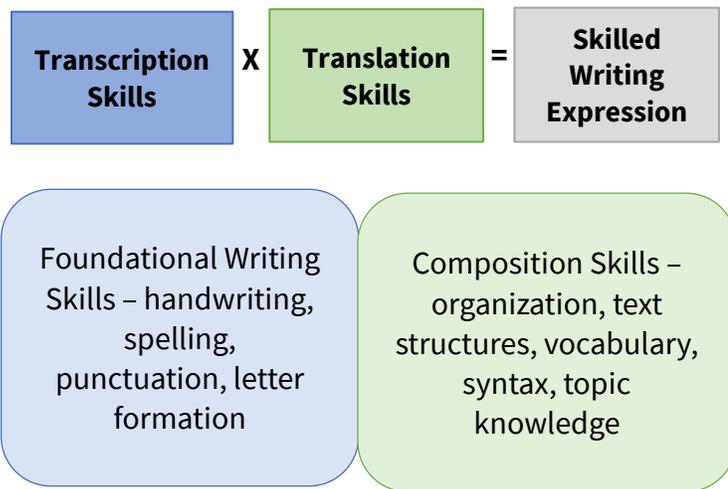
Principal Carla Leone and her collaborative team of teachers have crafted writing diagnostics to use as a formative practice to evaluate the needs of students and to help make decisions in writing instruction. The assessment, given twice a year, focuses on informative writing about a nonfiction and sentence structure in grades 2-5.

Examples of what an administrator might observe in grade-level team meetings when teachers are reviewing writing diagnostics:

- Analysis of students' mastery of sentence structures and handwriting skills
- Discussion of the sequence of skills in Tier 1 instruction and planning to support students in mastering grade level standards as well as in gap remediation
- Discussion of helping students who need more support in working memory
- Discussion of students who need support with cognitive flexibility in planning their writing and in shifting tasks while writing

**Why is Writing Important?** Writing improves all areas of reading, including reading comprehension (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Writing makes thinking visible and helps cultivate a command of language.

**Figure 4.** Simple View of Writing (St. Martin, et. al., 2020)



### How to Know if

#### Students Are Proficient in Writing?

- Writing includes grade appropriate spelling of words, spacing, handwriting and use of punctuation.
- Writing includes word choice appropriate to topic and audience.
- Writing is cohesive and well-organized, with a flow of ideas within and between paragraphs.
- Writers orchestrate the phases of writing: planning, translating (drafting) and revising as soon as they begin writing.
- Students fluently write for different purposes, use appropriate organization and can discern in the areas of word choice, syntax, vocabulary and text structures.

## How to Support Writing Development?

Elements of effective writing instruction:

- Students write about the texts that they read (for example, written responses, summaries of the text, notes about texts, answering questions about texts in writing).
- Instruction in writing skills and processes that go into creating texts such as the process of writing, text structures, paragraph and sentence construction skills and spelling
- Systematically teach letter formation and handwriting to fluency
- Use of explicit modeling; supported practice and independent practice of sentence components; text types and writing strategies; increasing how much students write
- Use of intentional sequence of skills within and across grades

Differentiated Universal Writing Instruction	Writing Instruction in Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follows a purposeful sequence of foundational skills and composition skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Building command of sentences following a progression</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Daily writing in response to texts, across content areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit instruction in handwriting and letter formation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use graphic organizers to help organize ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small group practice with progress monitoring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction in syntax with modeling and immediate feedback</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice manuscript and cursive writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit, systematic instruction in spelling, following a scope and sequence</li> </ul>

## Component D: Quality Instruction

The type of reading instruction that works for the largest proportion of students has been described as explicit and systematic and is referred to as structured literacy instruction.

### EXPLICIT AND SYSTEMATIC READING INSTRUCTION

Because reading is not a natural skill, becoming a reader should not be left to chance. 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 is direct and unambiguous. It can be thought of as “errorless learning” because students are supported with direct models and scaffolds to correctly perform the skills that lead to reading comprehension.

Classroom reading instruction that utilizes the principles of explicit teaching supports more students in achieving grade-level reading goals. Although some students learn to read without explicit instruction, it is difficult to know who those students may be until it is too late. Even these students see advantages from a structured literacy approach.

When schools apply the principles of explicit instruction in the regular classroom, they reduce the percentage of students who need intervention and increase the percentage of students who read at grade level. **Explicit instruction is one element of an effective schoolwide literacy model that can prevent reading failure for most students.**

Teaching explicitly is essential when:

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

Characteristics of effective reading instruction include:

- An emphasis on essential early literacy skills, which changes across grades
- Active engagement and participation
- A detailed scope and sequence that integrates aspects of language across skill areas
- Evidence of a basis in language structures (phonology, orthography, morphology, semantics, syntax, discourse, pragmatics)
- Elements of explicit instruction include:
  - breaking tasks into small steps
  - providing explicit models
  - using clear examples and non-examples
  - providing immediate corrective feedback
  - practicing to automaticity
- Structured lesson plans that move from phonemic awareness to phoneme-grapheme mapping to spelling, and transfer to text

**Table 2.** Explicit Literacy Practices versus Non-Explicit Literacy Practices

Skill Area	Explicit Literacy Practices	Non-Explicit Literacy Practices
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Emphasis on the sounds in spoken language distinct from and prior to phonics instruction; phoneme awareness used as the starting point for print	Letters used as the starting point for print; reading treated as a visual skill; confusion of phonemic awareness and phonics
<b>Phonics &amp; Spelling</b>	Intentional instruction in letter-sound combinations; sequenced from easier to harder for reading and spelling; application of word reading in print	Emphasis on whole to part (analytic) incidentally as students make mistakes in text or by analogy (word families); mini lessons responding to student errors
<b>Vocabulary &amp; Oral Language</b>	Oral language as the reference point for print; books used for reading aloud are more challenging than those students read independently; scripted teacher dialogue	Nondirective questioning and discussion
<b>Reading Fluency</b>	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	Emphasis on the 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; miscue analysis
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	Background knowledge, text structure and strategies overtly modeled and practiced in a planned progression	Activities such as choral reading

## Component E: Text Selection

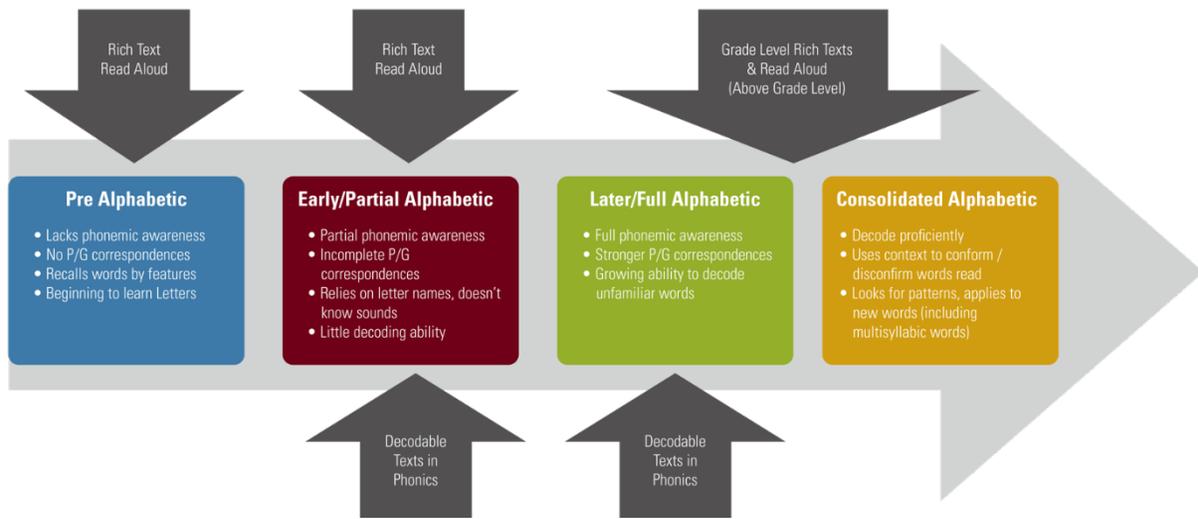
When selecting texts, educators should review for:

