STRONG**READERS**
STRONGLEADERS
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HOW TO BUILD
STRONG
READERS

Mississippi's Guide to Developing
Literacy Skills from Birth through Grade 12

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

STRONG**READERS**
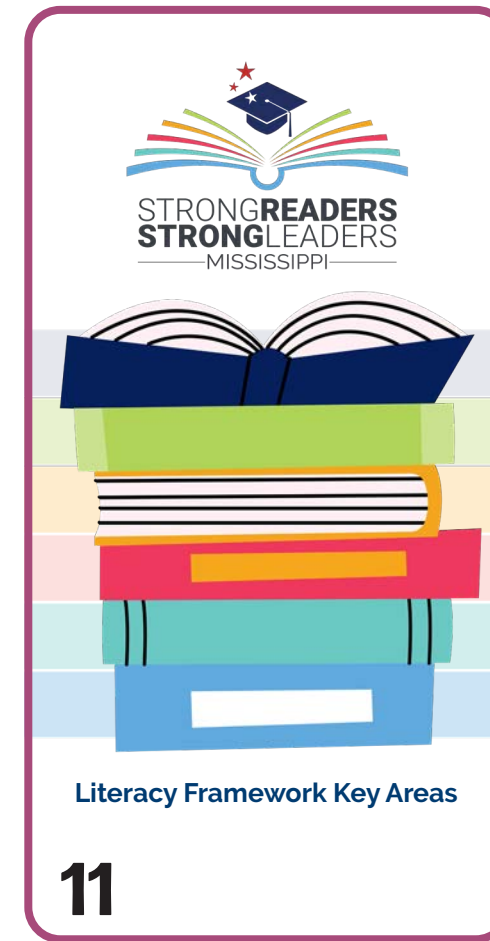**STRONG**LEADERS
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MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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2. **EVERY** Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. **EVERY** Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. **EVERY** School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. **EVERY** Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. **EVERY** School and District is Rated "C" or Higher

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Visit strongreadersms.com/guide to view this guide online and to access links and resources.

PURPOSE OF HOW TO BUILD STRONG READERS

How to Build Strong Readers provides a clear vision and comprehensive guide for educators to implement effective, evidence-based literacy instruction throughout the state. This guide is intended to promote strong language and literacy acquisition and support literacy reform efforts across the educational continuum in districts, schools, and communities. The effective implementation of this guide will ensure Mississippi's literacy instruction for birth through grade 12 will be of uniformly high quality and sufficient quantity to make a measurable difference in literacy achievement statewide.
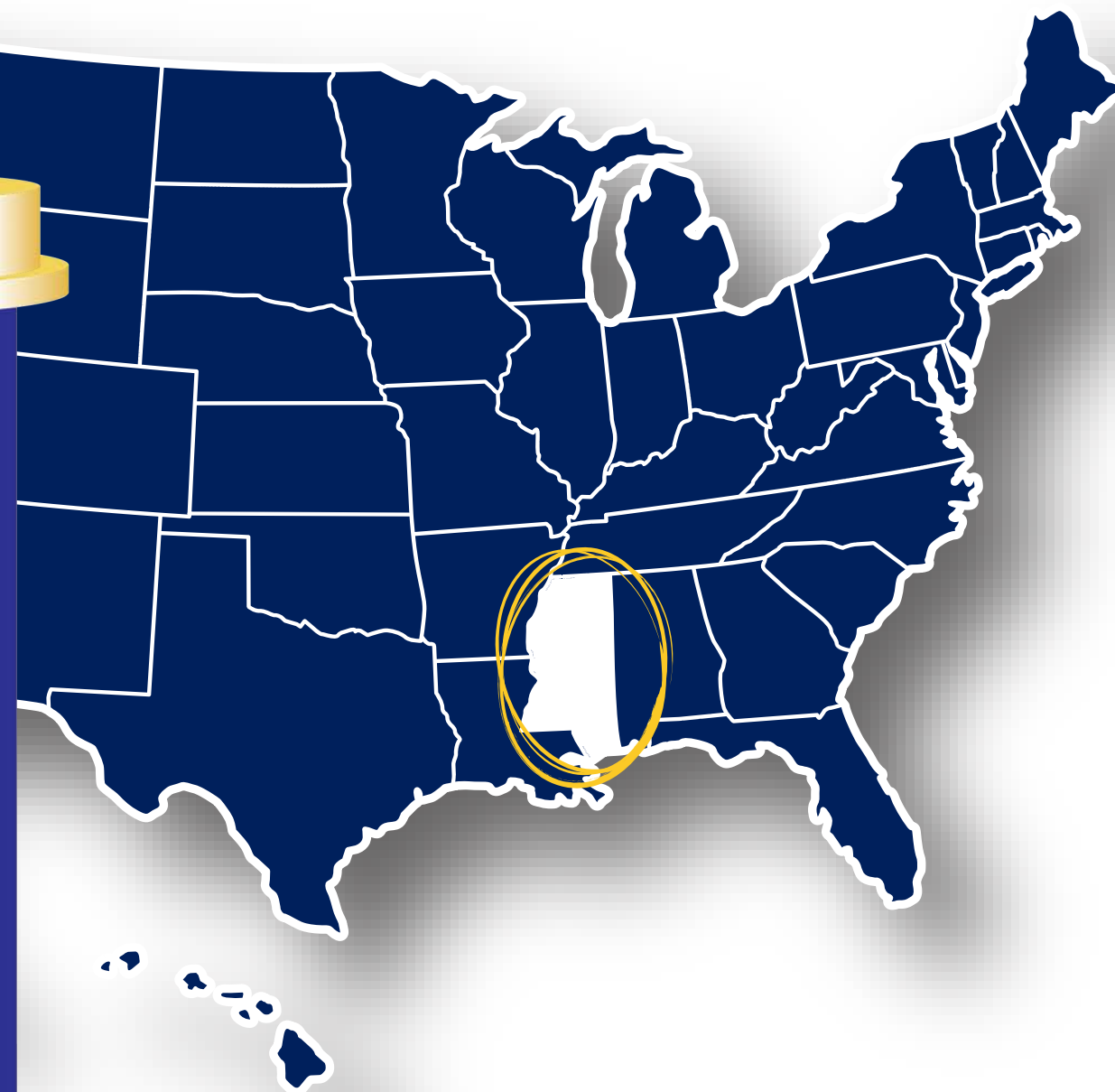
ONLY STATE
with Significant Increases in THREE of the FOUR NAEP-tested Areas in 2019

