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Now more than ever, educators across the state are articulating the need for intensive literacy support for adolescents. State funding has helped a handful of middle and high schools to “pilot” the adolescent component in Louisiana’s K-12 Literacy Plan: Ensuring Literacy for All, a design that was developed in 2006 to build on and expand the successful practices of Reading First. Results have been promising for these schools – lessons learned from the pilot have led to a comprehensive vision of what is needed in all Louisiana schools to adequately prepare our adolescents for the demands of college- and career-readiness, as well as effective citizenship in the new global economy.

The transformation of the day-to-day practice in the upper grades begins with the fundamentals of school effectiveness and good instruction, then goes a step beyond – to continuously monitor progress, modify practice, and infuse the growing knowledge base about teaching adolescent students to read and write well. Nothing less than a new paradigm is required – one based on joint problem solving, collaborative practice, and collective accountability – that engages students in purposeful reading and writing across all subject area learning. Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan replaces the old system with a new vision of teaching and learning that produces higher academic achievement for all students.

The Louisiana Department of Education literacy staff sought guidance in mapping a plan to fully address adolescent literacy – one that would eliminate achievement gaps many young adults face. A task force of district administrators, curriculum coordinators, principals, literacy coaches, teachers, university personnel, national consultants, and state staff representing various divisions at the LDOE offered advice and guided efforts. The process began by reviewing the most recent research on adolescent literacy, including Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (2006). This report, and subsequent reports reiterating the findings (Torgesen, et al., 2007; Kamil, et al., 2008), defines 15 key instructional and infrastructural elements that research has shown to have positive effects on adolescent literacy achievement. The task force further matched the 15 elements from Reading Next to five core components that provide the foundation for Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan:

» Leadership and Sustainability
» Standards-Based Curriculum
» Assessment System
» Instruction and Intervention (RTI)
» Professional Learning and Resources

This plan explains the core components, as well as actions and scaffolding necessary to improve adolescent literacy at the school level, and encourages a systemic and synchronized approach that also involves the state, districts, and communities.
After carefully reviewing the research, policies, and promising practices on adolescent literacy, Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan describes five interconnected core components important to improving adolescent literacy.

**The five core components are:**

- **Leadership and Sustainability**
  Creating literacy teams and plans for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to adolescent literacy

- **Standards-Based Curriculum**
  Examining Louisiana’s Standards, Grade-Level Expectations, and the Comprehensive Curriculum through the lens of adolescent literacy

- **Assessment System**
  Identifying and using valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose literacy needs to target instruction

- **Instruction and Intervention (RTI)**
  Implementing research-based strategies, promoting active student engagement, and establishing systems of support

- **Professional Learning and Resources**
  Developing learning opportunities, Web resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for students and educators

These components work as an effective literacy framework. Some components may precede others in implementation, but the comprehensive structure must be acknowledged and embraced through a systemic and holistic approach. Without leadership and sustainability, efforts for literacy improvement may be unfocused and short-lived. Without a balanced assessment system to guide instruction and intervention efforts for individual students, a Standards-Based curriculum may not be accessible to all learners. Ongoing professional learning transforms the status quo into effective practice for the 21st century. Lastly, and vitally important, a comprehensive system of learning supports garners all resources for reducing barriers to learning and engaging students.
### Literacy Plan Components and Reading Next Elements Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Leadership and Sustainability</th>
<th>Standards-Based Curriculum</th>
<th>Assessment System</th>
<th>Instruction and Intervention (RTI)</th>
<th>Professional Learning and Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Direct, explicit instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Reading and writing in all content areas</td>
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<td>3 Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Text-based collaborative learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Strategic intervention</td>
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<td>✅</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Diverse texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Intensive writing</td>
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<td>8 Technology</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>9 Formative assessment</td>
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<td>10 Extended time for literacy</td>
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<td>11 Professional development</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>✅</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Summative assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Teacher teams</td>
<td>✅</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Instructional leadership</td>
<td>✅</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Coordinated support</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- ✅ This component in the plan explains the steps necessary to implement the element.
- • This component provides additional information to support the element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Improvement Strategy</th>
<th>Leadership and Sustainability</th>
<th>Standards-Based Curriculum</th>
<th>Assessment System</th>
<th>Instruction and Intervention</th>
<th>Professional Learning and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Data-Driven Decision Making</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>2 Job-Embedded Professional Development</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Response to Intervention (RTI)</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Curriculum Alignment</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Meaningful Engaged Learning</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ This is the primary component most useful to implementing the school improvement strategy.