- Purpose (for example: decoding, building vocabulary and knowledge in specific content, motivation)
- Cultural responsiveness
- Bias and historical accuracy

Text Type	When to Use	With Whom
<b>Decodable Text</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial to full phonemic awareness</li> <li>• Incomplete to strong knowledge and use of phoneme-grapheme correspondences</li> <li>• Growing ability to decode unfamiliar words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten to third grade as a component of core phonics instruction</li> <li>• Grades 3-5 as a component of phonics interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Grade-Level Text Sets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports building of background knowledge, vocabulary and sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten to the beginning of first grade, as read aloud</li> <li>• Grades 1 and above with scaffolding and support</li> </ul>
<b>Read Aloud Texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports building of background knowledge, vocabulary and sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All grade levels</li> </ul>

Dr. Linnea Ehri developed a theory based on decades of research about how word reading skills develop. Knowledge of these phases can help educators plan for appropriate instruction to help students move through each phase. The development of these skills leads to proficiency in reading a wide variety of texts.

**Figure 5.** Types of texts needed for instruction of students in Ehri’s alphabetic phases (Ehri, 1987)



## Component F: Supports for Literacy at Home

Systematic family engagement includes partnering with families and caregivers on supporting literacy at home. When designing this type of engagement, schools should consider how home supports are connected to supports provided at school. This does not mean that families and caregivers are tasked with providing school-like instruction at home, but instead that educators mirror research-based home practices within the school environment and support families to implement these practices at home. Examples of research-based school, community and home practices that support early literacy are provided in the table below. An [infographic](#) providing this information is available through the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center.

**Table 3.** Supporting Early Literacy at Home (Boone, et al., 2017; Caspe & Lopez, 2017A)

Research-Based Ways that Families Promote Early Literacy	School and Community Practices to Support the Implementation
Communicate high expectations for learning	Communicate positive expectations for families and students
Make reading enjoyable	Encourage families to have fun with language and literacy
Communicate with the child’s teacher	Help families understand the child’s progress
Read stories and talk about them together Talk about letters and their sounds Draw pictures and write words and letters	Equip families to share reading, language and literacy at home Create roles for families that support literacy in the school
Visit the library and have books at home	Provide families with books and other resources

### 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 district or building <b>Red</b> – Exploration <b>Orange</b> – Installation <b>Yellow</b> – Initial Implementation <b>Green</b> – Full implementation	Using the scale below, determine the importance of this component <b>Red</b> – Not at All <b>Orange</b> – Somewhat <b>Yellow</b> – Very <b>Green</b> – Extremely
The Simple View of Reading		
Ohio’s Learning Standards		
Vocabulary		
Phonemic Awareness		
Phonics		
Reading Fluency		
Reading Comprehension		
Writing		
Explicit and Systematic Reading Instruction		
Text Selection		
Supports for Literacy at Home		

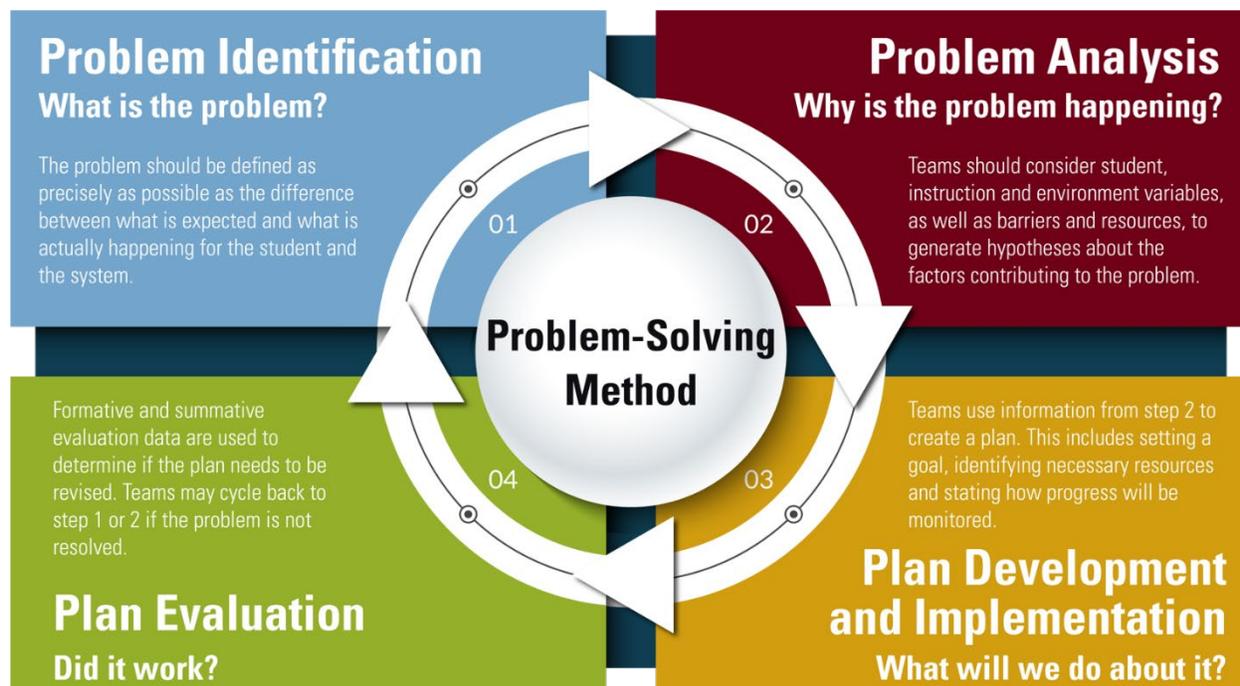
## Section 3: Collaborative Problem-Solving

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 that, once learned, can free up time to think creatively about solutions. When team members don't have to spend time thinking about what to do next in meetings, they have more time to focus on resolving the problem. Several examples exist in the educational literature – most follow a plan, do, study, act cycle.

**Figure 6.** Common steps and questions asked at each step in the iterative cycle of collaborative problem-solving

### Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. How does the building or district identify adult factors that are helping or not helping students to become readers?
2. What data is used to plan for differentiated instruction and intervention?
3. How can using data to problem-solve be modeled?