1st
IN THE NATION 2017-2019
FOURTH GRADE READING

THE MISSISSIPPI LITERACY STORY

Mississippi has become a national leader in literacy because our children have made more progress in reading in recent years than any other state. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows our fourth graders now read better than half their peers across the country. This is a giant leap from 2013, when Mississippi's fourth graders trailed more than one full grade level behind the nation's average. What's more, Mississippi students made significant gains in most core NAEP subjects, while scores nationally remained stagnant or declined.

That is why Mississippi has become the go-to source for educators and policymakers looking for guidance on improving literacy in their states. We have shared our expertise with close to 20 states and a dozen national education groups, and the list continues to grow. We are proud to tell the story of Mississippi's historic achievements in literacy and how the combination of sound policy, strong leadership, strategic planning, and a major investment in educators helped Mississippi children become stronger readers.

Mississippi's literacy policy is based on two 2013 laws that enabled the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to build an infrastructure to support communities and schools with early literacy efforts. The Early Learning Collaborative Act established the first state-funded pre-K program. The Literacy-Based Promotion Act made reading instruction a major focus in kindergarten through grade 3.

Other legislation provided funds for dyslexia scholarships and grants and ensured elementary teacher candidates were taught the science of literacy and how to be effective teachers of reading.

The Legislature's focus on literacy coincided with our schools' implementation of higher academic standards in pre-K through grade 12. The more rigorous standards demanded students perform at a higher level, so teachers developed new teaching methods to help students reach more challenging learning goals. At the same time, the Mississippi State Board of Education launched a new Strategic Plan, which prioritized access to high-quality early childhood education, improving literacy and ensuring all students graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

Mississippi has continued to refine and strengthen literacy policies that work and we have extended them from birth through grade 12. We understand and value the power teachers and families bring to the work of developing strong readers and remain committed to investing in their efforts. Building the capacity of educators and supporting families remain foundational to our work.

Education is life determining. All children need and deserve strong reading skills so they can succeed in school and access all the opportunities a quality education provides. We are excited about the next chapter in Mississippi's literacy story and the work to build future generations of strong readers.

VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

State Board of Education STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS
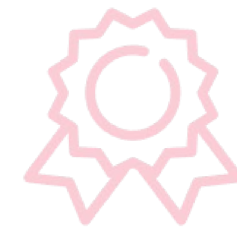
1 **ALL** Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LITERACY DEFINED

Literacy is students' ability to read, write, and think at increasingly higher levels of complexity, creativity, and sophistication to prepare for college and career pathways (Zhao, 2009).

Literacy is a life skill, and the ability to read is arguably the most important skill needed for success as an adult. Substantial research points to the importance of developing strong early literacy skills because they are closely linked to reading achievement in the primary grades and are the basis for successful performance in school and beyond (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Foorman et.al., 2016; National Reading Panel, 2000).

LITERACY ACQUISITION

Mississippi's approach to literacy acquisition is grounded in the Science of Reading and implemented in the early grades through a **structured literacy model** guided by **The Simple View of Reading, Four-Part Processing Model, and The Reading Rope.**

CORE BELIEFS

How to Build Strong Readers is grounded in a set of core beliefs based on the most recent and rigorous empirical research evidence.

1. All students deserve access to evidence-based literacy instruction using standards-aligned, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) grounded in the Science of Reading.

2. All students deserve access to effective educators from birth to grade 12 who ensure that students possess the language and literacy skills needed to be successful in college and the workforce.

3. Explicit, systematic literacy instruction must span birth to grade 12 and must occur across the curriculum for students to experience success in achieving literacy proficiency needed for college and workforce success.

How to Build Strong Readers is based on six key areas that must work together to support literacy instruction that prepares Mississippi students to be successful in college and the workforce. Each area is important on its own; however, each must be integrated to create a seamless and cohesive model for an effective, comprehensive, literacy-instructional approach.

Each area is addressed fully in the **State-Level Goals and Action Steps** section.

Literacy Framework Key Areas

Supporting Future Educators

Family and Community Engagement

Professional Learning and Practice

Leadership

Standards and Curriculum

Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment

Supporting Future Educators

Traditional or alternate route educator preparation programs provide the core of the initial training needed by future practicing professionals. The novice teacher or instructional leader is expected to become progressively more expert at teaching and leading effectively with experience and continuing education. To do this, traditional and alternate route programs must prepare initially licensed teachers and leaders with the essential knowledge and skills to competently perform their roles from the very start of their professional service, including foundations in evidence-based literacy instruction.

Family and Community Engagement

The family is a child's first teacher. Promoting literacy is a shared responsibility among families, schools, and communities. Family and community involvement and partnerships are critical to changing student outcomes. The provision of diverse support and resources for families and communities is a vital to ensuring student success in becoming strong readers.

Professional Learning and Practice

The Mississippi Department of Education defines research-based professional learning as having the following attributes:
- is focused on content
- incorporates active learning
- is collaborative and generally job-embedded
- includes coaching and mentoring
- offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
- is generally ongoing and of sustained duration

This process occurs over time and requires support to embed the new learning into instructional practices. Constructive feedback and reflection opportunities are integrated to facilitate continuous improvement in practice. This allows educators to develop their expertise as they apply their professional learning.

Leadership

Leaders are **central** to a successful literacy program because they ensure the delivery of evidence-based instruction focused on improving learning and changing student outcomes. Effective leadership ensures clearly defined roles, accountability, and collaborative opportunities at every level.