• This component provides additional information to support the school improvement strategy.

*Appendix D provides a description of the school improvement strategies.
The following pages present the features of each component, as well as actions and the scaffolding necessary to improve adolescent literacy. The actions offer guidance for school and district literacy leaders as they engage in their own planning to increase student achievement.
Effective leadership is essential for successful implementation and maintenance of a comprehensive literacy program at the local level. Leadership goes beyond the principal and is dependent upon the collective body of the organization, including school- and district-level staff, such as literacy coaches and a literacy leadership team. When established and cultivated, this form of collaborative leadership brings about a set of common values and beliefs – a complete systems view – that will guide instructional improvements over time. Along with instructional changes must come infrastructural modifications, such as those that extend time for literacy instruction and establish teacher teams to discuss teaching and learning. Schools with substantial literacy growth show evidence of continuous monitoring, adjustment, and adaptation, while keeping the focus on increased student achievement.

Extended Time for Literacy

Literacy leaders must ensure adequate instructional time to help all students perform at higher levels of reading and writing. In order to develop reading and writing fluency, students need extended opportunities for practice in these areas. Most reading and writing instruction currently takes place in reading/language arts classes and for some struggling readers, in intervention settings. Increased time must be allocated for reading text, discussing content and concepts derived from reading, and writing in response to text in all content area classes daily (e.g., science, social studies, mathematics). Comprehension in these areas can be maximized through teaching, modeling, and using before, during, and after reading strategies that enhance content understanding. (See the Instruction and Intervention component for specific strategies.) If improved academic achievement is to be the top priority, reading and writing must be placed at the center of instruction. In order to do so, these school-level factors must be considered:

Allocate time differently to provide extended time in the school’s master schedule

» Create schedules that maximize instructional time
» Schedule time for teacher teams to plan collaboratively
» Create support opportunities for students – literacy intervention, special programs, tutoring, and credit recovery

Advocate for change in the instructional focus

» Develop a shared responsibility of all teachers to support literacy development
» Analyze student data in teacher teams to determine and refine effective instructional practices
» Focus on student work and student learning

Teacher Teams

A collaborative school environment is established by providing time within the regular school day for teachers to learn, discuss, and plan the use of strategies for improving literacy learning. Teachers collaborate in a variety of teams – grade-level, vertical, departmental, or similar-responsibility teams such as special education teachers meeting with general education teachers with whom they share students. Teacher teams work interdependently toward a common goal – increasing student achievement – for which each team member is mutually accountable. All members of the faculty are assigned to at least one team. Teams are charged with answering the critical questions of learning:

» What do students need to know and be able to do?
» How will the concepts and skills be taught, with what strategies and resources?
» What do the data show about students’ learning?
» What steps need to be taken (e.g., adjustment in instruction) when students do not reach proficiency?
» What professional development must the team engage in to increase student learning?
Meeting in teacher teams affords staff the opportunity to use and study common assessments, establish proficiency standards, create and refine lessons, analyze student data, determine interventions for students, and most importantly— to study student work. Student work products are a direct reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of the school’s current instructional practices. Teacher teams raise the level of professional practice from isolation to sharing by reflecting upon, examining, and refining teaching practices so that all students are learning. Three specific protocols for looking at student work (collaborative assessment conference, consultancy, and tuning) can be found at http://www.lasw.org/methods.html.