## Component A: Schoolwide Assessment System

District leadership teams will create a schoolwide assessment system that includes tools for decision-making at the systems and student levels. Multiple sources of data are needed in a schoolwide literacy improvement model, including student data, implementation data and input from stakeholders. Assessments are used to make decisions at two levels:

System	Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information about literacy operations and processes that can either support or hinder effective instruction (such as schedule, grouping practices, district policies)</li><li>Information about adult implementation (such as walk-throughs)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information about individuals and groups of students</li></ul>

### SYSTEM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

The [Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory](#) (R-TFI) is a tool used by building leadership teams to assess the fidelity of implementation of their schoolwide literacy improvement efforts. It helps teams identify practices that are already in place, practices that need to be improved and practices that need to be implemented in the future. Although student data are used in completing the R-TFI, items are focused on the elements of effective systems that support better literacy outcomes.

The R-TFI is administered by a trained facilitator who leads the building leadership team through a simultaneous voting protocol to determine a score on each item. Items are organized around the three tiers of instruction. Data from the R-TFI, combined with adult implementation data and student outcome data, are used within the collaborative problem-solving process to develop building and district improvement plans aimed at increasing student literacy outcomes.

### ADULT IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

The behaviors of adults in the school may be the single most important factor influencing changes in student literacy outcomes. Administrators are charged with being the instructional leaders in their schools and districts. Therefore, they must be knowledgeable about 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 research-aligned 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 increased implementation of the adult behaviors that are more likely to improve literacy outcomes.

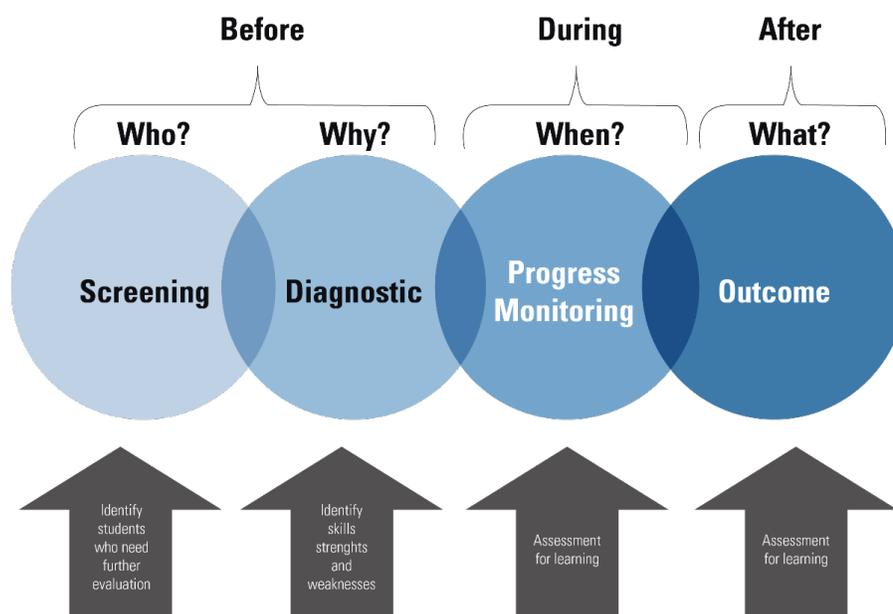
## STUDENT-LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

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 F](#)).

**Figure 7.** Details of a comprehensive assessment system to implement literacy improvement efforts



### 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 the five essential early literacy skills. The goal is to identify the level of skill in these key areas that predicts future reading comprehension. Running records and other assessments designed to match students to text levels do not meet the characteristics of standardized and technically adequate 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 who have the response capabilities required by the assessment should be screened with materials that match the grade to which they are assigned. 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 service 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.

### Scheduling Universal Screening

Time of Year	Suggested Timing
<b>Beginning of Year</b>	About two weeks after the start of school
<b>Middle of Year</b>	One to two weeks after winter break
<b>End of Year</b>	At least two weeks before the end of the school year

### DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Diagnostics assessment 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 are typically 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 a trained individual. Examples of intervention-based diagnostics include phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling and

#### Additional Universal Screening Scheduling Considerations:

- Plan roughly the same number of instructional days between beginning and middle of the year screening as between middle and end of year screening
- Balance considerations of screening as soon as possible so data can be used, against letting students settle in after breaks
- Collect all screening data across the district within a two-week window
- Allow an additional week to enter scores and generate reports for use in decision-making

vocabulary surveys. The goal of diagnostic assessment is to find the next skill in the instructional sequence that the student needs to be taught.

Diagnostic assessments are given to students whose screening data indicate a need for additional support. The assessments may be given by related service personnel, reading support staff, general education teachers and special education teachers. Diagnostic assessments are used by teacher-based teams to refine Tier 2 instruction and to plan individual instruction and 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 involves repeat measurement with alternate forms of the same task to measure growth over time. These measures are brief, conducted frequently throughout the year, easy to administer, sensitive to growth and easy to understand. Progress monitoring for systems can involve measuring growth on implementation and adult behaviors. 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 if progress is not sufficient, rather than waiting until the end of the year.

#### **Progress Monitoring vs. 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 literacy performance. Progress monitoring assessments may be given by related service 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 answer the question: **Did we meet our goals for students and systems?**

Outcome evaluation assessments are summative measures of attaining grade-level expectations. These measures may be norm-referenced, criterion-referenced or both. The

goal is to know if grade-level expectations have been met. This involves 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.

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, the state accountability measures of English Language Arts in grades 3-8 and reading achievement tests in kindergarten through grade 2 function as outcome measures.

## **IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Leading the implementation of a schoolwide assessment system is the responsibility of the building principal. However, district teams provide the guidance, funding and time to make this possible.

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.

The following strategies can be used for ensuring quality data collection:

- ❑ Provide high-quality professional development on the administration and scoring of reading assessments
- ❑ Provide brief “refresher” trainings for teachers and staff who conduct reading assessments
- ❑ Have someone “shadow score” alongside individuals collecting assessment data. This individual can provide feedback to the tester if standardized administration and scoring procedures are not efficient or effective.
- ❑ After testing is completed, choose a random sample of tests (approximately 20%) and check scoring according to the guidelines. If scoring errors are identified on more than 10% of the assessments, re-check all the assessments.

## Component B: Communicating with Families and Caregivers

Systematic family engagement includes ongoing two-way communication between educators and families regarding a student’s academic progress. Assessment data includes the strengths of the student and is shared openly and in a manner that is understandable to the caregiver. Additionally, the caregiver is provided the opportunity to share feedback with the school and make decisions about their child’s instructional plan. Schools can use the following checklist to ensure families and caregivers are participating in ongoing communications regarding a child’s reading progress:

- Families are informed about their child’s language/literacy progress in a timely manner.
- School personnel communicate and model high, positive expectations for students’ academics and behavior to families.
- Information about language and literacy sent to families from the school is understandable (for example: 5 components of reading, standards, grade-level expectations).
- Communication about literacy is two-way. The school listens and learns from families and provides information to families.
- When a child needs extra help with language and literacy development, families are provided with school-based intervention plans for their child and receive more frequent communication about the child’s progress (biweekly, monthly). Families can share feedback with the school and make decisions about their child’s plan (schools often call this “Tier II supports”).

### Want to Learn More?

[Implementing Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement: Resources for School Leaders](#) provides more supports on **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 <b>Red</b> – Exploration <b>Orange</b> – Installation <b>Yellow</b> – Initial Implementation <b>Green</b> – Full implementation	Using the scale below, determine the importance of this component <b>Red</b> – Not at All <b>Orange</b> – Somewhat <b>Yellow</b> – Very <b>Green</b> – Extremely
<b>Schoolwide Assessment System</b>		
<b>Adult Implementation Assessment</b>		
<b>Student-Level Assessments</b>		
<b>Communicating with Families and Caregivers</b>		

# Section 4: Tiered System of Instructional Support

## Pre-Reading Reflection Questions:

1. Are **all** students in the building or district currently receiving grade-level standards-based core instruction in reading? How is this evident?
2. Is intervention in the building or district provided in addition to or in place of core instruction?
3. What types of instructional materials are being used in core instruction and intervention?