Standards and Curriculum

Successful and sustainable literacy programs (birth to grade 12) require explicit and coherent goals defined by the state literacy standards. These standards determine the selection and implementation of a high-quality curriculum, which is critical to the delivery of effective evidence-based literacy instruction, including culturally and linguistically responsive practices.

Instruction, Intervention, and Assessment

Continuous improvement is dependent on a coherent cycle of accurate assessment, responsive instruction, and appropriate intervention.

Effective literacy programs develop and deliver high-quality instruction. Effective Tier 1 literacy instruction impacts academic achievement for the largest number of students at the state, district and school level. High-quality literacy instruction is dependent upon a well-designed assessment system. Collecting and using data with fidelity ensures system-wide accountability, evaluates systemic progress, and develops responsive, comprehensive instructional approaches (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2005).

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework for effective team-based problem solving that is data-informed, evidence-based, and flexible enough to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students. This framework includes the role of interventions. An intervention is defined as the use of instructional strategies, methodologies, and practices -- both academic and behavioral -- that are aimed at students of all ages and abilities who exhibit difficulties with meeting or achieving age-appropriate literacy standards or expectations. Effective classroom instruction should meet the needs of most students, but an efficient system for providing high-quality, intensive interventions is required to meet the needs of all students.

Finally, data-driven decision making includes opportunities for educators to increase their understanding of how to administer assessments with fidelity, analyze and interpret data results, and apply these insights to improving instructional practices and changing student outcomes.

State-Level Plan:
Goals and Action Steps
Birth to Kindergarten Entry

BIRTH TO AGE 3
LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

The Mississippi Department of Education's Commitment to High-Quality Early Care and Education Beginning at Birth

Recognizing the importance of early education beginning at birth, the MDE commits to partner and collaborate with state agencies and other stakeholder groups focused on providing education for all children starting at birth. The MDE focuses on education beginning with 4-year-old children within the Early Learning Collaborative Act; however, the reality is that early education occurs before age 4 and "that every environment—whether home, school, or childcare—is a learning environment for young children" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Center for Education and Workforce). As a result, the MDE understands that "providing schools with better-prepared students at the outset boosts their productivity throughout" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Center for Education and Workforce) the pre-K through grade 12 system and seeks to ensure that all children have access to high-quality early care and education. In addition, the MDE understands that investment in the entry point of the educational system can pay huge dividends toward the end of the educational system, as well as the broader national, state, and local economies.

Because literacy development begins in birth-to-age 3 early care and education, the MDE's commitment within the scope of How to Build Strong Readers will support collaborative work around the three critical foundational areas of oral language development, phonological awareness development, and print knowledge (including print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and writing). In addition, How to Build Strong Readers supports instructional practices in language and emergent literacy for children birth to age 3.

Essential Instructional Practices: Birth to Age 3

1. Create safe, secure, and stimulating environments. When infants and toddlers feel safe and secure, they can actively explore and focus on learning. When environments are stimulating, they support infants and toddlers to direct their own play, which provides adults with opportunities to engage in child-led conversations that support language development.

2. Bring attention to print concepts in books and the environment. Print concepts are understandings about how print works, and the functions it serves in our lives. Infants and toddlers learn about the many ways that print is used when we point out print concepts and printed words throughout the environment; creating a print-rich environment encourages adults to do this. Children learn print concepts about the mechanics of reading during book-sharing experiences.

3. Share books in engaging ways. Book sharing fosters a love of reading when it is engaging and fun, and when children feel close to the adult reading. Book-sharing can be used to support comprehension and vocabulary when it is interactive, and when adults talk about the content of the book and link it to children's interests and experiences. Children who start sharing books with their caregivers before age 1 have better language and literacy skills later on.

4. Play with sounds and invite children to play with you. Infants are born paying attention to sounds of voices and are attracted to higher-pitched and musical voices.

Playing with sounds draws children's attention to the sounds in language and supports their skills for recognizing and working with the sounds of language (phonological awareness).

5. Enhance two-way communication with gestures. Gestures (hand and body motions used for communication) let preverbal children choose the topic of conversation and promote two-way communication between adults and young children. This encourages children's vocabulary development. When toddlers combine two gestures, or combine gestures with words, this helps them learn to combine words and ideas into sentences.

6. Support skills across developmental domains that are important for writing. Writing is a multi-faceted activity about composing and communicating messages. It is supported by a set of skills including motor skills, understanding and using symbols, and creating messages for others. Early writing often looks like scribbles; this shows that children understand that writing has meaning and can communicate a message.

7. Converse with children, responding to their cues and letting them choose the topics. High-quality language interactions are central to supporting early language skills. Infants and toddlers need to hear a variety of language that is directly related to their attention and interests, and to be encouraged to communicate in all the ways they can -- facial expressions, hands and bodies, and voices. The same child-led, responsive interaction practices support both preverbal and verbal toddlers, but the practices can look a little different depending on the child's age and communication skills.

8. Provide materials for reading and writing that are always available to children. Infants and toddlers learn best when they can pursue their own interests in ways that utilize and build on their own skills. Environments and routines should provide them with the freedom to explore books and use writing and drawing materials at their own pace and in their own ways.

9. Monitor language development, screen for early delays, and refer families to services when needed. Toddlerhood is when language delays first appear, and when early intervention is most effective. Delays in early language development may cause challenges in behavior regulation and social interactions; if not addressed, these delays lead to later difficulties in language and literacy.

10. Work with families to promote home language and literacy environments that are rich and responsive. Infants' and toddlers' primary learning environment is their home, and their first and most consistent educators are family members with whom they live. The home language and literacy environment has a strong and lasting effect on language skills, emergent literacy, and related social and academic skills.

GOAL

To increase educators' knowledge of emergent literacy skills (**print knowledge including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary**, and **oral language**) to provide students the foundation needed to become proficient readers, writers, and communicators.