**Instructional Leadership**

This element applies to the principal, as well as teachers. Principals seek input from teachers in the design and implementation of school reform decisions and policies. The process of creating a School Improvement Plan with a literacy focus is an excellent opportunity for principals to develop teacher leaders. The principal forms a Literacy Leadership Team (School Improvement Team) that focuses on helping all staff improve content literacy instruction. The principal, as a highly visible team member, works along with this select group of teachers and supports them in their development as teacher leaders committed to improving student literacy.

In *Good to Great* (2001), Jim Collins discusses the necessity of getting the right people involved in improvement efforts before making definite plans: finding the *who* first and then determining the *what*. Collins says that “the right people will be self-motivated by the inner drive to produce the best results and to be part of creating something great.” (p.32).

When selecting staff members to serve on the Literacy Leadership Team (School Improvement Team), the principal should consider teachers who:

» have knowledge of literacy best practices and expertise in improving literacy across the curriculum;

» are highly competent and recognized by peers for their knowledge and skill in the classroom;

» are willing to share resources and guide other teachers;

» possess good communication skills;

» are flexible and respect the opinions of others; and

» maintain a positive attitude and can inspire others to do the same.

When the entire literacy leadership at a school (principal, teacher leaders, literacy coach, *ideally all teachers*) is centrally engaged in designing, supporting, and overseeing the school’s fundamental purpose— increasing all students’ literacy skills— the end result is a sustainable culture of commitment to the goal. Literacy leaders live by that defining principle and use it to build and maintain an outcomes-based literacy culture.
Leadership and Sustainability:
Creating literacy teams and plans for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to adolescent literacy

Positive student literacy outcomes start with strong leadership committed to implementing, supporting, and sustaining a quality literacy plan. Effective leadership incorporates extended time for literacy, collaborative teacher teams, and collective instructional leadership focused on improvements in student achievement. In order for the literacy plan to endure, school leaders must intentionally foster and prolong the plan by expanding and adapting it over time, reflecting on what is (and is not) working and how the school can do even better (Jerald, 2005). Leadership from committed teachers and administrators can promote sustainability by anticipating, influencing, and effectively responding to changing conditions that affect progress. Additionally, leaders can sustain an effective literacy plan by identifying what is to be sustained, what resources are needed, and how to access those resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO PLAN</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</th>
<th>SUSTAINING THE PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Extended Time for Literacy**       | • Study flexible scheduling options to include additional time for reading intervention (double dosing)  
  • Consider consulting with support services such as scheduling experts to maximize efficiency of existing time and personnel  
  • Leverage literacy instructional time by studying and planning ways to incorporate reading and writing in all content areas  
  • Take stock of talents and training of all existing staff in the area of literacy instruction  
  • Establish ways to utilize entire teaching staff to address the diverse literacy needs of students | • Assign duties and schedules to staff, matching literacy instruction strengths to their assignments  
  • Use flexible schedules to include extended time for language arts and reading (e.g., block schedules)  
  • Schedule students who need additional literacy support into an elective reading class (conducted by a qualified interventionist who has been trained in the specific program) in addition to the regular language arts classes  
  • Monitor adherence to instructional schedule to ensure efficient use of entire instructional time  
  • Ensure literacy strategies are appropriately implemented across all content areas daily | • Make staff reassignments based on what will benefit student learning (e.g., those who are not providing extra literacy help will do student monitoring duties)  
  • Identify additional funding sources to hire specialized staff (i.e., literacy coach and interventionist)  
  • Identify and provide classrooms/space for additional intervention if necessary | • Continue to base re-staffing and re-scheduling decisions upon literacy-based goals  
  • Integrate new priorities (i.e., programs and initiatives) into existing school structures, protecting the literacy focus in all content areas  
  • Optimize district and federal funding to sustain literacy supports (i.e., staff, materials, professional learning) |
| **Teacher Teams**                    | • Identify inter- and intra-disciplinary teacher teams for consistency across content areas  
  • Schedule time for teams to meet for regular collaboration and examination of student work  
  • Identify team norms, protocols, and expectations  
  • Research the components of the professional learning community model [www.althinggplc.info](http://www.althinggplc.info)  
  • Ensure team goals are aligned with the broader overarching school-wide goal – increasing student learning and achievement | • Meet in teams according to regularly established times for collaborative planning and examining student work  
  • Prepare agendas and minutes for all meetings  
  • Use protocols to examine student work (e.g., collaborative assessment conference, consultancy, and tuning) [http://www.lasw.org/methods.html](http://www.lasw.org/methods.html)  
  • Observe model lessons, organize materials, and practice effective instructional strategies for effective instruction  
  • Plan and implement lessons that address the literacy needs of students | • Solicit help from literacy coach on differentiated instruction, active engagement, vocabulary and comprehension strategies for students  
  • Collaborate with other teacher teams to conduct peer observations and analyze lessons to improve content area literacy instruction  
  • Study formative student assessment results and use the results to continue to adjust instruction  
  • Assess effectiveness of team actions on student learning  
  • Alter teams as necessary to ensure optimal effectiveness | • Provide professional learning to new and continuing teachers  
  • Share professional learning at team and staff meetings  
  • Collaborate with other schools (feeder schools and schools in close proximity) to conduct peer observations, share literacy expertise, etc.  
  • Form vertical curriculum teams to align student expectations across grade levels  
  • Publish in school newsletters examples (anecdotal or objective) of student successes from specific instructional or assessment techniques learned through collaboration |
### Teacher Teams
(continued)