## Component A: Three-Tiered Model

Decades of reading research have suggested two important conclusions. First, students who are at risk of reading failure can be identified before they have a reading problem and taught the skills needed to be adequate readers at the end of first grade. Second, students who are struggling readers can be provided with effective instruction that minimizes their risk and catches them up to grade level expectations. The most efficient approach to providing the instruction that makes these two conclusions a reality is a system of three-tiers of instruction in which all students can access the type and amount of instructional support they need to be skilled readers, without having to fail first. 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.

The three-tiered model of prevention 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 literacy expectations. Ideally, the tiered model for prevention of reading failure is integrated with the tiered model for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), creating a more comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

**Figure 8.** Three tiers of instruction and intervention



**Table 4.** Characteristics of the Three-Tiered Model of Prevention of Reading Failure

	Tier 1 Instruction	Tier 1 Instruction Plus Tier 2 Intervention	Tier 1 Instruction Plus Tier 3 Intervention
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary prevention of reading failure</li> <li>• Core structured literacy curriculum and instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary prevention of reading failure</li> <li>• Structured literacy intervention targeting students' specific reading concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tertiary prevention of reading failure</li> <li>• Individualized plan to intensify and coordinate structured literacy intervention</li> </ul>
Effectiveness Criteria	At least 80% of students reach grade-level expectations	Additional 15-20% of students reach grade-level expectations	Remaining 0-5% of students reach grade-level expectations
Where	Regular classroom	Regular classroom or other location determined by the school	Location determined by the school
Who Delivers	Classroom teacher with support for differentiation and planning for universal design for learning	Classroom teacher with support of others determined by the school	Classroom teacher with support of others determined by the school
Who Receives	<b>All students</b>	Some students who are at risk or haven't responded to <b>effective</b> Tier 1 instruction	A few students with significant reading difficulties or those who haven't responded to <b>effective</b> Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction
Group Size	Whole class, with small group of 5-7 students	Small groups (3-5 students recommended)	Small groups of students who need to work on the same skill (1-3 students recommended)
Time	Minimum of 90 minutes every day	30-45 minutes three to five times per week in addition to Tier 1 instruction	45-60 minutes every day in addition to Tier 1 instruction

	Tier 1	Tier 1 Instruction Plus Tier 2 Intervention	Tier 1 Instruction Plus Tier 3 Intervention
Assessment	Universal screening three times per year	Progress monitoring at least every other week but determined by grade level team	Progress monitoring weekly
Regular and Ongoing Engagement with Parents and Caregivers	Information, materials and events about literacy teaching and learning, curriculum, goals and ways to support literacy development at home	Information, materials and events matched to the literacy needs of specific students, ways to support literacy needs at home and receive feedback from families and caregivers	Information, materials and training matched to the literacy needs and goals of individual students, ways to intensify support at home and receive feedback from families and caregivers

## TIER 1: CORE INSTRUCTION

Tier 1, or core instruction, is the primary prevention of reading failure or universal literacy instruction. Tier 1 instruction is planned by the grade-level team. Parents are informed of the goals and methods of instruction and engaged as partners in providing practice to achieve skill mastery. The goal of an effective multi-tiered system of support is to have 100 percent of students achieve grade-level expectations. Within this system of supports, effective Tier 1 instruction meets the needs of at least 80 percent of students in achieving grade-level expectations.

All students receive the Tier 1 curriculum and instruction, ideally in the general education classroom. Tier 1 is characterized by standards-based instruction that matches the needs of students in the class and grade. Universal screening data are used to articulate the needs of students in the grade and design Tier 1 instruction that is differentiated to meet those needs. The early literacy skills component of the reading curriculum for Tier 1 must focus on essential early literacy skills in a sequence from easier to harder, integrating language structures that support skilled reading and cause students to meet grade-level standards. Explicit instructional routines provide a logical sequence that facilitates knowing what comes next, thus allowing students and teachers to focus on content.

Tier 1 is typically delivered in a protected block of time that ranges from 90-120 minutes ([Appendix G](#)). This class time can include whole group, small group, and even individualized instruction. Instructional delivery may vary based on need for differentiated instruction and instructional scaffolds. The amount of instruction in Tier 1 matters, so whole group instruction may be beneficial for all students. Teachers can ensure all students can access the content using the principles of Universal Design for Learning. For the sake of efficacy, whole group instruction can be very valuable, time saving and impact student achievement in reading. Whole group instruction can be very beneficial for classroom discussion, phonemic

awareness instruction and phonics instruction. Teachers should not feel obligated to teach in small groups for the sake of small groups when whole group instruction is more efficient.

Small groups should be utilized to scaffold complex texts for those that need more support or allow for additional practice of skills based on data. Screening and formative assessment data is used to plan small group support. While small skill-based groups can be an effective mode of delivering instruction, grouping size should be carefully considered. It may not be necessary to form a small group when the instruction could be provided as a whole group. Likewise, a small group may meet the skill needs of students rather than individualized instruction.

## **TIER 2: STRATEGIC AND TARGETED INSTRUCTION**

Tier 2 is strategic and targeted literacy instruction and is provided in addition to Tier 1 instruction. The term “Tier 2” is not used to refer to a group of students or an individual student. Some students who are at risk on the universal screening assessment receive Tier 2 support in addition to Tier 1 instruction. The goal of Tier 2 instruction is to cause the students who are at risk to catch up to grade-level expectations and standards. Tier 2 instruction is

planned by teacher-based team. Parents are informed of the goals and methods of instruction and engaged as partners in providing sufficient practice to achieve skill mastery. Parents receive progress reports.

Tier 2 instruction can be provided by the classroom teacher and/or other instructors, inside or outside the general education classroom. Tier 2 is small group instruction that is specifically tailored to the needs of students in the group. Tier 2 instruction is typically delivered in a 30-45-minute block, three to five days a week. Diagnostic assessment data on some students may be used to plan small group support. This small group instruction is provided in addition to and aligned with the small group portion of Tier 1 instruction. A purpose of Tier 2 is to provide more instructional time and practice opportunities to students who are at risk so they will catch up to grade-level expectations at an accelerated rate.

Universal screening data are used to articulate the needs of students in the grade and design Tier 2 instruction that is differentiated to meet those needs. Tier 2 instruction must focus on the specific skills the students in the small group need to grow in to allow students to catch up to grade-level standards. Tier 2 instruction is more explicit. It includes more opportunities to respond and practice, is delivered at a brisk pace, includes immediate affirmative and corrective feedback and uses cumulative review over time.

One goal of the three-tiered model of prevention is to get students to grade-level expectations through the least intensive instructional support possible.

## TIER 3: INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION

Tier 3 is intensive and individualized literacy instruction. A purpose of Tier 3 instruction is to address severe and persistent learning difficulties. In an effective schoolwide reading system, only a few students receive Tier 3 support. This support is in addition to Tier 1 instruction and may be in addition to 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 individually. Universal screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments are used to articulate the needs of each student.