What the Research Says

Families provide children with their first literacy experiences using interactions, conversations, books, and other print materials. Preschool teachers continue that learning by teaching the foundations of literacy, or emergent literacy skills. Emergent literacy skills include print knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language. Preschoolers who learn these skills are less likely to develop future reading problems and more likely to read with ease, understand what they read, and succeed in school (Kaplan & Walpole, 2005; Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch, 2014)

1. Develop an early literacy professional development plan that includes:
   - Use of kindergarten readiness data and other data points to determine topics for professional learning
   - Professional learning for preschool teachers, paraprofessionals, and leaders grounded in the science of reading
   - Alignment to the state kindergarten readiness requirements
   - Use of ongoing assessment data for setting and meeting individual child literacy goals
   - Joint learning opportunities for general education and special education teachers to support all learners
   - Ways to address emergent literacy skills (**print knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary,** and **oral language**)
   - Ways to increase providers' ability to identify children in CHILD FIND process and evaluate the training provided

2. Recognize early childhood providers that continue to support educators providing 3- to 5-year-old children with evidence-based language and literacy instruction.

3. Explore ways to expand opportunities for job-embedded professional learning opportunities to early childhood providers that support evidence-based language and literacy instruction.

4. Examine and monitor funding streams to expand the professional learning system for pre-K to kindergarten entry.

The MDE acknowledges the importance of all the developmental domains; however, for the purpose of **How to Build Strong Readers**, there is a laser-like focus on literacy to ensure that children successfully transition from early literacy to early reading and writing. Within the plan, the MDE follows the Science of Reading based on the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough's Reading Rope Model to ensure that students participating in pre-K programming supported by the MDE receive effective instruction and intervention. There is significant research to support intentional instruction across the foundational areas of oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge (including print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and writing). In addition to intentional instruction, students need many opportunities to practice skills across those foundational areas in fun, engaging, and playful ways to ensure mastery of those skills that best predict early reading and writing success and that are necessary for a successful transition to kindergarten.

GOAL

Increase early childhood education leaders' understanding, use, and support of evidence-based instruction in early language and literacy development in preschool settings

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1. Establish a coalition for early childhood education leaders to create implementation structures for sustaining the **How to Build Strong Readers** plan that includes:
   - Research from other states with similar early literacy efforts (Florida, Alabama, Georgia)
   - Involvement of internal and external stakeholders in determining implementation structures and resources needed for long-term sustainability
   - Recruitment of charter members who agree to contribute resources including time, money, space, and personnel
   - Alignment with existing federal, state and local funding structures to provide high quality, effective early literacy instruction

2. Include a "facility enhancement plan" in the district and school literacy plan template to help preschool providers continuously improve in preparing students to be ready for kindergarten.

3. Develop the training necessary for district leaders and preschool directors on using kindergarten readiness data to develop a plan to prepare students for kindergarten.

GOAL

Provide students enrolled in Mississippi preschools access to high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum that improves their language and literacy acquisition skills and develops the social and emotional skills necessary for success in primary school, later learning, and life.

1. Align English Language Arts (ELA) Early Learning Standards, specifically 4-Year-Old Standards, with the Kindergarten Standards in the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS).

2. Adopt a state-approved list of high-quality pre-K curriculum aligned to the science of reading.

3. Continue efforts to support the use of HQIM in pre-K classrooms through ongoing professional learning opportunities.

4. Ensure vertical alignment with kindergarten standards for literacy; conduct a gap analysis.

INSTRUCTION

GOAL

Implement evidence-based instruction, strategies, and interventions that promote active student engagement while meeting the emergent literacy needs of all children, including children with diverse learning needs in a developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant manner.

1. Develop resources and supports that promote resources for developing emergent literacy skills including **print knowledge including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary,** and **oral language.**

2. Develop a literacy-specific instructional framework for pre-K classrooms based on the developmental trajectories across the foundational areas of oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge, including alphabet knowledge and based on the Science of Reading. For example, alphabet knowledge = know and identify 18 uppercase and 15 lowercase letters with guidelines for developmentally appropriate instruction.

3. Provide job-embedded coaching to improve effective literacy instruction in child care facilities and align the coaching model to MDE's K-3 coaching model.

4. Use the Early Learning Collaboratives (ELC) to research the strategies being used to determine which instructional strategies and tools are making the most difference in students' outcomes.

5. Develop a district template that incorporates and supports the eight basic principles of effective early literacy instruction, recommended by the National Association of the Education of Young Children, The International Literacy Association, and Preschool Language Essentials for Teaching Reading and Spelling (LETRS).

INTERVENTION

GOAL

Develop resources and supports that focus on prevention and intervention in preschool classrooms to combat later reading difficulties

1. Assist districts and schools with gathering baseline information to use in developing an implementation plan for early literacy interventions.

2. Use screening and diagnostic data to plan the content and delivery of early literacy intervention to prevent later reading difficulties.

3. Develop a tool for districts and schools to use in choosing intervention programs or intervention strategies across each of the predictors of early reading and writing success, including oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge, including alphabet knowledge.

ASSESSMENT

GOAL

Use an inclusive assessment approach that includes assessments at different levels of the system (i.e., classroom, district, state) that are coherently linked to clearly-defined instructional learning goals aligned to the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

1. Identify tools (e.g., Early Literacy Checklist, Test of Preschool Early Literacy, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, EarlyBird to assess emergent literacy skills across the predictors of early reading and writing success, including oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge, including alphabet knowledge, to prevent early reading failure.

2. Explore possible methods or tools to evaluate and support early care providers' ability to teach mastery of emerging/early literacy skills.

3. Support early care providers' interpretation of data sources to improve instructional practice as a part of the coaching model.

4. Use CHILD FIND data to determine supports needed for special education services.

State-Level Plan:
Goals and Action Steps
Kindergarten through Grade 12

GOAL

To support the content knowledge and development of future educators.

Resource: Integrating Reading Foundations: A Tool for College Instructors of Pre-Service Teachers

1. Provide professional learning for teachers, paraprofessionals, and leaders grounded in the Science of Reading. Use the professional learning for paraprofessionals as an opportunity to address the teacher shortage by encouraging them to seek a degree in early childhood education or elementary education.