- Identify specific, measurable student achievement goals that are aligned with grade level expectations
- Develop a cyclical action plan that makes student learning the primary focus—look at student work, reflect on effectiveness of instruction, adjust to meet specific needs of students
- Participate in professional learning on effective teaching practices (professional development sessions, study of current literature and research)
- Study current research on process and teaming
- Focus on student learning through a continuous cycle of inquiry, planning, application, reflection (particularly looking at student work), and improvement
- Practice shared leadership by creating a schedule for rotation of team leadership

### Instructional Leadership
- Evaluate the school culture and current practices to determine the school’s strengths and needs for improvement in the area of literacy
- Co-develop with staff a list of prioritized needs and recommendations for literacy improvement
- Create a shared literacy vision for the school and community
- Analyze multiple forms of student, school, and teacher data to determine literacy needs of students and professional learning needs of teachers
- Plan for targeted, sustained professional learning of the staff on literacy strategies and deep content knowledge
- Identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support
- Organize a Literacy Leadership Team (School Improvement Team) with the principal as the leader
- Schedule time for the Literacy Leadership Team (School Improvement Team) to meet and plan
- Engage in leadership professional learning with a focus on facilitation/group process and teaming
- Study current research on

### Action

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<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO PLAN</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</th>
<th>SUSTAINING THE PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Teams</td>
<td>Identify and use common formative assessments, rubrics, data analysis on assessments, and strategies for improving student outcomes</td>
<td>Use technology to establish electronic teams where teachers contact each other for support</td>
<td>Encourage teachers to share stories of success in the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>Make sure all staff understands the school’s literacy goals and their roles in meeting the goals</td>
<td>Recognize and celebrate staff successes and accomplishments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Actively and consistently demonstrate in both words and actions a commitment to substantial, sustained literacy improvement</td>
<td>Recognize and celebrate student successes and progress toward goals</td>
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<td>Support a climate of collaboration and shared decision making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guide development and implementation of a literacy-focused school improvement plan that includes activities, resources, timelines, and persons responsible to support and expand literacy learning for all students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide follow-up professional learning and technical assistance to meet individual teacher needs (determined by student achievement data)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide follow-up professional learning and technical assistance to meet individual teacher needs (determined by student achievement data)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rewrite/refocus School Improvement Plan goals and objectives according to the results of student achievement</td>
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<td>Share student achievement gains with the local community through newspaper articles, displays of student work, podcasts, news conferences, community open houses, etc.</td>
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<td>Enlist the help of parents and community members in organized mentoring and volunteer tutoring programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Offer frequent opportunities to engage parents in the improvement process</td>
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<td>Identify and commit adequate fiscal and other resources that move effective practices to full implementation and scale-up</td>
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<td>Identify and allocate additional funding sources to hire specialized literacy staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Retain strong leaders on faculty</td>
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<td>Join or form a leadership organization to share successes and profit from others’ successes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visit other schools that have successfully improved student achievement to gain valuable insights and fresh ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meet with district-level instructional leadership and staff; participate on District Literacy Leadership Team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Define priorities and allocate needed resources to sustain them over time</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELEMENT</td>