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

The reading curriculum for Tier 3 instruction 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. Tier 3 is typically delivered in small groups or individually, in blocks of 45-60 minutes daily. Diagnostic assessment data and progress monitoring data are used to plan small group

support. The goal of Tier 3 instruction is to catch students up to grade-level expectations.

Tier 3 instruction is planned by a **student-level problem-solving team** that is specific to each student. Parents are members of the student team. The determination of need for Tier 3 interventions is often made after Tier 2 interventions have not provided sufficient growth or progress on screening, and after diagnostic data indicates the student requires significant additional support beyond the Tier 2 intervention(s).

## Component B: Data-Driven Access to Tiers of Support

### INTENSIFYING SUPPORT

The general classroom instruction at Tier 1 should be so well matched to the needs of students that it causes the vast majority (at least 80%) of students to reach grade-level goals. However, some students will need additional support at Tier 2 to reach those goals. And a small number of students will need the most intensive support at Tier 3 to reach them.

Decisions about intensifying instruction can be made by teacher-based teams. These teams need clear guidelines about how to intensify support. In the absence of such guidelines, when faced with students who are not progressing,

Instruction is thought to be more resource intensive when it includes:

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

school teams may revert to the old refer-test-place model of service delivery, thus defaulting to high-inference assessment practices and to treating special education as a generic cure-all. Not all students who need intensive support in reading are students with disabilities and not all students with disabilities need intensive support in reading.

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.

**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 5: 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. Others have an ongoing need for intensive support. Student teams can use progress monitoring data to test the possibility of fading support. Decisions about intensifying and fading support can be guided by district-wide decision rules that are grounded in data.

## DECISION RULES

Building, teacher-based 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 H](#)). It is important for all schools in a district to have the same decision rules, as teachers and students may travel across buildings. The specific decisions and consistent parameters for making them may evolve over time. Listed below are a few of the key decisions that arise when districts work to improve reading outcomes, along with a few sample “rules.”

**Table 6.** Sample decision rules

Tier of Instruction	Sample Decision Rules
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Effectiveness of instruction, judged by percentage at benchmark at each grade level</li><li>Fidelity of assessment, judged by percentage of assessors trained to criterion</li></ul>
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.)</li><li>Was instruction implemented with integrity?</li></ul>
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Was instruction changed after progress monitoring indicated need?</li><li>When to move to Tier 2, back to Tier 1, to Tier 3, back to Tier 2, refer for special education evaluation?</li><li>When to fade support?</li><li>When to exit special education?</li></ul>

## Component C: The Comprehensive Universal Reading Program

Access to high-quality instructional materials is critical 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.

Effective universal reading programs apply the principles of explicit instruction across the five essential early literacy skills. The universal reading program is used by knowledgeable teachers as the primary framework and tool for delivering instruction that prevents reading failure by getting students to grade-level expectations. Analysis of the universal reading program is one of the first and most important tasks district and building leaders engage in at the start of literacy improvement efforts. The selection and adoption of research-based core, supplemental and intervention programs is a crucial step in implementing a schoolwide literacy improvement model.

### CORE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The three-tiered model is grounded in research stating that most students can be brought to grade-level expectations through instruction provided to all students in the regular education classroom (Tier 1). When fewer than 80% of students are reaching grade-level expectations, teams should undertake careful analysis of the alignment between instructional focus, routines and materials used in core reading instruction at each grade and those that are recommended in the reading research. Core programs should be selected based on universal screening data, so the program meets student needs in specific skill areas in each grade.

A core reading program should show evidence of:

- Explicit instruction in foundational reading skills for word recognition, including phonemic awareness and phonics
- Systematic scope and sequence of instruction for teaching decoding, using blending drills, dictation and decodable texts
- Rich texts organized in units or themes
- The use of text sets in units or themes, based on grade-level content area standards
- Grade-level texts with scaffolding supports to ensure all students can access grade-level content
- Explicit vocabulary instruction of both Tier 2 (academic) and Tier 3 (domain specific) vocabulary
- Opportunities to write about and talk about the content to build comprehension
- Handwriting instruction

Core instructional programs should be comprehensive in scope and aligned to state standards. The skills taught within and across grades should be articulated in a clear scope and sequence. Core programs reflect the reading research in terms of the amount of time allocated, routines used, grouping formats and materials provided for instruction in essential early literacy skills in each grade. Research-based core reading programs must integrate the many aspects of language that underlie the process of learning to read (such as phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax).

## **SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

Supplemental instructional programs are designed to support and extend the key components of a core reading program. They are typically used to provide additional instruction in one or two essential early literacy skills. Supplemental programs should be selected based universal screening data, so the programs meet student needs in specific skill areas at each grade level. Supplemental instruction is delivered in addition to, not instead of, core reading instruction. Therefore, supplemental programs must closely align to core programs.

Key questions to ask to monitor the effectiveness of supplemental instruction:

- What is the rate of learning in a student’s performance in a targeted skill area?
- Is the growth sufficient after six weeks of supplemental instruction? What are the next steps?

## **INTENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

Intensive instructional programs are designed for students who are having significant reading difficulty and are performing below grade-level expectations. The purpose of intensive instructional programs is to provide the explicit and systematic instruction necessary to accelerate learning for students so they get caught up to grade-level expectations as soon as possible. These programs typically focus on one or two essential early literacy skills and are delivered in small groups.

Although published reading materials are not required for implementing a schoolwide literacy model, evidence-based programs have the advantage of offering appropriate emphasis on essential skills, organizing instruction in a purposeful

sequence, and including all necessary materials. Even if the district is not in an adoption year, low student achievement requires review of the programs, materials and instructional approaches used to teach reading.

Programs that are highly rated are not guaranteed to work with all students. When otherwise effective programs are not improving student outcomes, the district leadership team should consider the extent to which:

- The program is designed to improve the skills the students are missing
- Training was provided to instructors
- Instructors are implementing the program as designed

## Component D: Integration of Tiered Support Systems

Schools use tiered systems to organize a variety of supports, including academics, social and emotional behavior and family engagement.

The tiered support systems a school is implementing might be parallel, aligned or integrated as described in Table 6. Developing an **integrated multi-tiered system of support** requires intentionally designing each component of the system for integration. This includes integrating teaming structures, evidence-based practices and interventions, data systems and the allocation of resources. Ideally, a school will implement an integrated framework for its multi-tiered system of support, but an aligned framework is considered an acceptable variation. In an aligned framework, the school is implementing multiple systems of support, but the systems are leveraged to support each other and they do not compete for resources.

Family engagement is a component of any tiered system of support. Families are important members of the “system” that provides flexible, appropriate supports for student learning and behavior. As data indicates a need for a change in practice, intensity or dose of supports for a student, family engagement should be adapted to match and align with the supports. For example, if data indicates that a student requires additional and different supports to overcome challenges in reading fluency, the student’s family should be provided with information about this change, an explanation of what this means for their child’s progress and means for supporting their child’s learning at home.

**Table 6.** Relationships between tiered systems of support

Parallel	Aligned	Integrated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tiered support systems are separate, siloed from each other</li><li>• Implementation causes competition for staff attention and resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tiered support systems are separate systems that are <b>supportive</b> of each other</li><li>• Features of the practices are leveraged to support each other</li><li>• Barriers for implementation resources are minimized across practices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tiered support systems are one system <b>woven</b> together</li><li>• Seamless connections</li><li>• Resources are leveraged to build upon each other</li><li>• <b>One multi-tiered system of support</b></li></ul>

### Want to Learn More?

[Implementing Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement: Resources for School Leaders](#) provides more supports on **tiered systems of instructional support**.