2. Continue to partner with the Higher Education Literacy Council (HELC) to support professional learning, as well as other preservice education efforts.

3. Continue to engage higher education faculty in a professional growth model that maintains a high level of knowledge in cognitive and education research to support effective pedagogy. Provide per-service candidates access to professional learning opportunities currently available to in-service teachers statewide.

4. Extend the Foundations of Reading licensure assessment for the licenses and endorsements required of pre-K and special education teachers.

5. Report individual educator preparation program (EPP) data for **first-time pass rate** on the Foundations of Reading licensure assessment to empower preservice teachers to review data to help select an EPP to attend.

6. Create a 12-hour reading coursework sequence that includes:
   - First course: Early Literacy 1 (3 hours)
   - Second course: Early Literacy 2 (3 hours)
   - Third course: Integrating Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum (3 hours)
   - Fourth course: Assessment, Recognition, and Intervention of Reading Difficulties (3 hours)

7. Once the Mississippi State Board of Education approves the 12-hour reading coursework sequence, the MDE will partner with the HELC, Mississippi Reading Panel and other entities to create a course syllabus for the two additional required courses.

8. Review other state content area literacy requirements for grades 7-12 secondary content licenses.

GOAL

To support families and communities in their critical roles in student's literacy development.

1. Include in school/district literacy plan a consideration for districts/schools to partner with birth-to-age 5 feeder facilities within the district/school attendance zones to serve on the district/school literacy leadership and data teams. Continue current MDE efforts to increase families' and community stakeholders' knowledge about the importance of effective literacy instruction from birth to kindergarten entry, as well as the components of effective literacy instruction.

2. Conduct First 2,000 Days presentations for district/school Parent Coordinators in collaboration with the Mississippi Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (MCGLR) to cultivate state and local champions for early childhood education.

3. Promote parent education module, Barksdale Reading Institute's Parent Academies, Talk from the Start campaign, and Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) instructional resources and content.

4. Provide resources for parents encouraging them to look for high-quality preschool providers such as, National Center on Improving Literacy: Learning About Your Child's Reading Development.

5. Provide resources for district and school Parent Coordinators and provide professional learning about the menu of services.

6. Partner with the MCGLR to increase the number of recognized communities across the state.

7. Partner with Reach Out and Read to support family education efforts about the importance of reading and supporting oral language development.

8. Partner with the MCGLR and other statewide entities to support the use of Mind in the Making and Vroom with families and caregivers.

9. Continue to provide Families as Partners training across the state to support family awareness of the requirements of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).

10. Partner with Decoding Dyslexia to provide additional training for families.

11. Promote MDE's StrongReadersMS.com website as a resource for families to help their children build reading skills at home.

GOALS
K-3

Goal One: To provide professional learning and resources that deepen educators' understanding of how children learn to read, diagnose why some children struggle to read, and sharpen educators' abilities to implement literacy instruction and interventions that align to the science of reading and are culturally responsive.

Goal Two: To support the implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction through ongoing coaching support.

4-12

Goal One: To provide professional learning and resources that deepen educators' understanding of evidence-based strategies that align to the Science of Reading (SoR) and are culturally responsive to improve adolescent literacy outcomes.

Goal Two: To support the implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction through ongoing coaching support.

K-3 Action Steps for Goal One

Monitor and refine the statewide system of support that includes:

1. Professional Development plan to include a centralized communication template (including but not limited to MDE, Regional Education Service Agencies, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), districts, and schools)

2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the impact of professional learning through multiple data sources including student outcome data

3. Statewide individual teacher and leader professional learning plans based upon multiple Professional Growth System standards (teacher and leader evaluation data, student achievement data, etc.) including accessibility guidance for building and district participation (webinars, chats, archive)

4. Systemic, long-term, job-embedded coaching and professional learning cycle to ensure the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom and/or school

   • Coaching Learning Series
   • Teacher Learning Series
   • Building Administrator Learning Series (Coaching cycle: , best practices, learning walks, action plans, curricula, etc.)
   • District Learning Series (Instructional District Personnel)

Provide statewide professional learning opportunities for **pre-K through grade 3 teachers, paraprofessionals, and teachers and paraprofessionals of English Learners** grounded in the Science of Reading () and address both components of the Simple View of Reading (SVR) and all strands of Scarborough's Rope Model. This opportunity should provide for practical application of evidence-based instructional practices as demonstrated in a Structured Literacy Model.

Provide statewide professional learning opportunities for pre-K through grade 3 district and school administrators grounded in SoR and address both components of the Simple View of Reading (SVR) and all strands of Scarborough's Rope Model. This opportunity should provide for practical application of evidence-based instructional practices as demonstrated in a Structured Literacy Model.

1. Offer training and tools for leaders to support Core Actions and Shifts associated with high-quality, standards-aligned literacy instruction

   • Grades K-2: Reading/Listening Comprehension
   • Foundational Skills Observation Tool
   • Grades 3-12

2. Establish and provide professional learning and technical assistance to support literacy leadership team to foster a collaborative culture that analyzes data (not limited to state assessment data) to make district-level and school-level instructional decisions

3. Develop the district/school literacy plan

Develop and provide districts a rubric (sample tool) for external Literacy Professional Development providers for districts that includes needs, evidence, fit, usability, capacity and identified supports.

1. Develop, and provide a menu of resources decision-making and evaluation of external Literacy Professional Development programs and offerings

4-12 Action Steps for Goal One

Develop a statewide system of support that includes:

1. Delivery of grades 4-12 professional learning opportunities aligned to the recommendations for improving adolescent literacy instruction and interventions to support content area teachers and leaders

2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the impact of professional learning through multiple data sources including student outcome data

3. Feedback loop to inform and refine ongoing professional learning opportunities

Identify professionals who will be trained to deliver MDE-approved adolescent literacy professional learning.

1. Develop the vetting process to include: certification, assessment of content knowledge, and presentation delivery ability

2. Create a state-level training certification process with "State" and "Regional Trainers" at the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA)

Develop and provide districts a rubric (sample tool) for external Literacy Professional Development providers for districts that includes needs, evidence, fit, usability, capacity and identified supports.

