

EXEMPLAR STATES

ALASKA

An example of giving parents a voice in their children’s literacy education

Alaska HB 114 requires that each public school in the state annually provides to parents and guardians of K-3 students current information on the importance of literacy and early reading. This includes: (1) culturally responsive intervention strategies and reading intervention services; (2) home reading plans; (3) grade progression standards and policies for the elementary school attended; (4) strategies and resources to help children learn to read; and (5) a list of resources and organizations that specialize in improving adult literacy.

The state establishes a partnership with parents and guardians to support their child’s literacy development through intervention services. This entails offering a “list of adult literacy resources and organizations, providing opportunities for parent or guardian participation in training workshops, and encouraging regular parent or guardian-guided home reading activities.”

Additionally, the law requires that parents and guardians be an active participant in creating their child’s literacy improvement plan. This involves the development of a plan in consultation with the reading teacher, school principal, and other pertinent district staff; receiving reading progress updates each year; and acquiring strategies to use at home to help their children succeed in reading.

Finally, the law promotes a statewide “parents as teachers” program for the benefit of children who are under 5 years of age. This home-based program includes a curriculum on early language and literacy development along with ongoing coaching to enhance parents’ understanding of important child development principles and developmental milestones.

ARIZONA

An example of legislation that supports writing, oral language, background knowledge and motivation as important components of literacy

In SB 1572, Arizona defines the essential components of reading instruction as “explicit and systematic instruction in the following: (a) phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness, (b) phonics encoding and decoding, (c) vocabulary development, (d) reading fluency as demonstrated by automatic reading of text, (e) reading comprehension of written text, (f) written and oral expression, including spelling and handwriting.” Elsewhere, the bill mentions the importance of “sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension and the development and maintenance of a motivation to read.”

The legislation stipulates that adopted curricula and teacher training must incorporate all these essential components. The law also requires that screening and reading assessments measure progress toward the six components. Additionally, SB 1572 also mentions using a specific assessment tool to measure a student’s motivation to read in kindergarten through 3rd grade.

CALIFORNIA

An example of legislation that recognizes and responds to the literacy needs of bilingual and multilingual students

First, CA AB 130 is committed to “building and strengthening capacity to increase bilingual and biliteracy proficiency” by implementing effective language acquisition programs and interventions. Through CA AB 320, educators will utilize “ongoing and diagnostic techniques that inform teaching, assessment, and early interventions.” Such interventions include, the hiring of literacy coaches to support struggling students and establishing

biliteracy support programs during after school, weekend, and summer hours. Additionally, California will provide professional development to principals and teacher leaders to lead evidence-based reading instruction for English learners. Furthermore, bilingual reading specialists will be utilized to support English learner programs.

Next, CA AB 181 is dedicated to family engagement and has created different programs to support this desire. The literacy and biliteracy home visiting program allows “promotora” or family literacy outreach specialists to engage with families to “best support their pupils and every family member in reaching their literacy goals.” Family literacy plans are another tool used to create biliteracy goals, benchmarks, and roles for all family members.

Finally, CA AB 181 addresses the significance of culturally relevant texts. The state’s goal is to establish school and classroom libraries that include diverse book collections in English and other languages.

COLORADO

An example of a commitment to community engagement

Recognizing the lack of progress in literacy for historically underserved students, Colorado has created a set of guidelines that support children from the start. The state’s law highlights the pivotal role that the early years play in a child’s literacy development, noting that “children who struggle with literacy in kindergarten through third grade are unlikely to catch up to their peers.” Among its features, the law provides funding for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library Program to work with community partners in a book distribution effort designed to inspire a love of reading by giving books to children every month, starting from birth and continuing to age 5.

The presiding state librarian in the Department of Education plays an important role according to the law. They will support efforts to provide access to books in Colorado’s rural areas and to establish a detailed plan with local nonprofit organiza-

tions to provide greater access to age-appropriate, high-quality books each month. Other specific duties include managing the daily operations of the program, and developing, promoting and coordinating a public awareness campaign.

Finally, the law requires examining the success of the program. Yearly reports to the Department of Education and the education committees of the legislature are required to determine the total number of eligible children who will continue to be served by the program.

DELAWARE

An example of aligned curriculum and professional development

Like many other states, Delaware identifies the five pillars of reading as the essential components of an evidenced-based curriculum. Districts are asked to select from an approved list or can apply to use an alternative curriculum that is evidenced-based. All curricula on this approved list should include a “logical scope and sequence that is sequential, systematic, and cumulative.” At the same time, the law recognizes that one core reading program may not contain all of these elements and may need to be combined with other resources. Therefore, the core program and the supplementary sources need to be well-aligned to ensure that students receive an evidence-based curriculum.

The law also requires districts to align their assessments and progress-monitoring tools to support instruction and to identify students who need additional support. To ensure that teachers are well-prepared to take on these responsibilities, it requires districts to provide professional development aligned with the adopted curriculum and creates a supervisory role for an individual to assist in its implementation.