# Post-Reading Self-Reflection

Component	Use the “traffic light scale” to evaluate the current level of implementation in the district or building <b>Red</b> – Exploration <b>Orange</b> – Installation <b>Yellow</b> – Initial Implementation <b>Green</b> – Full implementation	Using the scale below, determine the importance of this component <b>Red</b> – Not at All <b>Orange</b> – Somewhat <b>Yellow</b> – Very <b>Green</b> – Extremely
Core Instruction		
Strategic and Targeted Intervention		
Intensive Intervention		
Intensifying Support		
Fading Support		
Decision Rules		
Core Instructional Programs		
Supplemental Instructional Programs		
Intensive Instructional Programs		
Integrating Tiered Support Systems		

## Conclusion

Improving reading outcomes requires collaboration between schools and communities. District and building administrators are key leaders of problem-solving, planning and ongoing implementation needed to improve reading outcomes for all students in their schools. When administrators are knowledgeable about the science of reading and have the skills to lead their staff through the collaborative problem-solving process, they are able to use a system of assessments and tiered instruction to create equitable learning environments that support all students in becoming effective readers.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Educator Actions That Communicate High Expectations

1. Greet students by name as they enter the classroom.
2. Be conscious of body language and use of eye contact.
3. Develop a plan to engage in consistent classroom management
4. Clearly articulate high expectations.
5. Engage in explicit instructional strategies that support student learning to provide a scaffold for all students to meet grade-level expectations.
6. Provide formal and informal feedback for student work.
7. Communicate the importance of all students' questions and opinions.
8. Vary the arrangement of the physical environment based on the lesson purpose.
9. Design collaborative learning tasks that foster creativity and critical thinking.
10. Call on students directly.
11. Use random response and grouping strategies.
12. Seek multiple perspectives and encourage self-reflection.
13. Incorporate and connect students' real-life experiences in classroom learning.
14. Provide assistance and opportunities to respond 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 Collaborative, Competitive and Successful 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
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
<b>District Leadership Team (DLT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District and building administrators</li> <li>Teacher and staff representatives from each building</li> <li>Parent and community representatives</li> </ul>	Quarterly (more often at first)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set a vision, priorities and expectations</li> <li>Create a metric to evaluate the effectiveness of the DLT</li> <li>Review district data to develop, implement and evaluate the action plan</li> <li>Review and establish district policies so they are supportive of, not barriers to, implementation of the model</li> <li>Provide support for implementation (funding, PD, coaching)</li> <li>Guide building leadership teams</li> </ul>
<b>Building Leadership Team (BLT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>Teacher representative from each grade, related service staff, union representative</li> <li>Representative from non-certificated staff</li> <li>Parent, community representative</li> <li>Coach (district, regional)</li> <li>District office rep</li> </ul>	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review building data to develop, implement and evaluate action plan</li> <li>Develop knowledge and skills of building staff to implement</li> <li>Plan and conduct professional learning and coaching</li> <li>Set a vision, priorities and expectations</li> <li>Review district data to develop, implement and evaluate action plan</li> <li>Review and establish district policies so they are supportive of, not barriers to, implementation of the model</li> <li>Provide support for implementation (funding, PD, coaching)</li> <li>Guide building leadership teams</li> </ul>

Type	Who	Meeting Frequency	Tasks
<b>Grade-Level Teacher Based Team (TBT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All teachers in the grade</li> <li>Related service staff</li> <li>Coach</li> </ul>	Every other week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review grade-level data to develop, implement and evaluate building action plan</li> <li>Guide student teams</li> </ul>
<b>Student-Level Team (TBT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers</li> <li>Parents</li> <li>Student when appropriate</li> </ul>	Yearly or more frequently at first	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review student data to develop, implement and evaluate student intervention plan</li> </ul>

## Appendix D: Sample Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Continuum

Phase	Skill	Timeline	Example
<b>Readiness</b>	Sound Discrimination	PreK	Songs with lines that rhyme Repeating nurse-y rhymes
	Concept of Word		
	Definitions of Terms		
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Blending Compound Words	PreK to beginning K	Sand - box sandbox
	Segmenting Compound Words		I'm going to say a word and I'd like you to tell me the word parts: Snowman
	Blending Syllables		I'm going to say two-word parts and I would like you to put them together to make a word: Sis -- ter
	Segmenting Syllables		I'm going to say a word and I'd like you to tell me each part of the word: Kitchen    kitch - en
<b>Phonemic Awareness</b>	Isolating Initial Phoneme	End of PreK - K	What is the first sound in cat, car, can?  Look at this picture of a pig. Can you tell me the first sound in the word pig?
	Blending Phonemes		In my grab bag of surprises I have a /w/ /i/ /g/ What do I have in my bag?
	Segmenting Phonemes		Listen to this word - map - Let's tap all the sounds in the word "map." (/m/ /a/ /p/)
<b>Phonemic Proficiency</b>	Adding Phonemes	K-2 (add beginning, ending, then medial sounds)	Say "at" - add /b/ to the beginning (bat) Say "we" - add /d/ to the end (weed) Say "said." Now add /l/ after the /s/ What is the new word? sled
	Deleting Phonemes	K-2/3 (delete beginning, ending, then medial)	Say "band," now say band without /b/ - and Say "feel," now say feel without /l/ - fee Say "please," now say it without /l/ - peas
	Substituting Phonemes	1-2/3 (substitute beginning, ending, then medial)	Say "lip," now change the /l/ to /s/ - sip Say "dip," now change the /p/ to /g/ - dig Say "bag," now change the /a/ to /i/ - big

## Appendix E: Sample Phonics Skills Continuum

It is important to note there is not one perfect scope and sequence (Blevins, 2017 and Shanahan, 2014), but some scope and sequences are better than others. What matters is that districts use a curriculum with a developmental scope and sequence that builds on the complexity of skills, beginning with not only easier skills, but also high-utility skills (frequency of occurrence or use), and then increases complexity. The sequence should also separate skills that can be confusing for students, and space skills to allow for judicious practice and review. Too often, phonics instruction ends in second or third grade. Instead, phonics instruction should move to advanced word study in third grade and beyond, with a focus on syllable division rules, morphology and etymology.