1. Develop and provide a menu of resources for decision-making and evaluation of external Literacy Professional Development programs and offerings

Sustain the application process for identifying Mississippi schools/districts that embody a "culture of excellence" to include:

1. Literacy achievement results which positively affect student growth, based on data, to serve as models of excellence within the state and replicate the approaches used by those districts/schools

2. Align training, data usage, and implementation evidence

   • 80% of the staff previously completed statewide literacy professional development grounded in the SoR

3. Criterion Survey submission

4. Announce and recognize the "culture of excellence" schools and provide additional incentive(s)

Identify and develop statewide professional learning opportunities for grade 4-12 teachers and paraprofessionals of English Learners grounded in the Science of Reading (SoR).

Provide statewide professional learning opportunities for grade 4-12 teachers of English Learners to facilitate the delivery of evidence-based instructional practice, specific to their content area.

K-3 Action Steps for Goal One (continued)

Sustain the application process for identifying Mississippi schools/districts that embody a "culture of excellence" to include:

1. Literacy achievement results which positively affect student growth, based on data, to serve as models of excellence within the state and replicate the approaches used by those districts/schools

2. Align training, data usage, and implementation evidence

    - 80% of the staff previously completed statewide literacy professional development grounded in the SoR

3. Criterion Survey submission

4. Announce and recognize the "culture of excellence" schools and provide additional incentive(s)

Provide guidance for educators, parents, and community members regarding evidence-based literacy instructional practices aligned with reading research.

1. Partner with parents and communities using Strong Readers Strong Leaders webpage

2. Provide training for educators, parents, and community members

3. Partner with MS Campaign for Grade Level Reading to increase the number of Grade Level Reading communities across the state

4. Partner with MS Public Broadcasting to share information with parents and community members

Explore connections to the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS) to improve student achievement by providing teachers and administrators with clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback to inform continuous improvement.

1. Mississippi Professional Growth Cycle
2. PGS Teacher Observation Guidebook
3. Teacher Evidence Collection Sheet (Fillable)
4. Teacher Growth Rubric-Examples of Evidence

K-3 Action Steps for Goal Two

Provide job-embedded coaching (K-3 coaches) and guidance for professional learning communities to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills to the classroom and/or school.

Examine and monitor federal funding streams, as well as other funding, to determine ways to utilize all funding sources to support K-12 professional learning and coaching. Provide guidance for educators, parents, and community members regarding evidence-based literacy instructional practices aligned with reading research.

4-12 Action Steps for Goal Two

Provide job-embedded coaching (4-8 coaches for intervention and content-area support) and guidance for professional learning communities to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills to the classroom and/or school.

Examine and monitor federal funding streams, as well as other funding, to determine ways to utilize all funding sources to support K-12 professional learning and coaching.

Explore connections to the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS) to improve student achievement by providing teachers and administrators with clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback to inform continuous improvement.

1. Mississippi Professional Growth Cycle
2. PGS Teacher Observation Guidebook
3. Teacher Evidence Collection Sheet (Fillable)
4. Teacher Growth Rubric-Examples of Evidence

GOALS
K-12

Goal One: To build the capacity of leaders to organize and implement a strategic approach to literacy development for all students.

Goal Two: To create and support sustainable district/school literacy leaders and systems that advocate for equity through evidence-based literacy instruction for all learners while improving the recruitment, hiring, and retention of highly effective staff.

Goal Three: Select high-quality instructional literacy curriculum to support grade-level reading proficiency to ensure instructional equity for all students.

K-3 Action Steps for Goal One

Identify evidence-based leadership and problem-solving practices to support effective literacy instruction and intervention.

Establish a statewide network of literacy leaders: Mississippi Literacy Leadership Network (MS-LL).

1. Learn and problem-solve with other leaders while implementing standards aligned, high-quality literacy curriculum, and evidence-based literacy practices

Continue guidance and support related to the identification of and intervention processes for students in grades K-2 who are not on a trajectory to reading proficiency by end of grade 3.

1. Provide guidance on MS's Approach to K-3 Literacy Instruction

2. Provide guidance for 3rd graders promoted with Good Cause Exemption (GCE)

3. Provide guidance on the Acceleration/Transitional Class guidance

4. Provide guidance on Individual Reading Plan (IRP) for K-3 students

5. Continue guidance and support related to retention of those students who are not proficient by grade 3 with clear directions for specific interventions that must be implemented for students retained in grade

Provide a district and School Literacy Action Plan (SLAP) template for leadership teams to plan evidence-based literacy instruction based on the Science of Reading (SoR), as well as student data to improve student outcomes.

K-3 Action Steps for Goal Two

Explore connections to the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS) to improve student achievement by providing teachers and administrators with clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback to inform continuous improvement.

1. Mississippi Professional Growth Cycle

2. PGS Teacher Observation Guidebook

3. Teacher Evidence Collection Sheet (Fillable)

4. Teacher Growth Rubric-Examples of Evidence

Develop and disseminate guidance to districts on how to differentiate staffing to address specific student needs.

1. Provide professional development and technical support to administrators regarding professional growth models founded in the Science of Reading

Provide literacy leadership mentoring programs for principals and teachers to promote retention of highly effective staff.

Develop and utilize a classroom observation tool to support school and district leaders in identifying professional development needs for teachers and paraprofessionals focused on supporting literacy acquisition for English Learners (EL)i.

4-12 Action Steps for Goal One

Identify evidence-based leadership and problem-solving practices to support effective literacy instruction and intervention.

1. Develop literacy leadership mentoring program

2. Review Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction

Establish a statewide network of literacy leaders: Mississippi Literacy Leadership Network (MS-LL).

1. Learn and problem-solve with other leaders while implementing standards aligned, high-quality literacy curriculum, and evidence-based literacy practices

Provide guidance and support related to the identification of and intervention processes for students in grades 4-12 who are not on a trajectory to reading proficiency.