KENTUCKY

An example of legislation that supports writing instruction as an component of literacy

In SB 129, Kentucky defines writing as “the purposeful act of thinking and expression that uses language to explore ideas and communicate meaning to others.” It recognizes that writing is a complex, multifaceted act of communication that has an important role in educational improvement.

The law requires an on-demand assessment to be administered annually to elementary, middle and high school students. In addition, students are required to take a yearly assessment on the mechanics of writing, using multiple-choice and constructed response questions at each grade level.

The Kentucky Department of Education will provide guidelines to all schools for including an effective writing program within the curriculum. Within each school, “a committee appointed by the principal shall adopt policies that determine the writing program for its school and submit it to the Department of Education for review and comment.” It should include a variety of language resources; technological tools; and multiple opportunities for students to develop complex communication skills for a variety of purposes.

In a companion law, SB 9, the Kentucky Department of Education provides technical assistance to local school districts in helping teachers in each subject area implement evidence-based reading instruction (e.g., the five pillars), and the connections between reading and writing. To support instruction, the Department will develop a web-based resource that includes:

(a) Information on the use of specific screening processes and programs to identify student strengths and needs, including those for advanced learners; (b) current, evidence-based research and age-appropriate instructional tools that may be used to make substantial improvement in writing for students who experience difficulty with characteristics of dysgraphia.

In addition, the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development: Early Childhood through Adulthood shall collaborate with public and private institutions of postsecondary education and adult education providers to provide similar services to pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and administrators.

MICHIGAN

An example of a comprehensive set of services for students

Through several bills, Michigan has created a set of interventions designed to address the needs of students who may need additional support in reading. Five different support programs have been developed under this legislation: (1) tutoring, (2) summer programs, (3) before- and after-school programs, (4) multi-tiered systems of support and (5) parent involvement and support programs.

The state has partnered with the Michigan Education Corps to provide tutoring in pre-K through 3rd grade. The tutors will be trained in a multisensory, sequential, systematic education approach to reading. The impact of the tutoring program will be measured by recording the number of tutors, the number of children tutored and their demographic information, whether interventions are implemented with fidelity, whether children’s improvement in math or literacy is consistent with expectations, and the impact of the programs on organizations and stakeholders.

Furthermore, Grand Valley State University will work with families and districts to provide services such as after-school education and specialized summer education programming designed to improve reading and literacy using a multisensory approach. Moreover, Michigan is adopting a multi-tiered system of supports model to track pre-K to 3rd grade students’ progress, aiming for them to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The multi-tiered system of supports must include (i) team-based leadership, (ii) a tiered delivery system; (iii) selection and implementation of instruction, interventions, and supports; (iv) a comprehensive

screening and assessment system; and (v) continuous data-based decision making.

Finally, Michigan's state-funded preschool program, The Great Start Readiness Program, will partner with local parent coalitions to coordinate home visits for at-risk children and their families. The home visits must be conducted as part of a locally coordinated, family-centered, data-driven strategic plan. One of the goals of the home visits is to improve school readiness using evidence-based methods, including a focus on developmentally appropriate outcomes for early literacy so that children have the reading proficiency they need to succeed in 4th grade and beyond. Reading instruction into the curriculum for their subject area.

TEXAS

An example of professional development across grade levels

Professional development in Texas addresses the important issue of vertical alignment in reading. The commissioner is charged with developing and making available literacy academies for teachers with appropriate professional development for each grade band. The academies are also required to create a specialized screening and training program for students who may have dyslexia.

For teachers in grades K–3, for example, professional development must include training in systematic instructional practices in the five pillars of reading, and the use of empirically validated instructional methods for struggling readers. In addition to those skills, the academies for teachers in grades 4–5 must provide training in comprehension, inferential and critical thinking. For teachers in grades 6–8, the academies must include strategies for multisyllabic word reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension of expository and narrative text. In addition, teachers must be trained in an adaptation framework that enables them to respond to differing student strengths and needs, and degrees of English proficiency for students receiving special education services. The academies will also focus on helping teachers develop collab-

orative strategies to active student involvement and motivation to read.

Furthermore, all teachers in these grades who provide instruction in content areas such as mathematics, science, or social studies must receive training in strategies for incorporating reading instruction into the curriculum for their subject area.

UTAH

An example of capacity-building leadership promoting the science of reading

In Utah, the administrative team takes on an important role in promoting educational improvement and the science of reading. Specifically, the law states that leaders should “develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems” for teachers’ professional learning. The law requires all principals, supervisors, local educational district leaders and literacy specialists to complete professional learning on the science of reading within a specified time period. School leaders and literacy coaches are then required to work in partnership to ensure that all teachers have a team of support for improving literacy instruction.

In addition to the school leadership team, the legislation calls for a statewide literacy panel. This panel is designed to work with educator preparation programs, university teacher preparation program faculty, deans of education and literacy leadership fellows to advance the science of reading and the science of reading instruction.