### KINDERGARTEN SKILLS

- Letter-Sound Correspondence
- VC and CVC Words Beginning with Continuous Sounds
- CVC Words Beginning with Stop Sounds

### FIRST GRADE SKILLS

- VCC and CVCC Words
- Double Final Consonants
- CCVC Words
- Consonant Digraphs
- Words with "y" as a Vowel and Open-Syllable One-Syllable Words
- Suffix "s"
- CCVCC, CCVC, and CCCVCC Words Contractions
- One-Syllable Words with R-Controlled Vowels
- VCe and CVCe Words
- Words Beginning with "qu"
- One-Syllable Words with L-Controlled Vowels
- Words with Hard and Soft "c"
- Words with Hard and Soft "g"
- One-Syllable Words with Vowel Teams
- Common Silent Letters
- Compound Words
- Words with "ed" Ending Pronounced as /ed/
- Vowel Teams and "ing" Ending
- Suffix "es"
- Suffix "er"
- Suffix "y"

## SECOND GRADE SKILLS

- Possessives
- Contractions
- Compound Words
- Medial Double Consonants
- Words with "y" as a Vowel and Open Syllables
- Two-Syllable Words with R-Controlled Vowels
- Words with "ed" Endings Pronounced as /d/ (no orthographic shift in base word)
- Words with "ed" Endings Pronounced as /t/ (no orthographic shift in base word)
- "ing" Ending
- "ed" Ending Pronounced as /d/
- "ed" Ending Pronounced as /t/
- Suffix "es"
- Suffix "er"
- Suffix "y"
- Digraphs
- Common Prefixes and Suffixes
- Multisyllabic Words

## THIRD GRADE WORDS

- Compound Words
- Possessives
- Contractions
- Variant Plurals
- Consonant Trigraphs
- CCCVC and CCCVCC Words with Inflectional Endings
- Silent Letters
- "le" Syllable Pattern
- CCCVCC, and CCCVCCC Words with Inflectional Endings
- Two-Syllable Words with Vowel Teams
- Common Prefixes and Suffixes (no orthographic shift in base word)
- "ive," "ous," "ious" Endings
- Multisyllabic Words
- Common Prefixes and Suffixes (orthographic shift in base word)
- Multiple Affixes
- Low-Frequency Vowel Patterns
- "ch" pronounced as /k/
- Low-Frequency Vowel Patterns (ea, eau)

## Appendix F: Four Purposes of Assessment

Purpose	Question Answered	Characteristics	Example	Non-Example
<b>Screening</b>	Who needs support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief</li> <li>Standardized</li> <li>Predictive</li> <li>Indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acadience Reading K-6</li> <li>Aims Web</li> <li>Easy CBM Deluxe</li> <li>DIBELS 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTOPP-2</li> <li>Benchmark Assessment System (BAS)</li> <li>Running Records</li> <li>Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA)</li> </ul>
<b>Diagnostic</b>	What support is needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardized</li> <li>Specific and detailed</li> <li>Closely linked to instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acadience Reading Diagnostic: Comprehension, Fluency &amp; Oral Language (CFOL)</li> <li>Basic Decoding Survey</li> <li>Advanced Decoding Survey</li> <li>Phonological Awareness Screening Test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA)</li> <li>Running Records</li> <li>Teacher-Created Assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Progress Monitoring</b>	Is the support working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief</li> <li>Standardized</li> <li>Sensitive to change</li> <li>Alternate forms at same difficulty level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acadience Reading K-6</li> <li>Aims Web</li> <li>Easy CBM Deluxe or Lite</li> <li>DIBELS 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acadience Reading Diagnostic: CFOL</li> <li>Running Records</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome Evaluation</b>	Did the support work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardized</li> <li>Norm-referenced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ohio's State Test in English Language Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmark Assessment System (BAS)</li> </ul>

## Appendix G: Tier 1 Core Instruction Sample Schedules

### EXAMPLE 1

- 90-120 minutes of reading instruction
- 45 minutes of writing
- 75 minutes of math
- 45 minutes of science
- 45 minutes of social studies
- 45 minutes of lunch/recess
- 30 minutes of flex

	K	1	2	3
<b>7:45 – 8:05</b>	<b>Morning Meeting</b>			
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Period 8:05 – 8:50</b>	P-2 English Language Arts Instruction			<b>TBT</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Period 8:50 – 9:35</b>				3 English Language Arts
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Period 9:35 – 10:20</b>				
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Period 10:20 – 11:05</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>TBT</b>	
<b>11:05 – 11:50</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>11:05 – 11:50</b>	<b>Lunch</b>			
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Period 11:50 – 12:35</b>	<b>TBT</b>	<b>Science/Social Studies (12:05-12:35)</b>		<b>Math (11:50-12:50) Science/Social Studies (12:50--1:20)</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Period 12:35 – 1:20</b>	<b>Science/Social Studies 12:35-1:20</b>	<b>TBT</b>		
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Period 1:20 – 2:05</b>				<b>Writing</b>
<b>2:05 – 2:15</b>	<b>HOMEROOM/FLEX</b>			

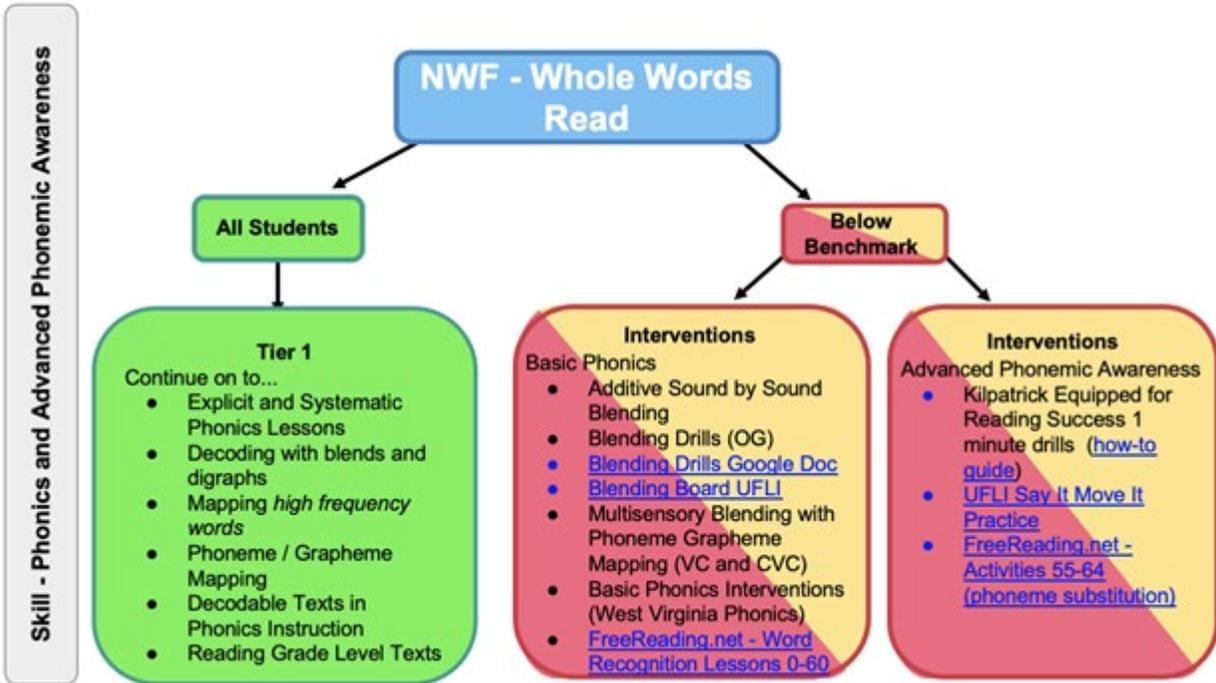
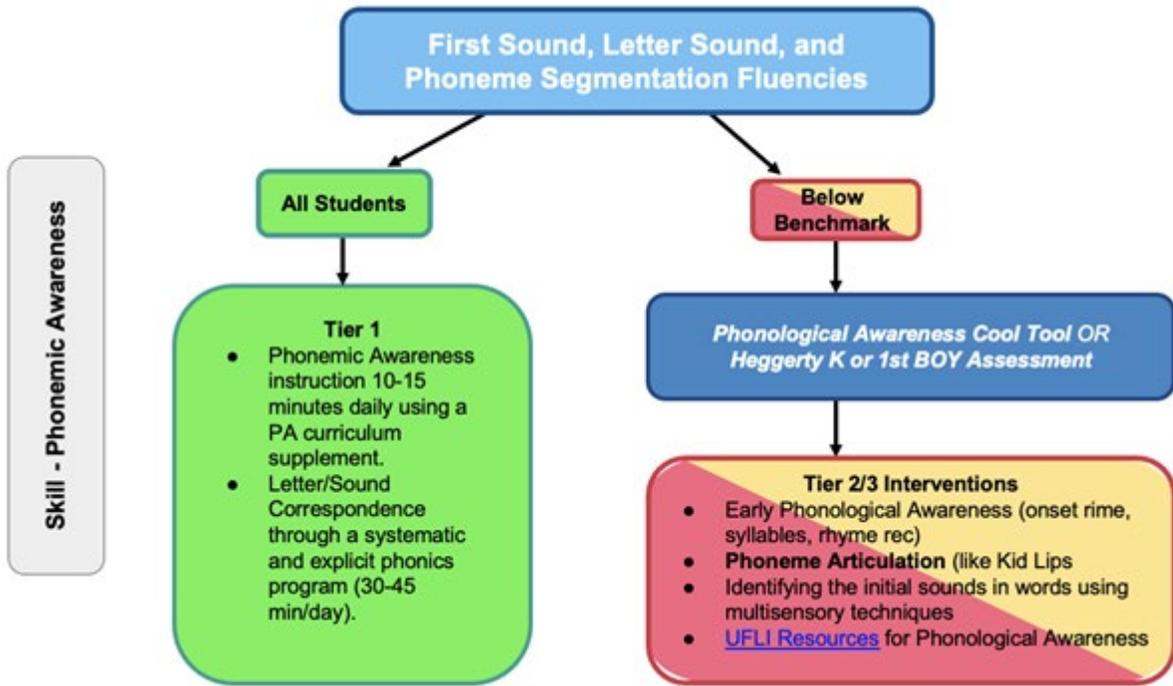
## EXAMPLE 2