1. Preventative actions focused on strengthening Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction

2. A system of data analysis for accurate identification of students needing intervention

3. Maximized opportunities for intervention course enrollment for identified students

4. Differentiation of staffing to address specific student needs

Create a district and school literacy plan template to include the following:

1. Utilize literacy needs assessment

2. Conduct professional learning for districts and schools to create the literacy plan

3. Guidance for establishing literacy leadership teams and data teams

4. Guidance for fostering a collaborative culture that analyzes data (not limited to state assessment data) to make district-level and school-level instructional decisions

4-12 Action Steps for Goal Two

Convene literacy leaders regularly to provide training and information about MDE resources and legislative and policy changes.

Continue to provide support for school/district literacy coaches (ABCs of Coaching, coach shadowing, etc.).

Support selected MDE 4-12 literacy coaches to ensure effective instructional delivery via job embedded professional learning and implementation of effective literacy instruction practices.

Provide technical assistance and guidance to district and school leaders in how to coordinate state and federal funding streams to leverage the maximum benefit.

Provide literacy leadership support to promote retention of highly effective staff.

Develop and utilize a classroom observation tool to support school and district leaders in identifying professional development needs for English Learner (EL) educators supporting literacy acquisition.

Provide guidance and training in use of classroom observation tool to support professional development needs for English Learner (EL) educators supporting literacy acquisition.

K-3 Action Steps for Goal Three

Develop guidance for district/school team to review ELA/Literacy Rubrics for High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) adoption.

Provide support for the selection of school/district teams to review **ELA/Literacy Rubrics** for HQIM adoption.

Provide professional learning related to HQIM reform efforts.

Review selected materials considered for adoption and provide professional development and ongoing supports to ensure effective implementation.

4-12 Action Steps for Goal Three

Develop guidance for district/school team to review ELA/Literacy Rubrics for High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) adoption.

Provide support for the selecting school/district teams to review **ELA/Literacy Rubrics** for HQIM adoption.

Provide professional learning related to HQIM reform efforts.

Review selected materials considered for adoption and provide professional development and ongoing supports to ensure effective implementation.

GOAL
K-12

Goal: Utilize Highly Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) to improve the alignment of Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards to curriculum and assessments for students that support grade-level reading proficiency to ensure equity for all students.

K-3 Action Steps

Provide guidance using the [ELA/HQIM Roadmap](#) to support the local HQIM adoption process.

Provide guidance for implementation of evidence-based instructional practices using HQIM to multiple stakeholders including district literacy leadership teams.

Provide guidelines for the literacy block regarding time requirements and essential elements for K-3 including the Literacy Instruction Components.

1. [Kindergarten Sample Schedule](#)
2. [1st - 5th Sample Schedule](#)
3. [Virtual Sample Schedule](#)

4-12 Action Steps

Provide guidance using the [ELA/HQIM Roadmap](#) to support the local HQIM adoption process.

Provide guidance for implementation of evidence-based instructional practices using HQIM to multiple stakeholders including district literacy leadership teams.

Develop guidance for instructional blocks regarding time requirements for grades 4-5 and grades 6-12 to provide additional instructional support to address the needs of students.

1. [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#)

INSTRUCTION

GOALS

K-3

To support grade-level proficiency through explicit, systematic foundational skills instruction; to support robust vocabulary practices and exposure to academic content to increase students' knowledge of the world.

4-12

To provide evidence-based recommendations, resources, and support to improve adolescent literacy instruction to maximize opportunities to incorporate evidence-based literacy practices across content areas through diverse complex text and tasks.

K-3 Action Steps

Utilize MS Approach to K-3 Literacy Instruction document to guide district and school literacy instruction.

Include academic literacy and the literacy-related skills needed to negotiate grade-level texts in each discipline area to ensure equitable literacy instruction.

Develop English Learners (EL) statewide identification criteria; develop English Language (EL) proficiency standards (by grade) that are linked to the Mississippi College and Career-ready Standards.

Develop exemplar units and video lessons that demonstrate high-quality, standards-aligned instruction using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). Provide professional learning to schools/districts seeking to effectively implement HQIM.

Support school and district leaders in the ability to evaluate evidence-based instructional materials and practices. School Leader's Literacy Walk-Through Grades K-3.

Develop a menu to locate evidence-based instructional resources (e.g., REL resources, Comp Centers, What Works Clearinghouse, etc.).

4-12 Action Steps

Develop an instructional model for grades 4-12 to include evidence-based recommendation, resources, and instructional supports.

1. Define direct, explicit, intentional instruction to include the model, define academic literacy and the literacy-related skills needed to negotiate texts in each discipline area

2. Identify and ensure cohesiveness of observation tool(s), including walk-throughs, to support and improve adolescent literacy instruction for use by literacy coaches and principals. Guide and Checklist for a School Leader's Walk-Through...Grades 4-12.

3. Develop guidance and training for implementation protocols regarding the instructional model

Provide follow-up training for leaders on the Multi-tiered System of Supports utilizing the MTSS Guidance Document with a focus on literacy goals at the Tier 1 Level.

Investigate and make recommendations about potential literacy support options for students of extended day, after school, extended year, summer school, and extended week to increase instructional time needed to accelerate struggling students' literacy growth.

Provide guidance to schools in developing a scheduling framework to incorporate required literacy blocks and time periods for effective interventions.

Encourage the use of technology as an integral instructional tool at the Tier 1 classroom level, as well as providing students' access to content by using technology as they are working independently or virtually.

INTERVENTION

GOALS
K-12

Goal One: Create a phased system of support to increase the quality of evidence-based literacy interventions.

Goal Two: To improve the quality and effective delivery of instructional interventions.

K-3 Action Steps for Goal One

Develop literacy-specific supporting documents to accompany intervention services through a Multi-tiered System of Support.

1. Self-Study Guide for Implementing Early Literacy Interventions

Establish a task force of state stakeholders to review the supplemental document.

Design and implement professional learning modules for training on literacy-specific supplemental documents.

Provide continued training for leaders on the MTSS Guidance Document with a focus on literacy goals and interventions.