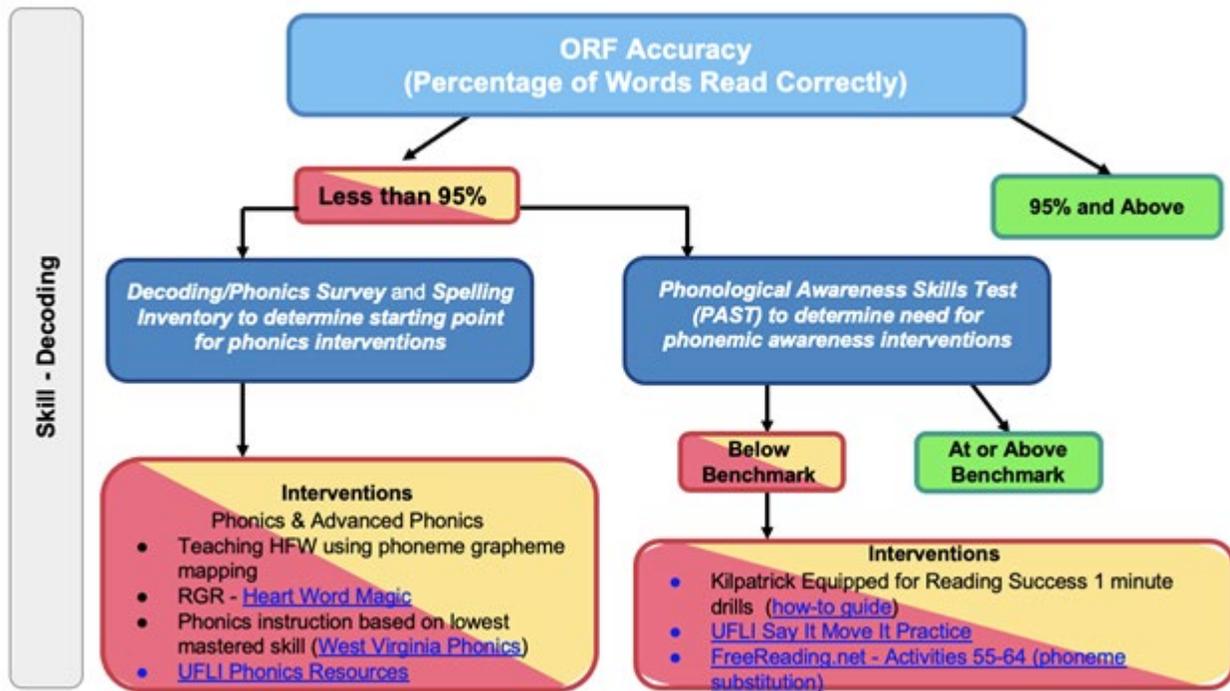
	K	1	2	3
8:00 – 8:30 8:00 – 9:30	Whole Group	Whole Group	WIN (What I Need Time)	Math
8:30 – 9:30 8:30 – 9:15	Small Group	Writing	Writing	
9:30 – 10:15 9:15 – 10:15 9:15 – 10:00	Writing	Small Group	Specials	Science
10:00 – 10:45 10:15 – 11:00 10:15 – 11:30	Specials	Math	Whole group	Social studies
10:45 – 11:45			Small Group	
11:00 – 11:45 11:30 – 12:15 11:45 – 12:15 12:00 – 12:45	Lunch and recess	Lunch and recess	Lunch and recess	Whole Group Lunch and recess
11:45 – 1:00 12:15 – 1:00 12:30 – 1:45 12:45 – 1:30	Math	Specials	Math	Writing
1:00 – 1:30	WIN (What I Need) Time	WIN (What I Need) Time		
1:30 – 2:15 1:30 – 2:30	Science	Science		Small Group
1:45 – 2:30			Social studies	
2:15 – 3:00	Social Studies	Social Studies		
2:30 – 3:00			Science	WIN (What I Need) Time

### EXAMPLE 3

	K	1	2	3	4	5
7:40-7:50	Arrival Time/Creative Start	Arrival Time/Creative Start	Arrival Time/Creative Start	Arrival Time/Creative Start	Arrival Time/Creative Start	Arrival Time/Creative Start
7:50-8:00	Morning Meeting/Music and Movement	Morning Meeting/Student Council	Morning Meeting/Student Council			
8:00-9:00	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
9:00-10:20	Break/Math	Break/Math	Break/Math	Math	Math	Math
10:20-11:05	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
11:05-11:50	Social Studies/Science	Social Studies/Science	Social Studies/Science	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:50-12:35	Reading	Reading	Reading	Arts/English Language Arts	Arts/English Language Arts	Arts/English Language Arts
12:35-1:20	Writing/Library/Media	Writing/Library/Media	Writing/Library/Media	Science	Science	Science
1:20-2:05	Writing/Library/Media	Writing/Library/Media	Writing/Library/Media	STEAM/Interdisciplinary	STEAM/Interdisciplinary	STEAM/Interdisciplinary
2:05-2:20	WIN (What I Need) Time	WIN (What I Need) Time	WIN (What I Need) Time	Teams	Teams	Teams

# Appendix H: Sample Decision Rules





(What Matters Now Network, 2018)