Design and implement professional learning modules for training on the newly revised Dyslexia Handbook.

Update the Quick Reference Guides for school districts.

Identify districts/schools to highlight their MTSS success.

Make recommendations regarding literacy support options for students to increase instructional opportunities:

1. Extended day, after school, extended year, summer school, and extended week to increase instructional time needed to accelerate struggling students' literacy growth

Ensure evidence-based intervention programs should align to Tier 1 instructional programs.
1. Instructional Planning Guides for ELA

K-3 Action Steps for Goal Two

Establish an intervention services monitoring schedule to obtain intervention data on schools K-3 that will be carried over a five year period.

Encourage use of literacy intervention programs on the MDE-Approved Intervention list or other evidence-based programs through training provided by the intervention services team. This training will provide guidance for schools and districts on appropriate selection of evidence-based programs.

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Provide guidance to schools in developing master schedules to incorporate required reading blocks and time periods for interventions, as well as utilizing all school staff during interventions.

Work with K-3 stakeholders to ensure districts have the most current MTSS information through:

1. Yearly MTSS Documentation packet webinars

2. Monthly MTSS Network Virtual Office Hours

3. Technical assistance to schools and districts as requested

4. Professional development trainings at state level conferences

5. Current MTSS resources and documentation on the intervention services website

4-12 Action Steps for Goal One

Develop literacy-specific supporting documents to accompany intervention services through a Multi-tiered System of Support.

Develop a Self Assessment of Intervention Capacity at the school level.

Establish a task force of state stakeholders to review the supplemental document.

Design and implement professional learning modules for training on literacy-specific supplemental documents for 4-12.

Provide continued training for leaders on the MTSS Guidance Document with a focus on content area literacy strategies aligned with ELA Standards.

Design and implement professional learning modules for training on the newly revised Dyslexia Handbook.

Update the Quick Reference Guides for school districts.

Identify districts/schools to highlight their MTSS success. Instructional Planning Guides for English Language Arts K-12

Make recommendations regarding literacy support options for students to increase instructional opportunities:

1. Extended day, after school, extended year, summer school, and extended week to increase instructional time needed to accelerate struggling students' literacy growth

Ensure evidence-based intervention programs should align to Tier 1 instructional programs.
1. Instructional Planning Guides for ELA

4-12 Action Steps for Goal Two

Establish an intervention services monitoring schedule to obtain intervention data on schools 4-12 that will be carried over a five year period. The first schools to be monitored would be schools that have been identified as literacy support schools and school improvement schools.

Encourage use of literacy intervention programs on the MDE-Approved Intervention list or other evidence-based programs through training provided by the intervention services team. This training will provide guidance for schools and districts on appropriate selection of evidence-based programs.

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Provide guidance to schools, based on grade levels at each site, in developing master schedules to incorporate required intervention time. This may include a learning strategies block, as well as utilizing all school staff during interventions.

Work with 4-12 stakeholders to ensure districts have the most current MTSS information through:

1. Yearly MTSS Documentation packet webinars

2. Monthly MTSS Network Virtual Office Hours

3. Technical assistance to schools and districts as requested

4. Professional development trainings at state level conferences

5. Current MTSS resources and documentation on the intervention services website

ASSESSMENT

GOAL

K-12

Develop protocols to implement an appropriate cycle of continuous improvement in response to data collection and evaluation to increase literacy proficiency.

K-3 Action Steps

Create a data literacy framework for building a culture of data use that includes types of data important for informing effective literacy instructional practice to improve student outcomes.

Create an MDE process for more efficient data collection in collaboration with each vendor and/or districts.

Create a list of MDE-approved diagnostic tools based on the flowchart for identifying lowest deficit skill using a similar process that identified the six screening assessment tools.

Design and implement professional learning resources based on selected K-3 statewide screening tools.

Analyze statewide longitudinal, disaggregated student performance data annually to identify trends to make state-level policy decisions, as well as to determine supports and resources to strengthen schools and districts.

The Intervention Services Team will establish a monitoring schedule for the special-purpose nonpublic schools to determine progress of students receiving dyslexia scholarships and determine growth/improvement.

Continue to support a kindergarten-readiness assessment and minimal level of readiness defined based on a benchmark score.

4-12 Action Steps

Improve MDE's data reporting system to provide more efficient reporting.

Create an approved list of evidence-based universal screeners and diagnostic assessment tools.

Analyze statewide longitudinal, disaggregated student performance data to identify trends to make state-level policy decisions.

Review statewide student achievement assessment results to determine supports and resources for schools and districts.

Utilize currently developed LEA guidance documents for selecting screeners for grades 4-12.

Expand use of evidence-based screeners and assessment tools including the:

1. Identification of a state-wide universal screener and diagnostic tool for grades 4-12 to identify general and special education students with reading deficiencies.

2. Development of an approved list of free and low-cost evidence-based assessment tools and the effective use of these tools in local districts/schools' kindergarten through grade 12

Develop mid-year and end-of-year benchmarks to support districts in determining student progress in literacy.

1. Develop guidelines for IRPs in grades 4-12.

2. Utilize the data-coaching pilot program to assist schools in establishing a collaborative culture that values and uses data (not limited to state assessment data) to make instructional decisions to improve student outcomes; Seek out additional funding to expand the data coaching model to increase opportunities for equitable access to data coaches for schools with limited resources.

3. Continue to provide technical assistance on the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) and Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) aligned with MS-CCRS, in 2016 and set benchmarks for student achievement through 2025; Develop annual benchmarks for growth in student proficiency including overall growth and sub-group achievement (e.g., low-income, EL, students with disabilities, minorities, etc.) and provide supports for interpreting LEA and school level data to make instructional decisions; Identify or develop high-quality professional learning for school personnel related to assessment and data use, particularly related to teacher use of formative and summative data to plan instruction that meets individual students' needs.

4. Statewide Longitudinal Data System provides MDE and LEAs with longitudinal data from birth through college and career; Review state-wide student achievement assessment results to determine supports and resources for schools and districts

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