<td>BEGINNING TO PLAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>adolescent literacy content learning</td>
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<td>• Serve as models of professional learning by studying literacy research and best practices, sharing professional resources among faculty, facilitating professional discussions, and training team leaders as facilitators</td>
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<td>• Select a walk-through observation form to ensure consistency of effective instructional practices (<a href="http://www.louisianschools.net/lde/uploads/15539.pdf">http://www.louisianschools.net/lde/uploads/15539.pdf</a>)</td>
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<td>• Implement a coherent professional learning plan for each teacher in order to improve instructional practices</td>
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<td>• Schedule regular literacy observations to monitor the use of literacy strategies across content areas and to monitor student engagement and learning (to ensure consistent use of effective instructional practices)</td>
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<td>• Create a culture and environment that promotes and celebrates literacy</td>
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<td>• Establish a system of literacy supports to ensure that “failure is not an option” [differentiation, use of principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – <a href="http://www.cast.org/">http://www.cast.org/</a>], homework help, tutoring, use of supportive technologies, increasing intensities of intervention</td>
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<td>• Model and communicate high expectations through commitment and careful implementation of sound practices</td>
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Louisiana’s Content Standards, Grade-Level Expectations, and the Comprehensive Curriculum serve as the foundation for academic literacy instruction. In an effective literacy plan at the local level, teachers translate the standards and curriculum goals into lessons that integrate literacy tasks into content area learning. Equally important, teachers plan direct, explicit instruction on how to read and learn from diverse text, both print and multi-media, that meet students' interests and skills. Each discipline requires specialized reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills. Content teachers are well suited to provide this instruction — they know the reading and writing formats specific to the subject area, as well as the learning goals of the course.

Reading and Writing in All Content Areas

Reading and writing in all content areas provides a way for students to review their own learning, organize their thinking, evaluate their understanding, and demonstrate their knowledge through meaningful communications with real audiences. Moving from one subject area to the next, students must tap into entirely different sets of vocabulary, text structures, and background knowledge. They must learn to write in many styles, applying a myriad of discipline-specific conventions and rules to match the purpose of the task.

Direct, explicit instruction — with special attention to vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, and sharing ideas with others — is necessary to develop advanced skills to meet the demands of content mastery. Incorporating reading and writing in all content areas is not an add-on, but reflects a commitment to helping students achieve content mastery and become independent, lifelong thinkers and learners. Use of writing rubrics by teachers sets standard proficiency goals, while students’ use helps them take responsibility for evaluating and improving their own writing.

Comprehension strategies help students construct meaning from text. These strategies are instructional practices that combine reading, writing, and thinking with content. In addition, strategy use by students enables independent, strategic reading and writing processes. The Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum includes content literacy strategies derived from sound, evidence-based principles of literacy and learning that require teacher modeling, interaction, and monitoring. The IES Practice Guide, Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (2008), substantiates the use of direct, explicit instruction in comprehension strategies to advance content-area achievement and literacy development. These strategies include:

- Summarizing;
- Asking and answering questions;
- Paraphrasing;
- Word learning; and
- Finding the main idea.

Writing activities are essential learning experiences and should be part of every teacher’s routine instructional practice. Research shows that combined instruction in reading and writing leads to improvements in content retention and creation of meaning. The Southern Regional Education Board (2004) recommends three types of writing activities — writing to learn, writing to demonstrate learning, and authentic writing — to help students develop as writers. These types of writing are not necessarily discrete and disconnected from one another. For example, a student studying the executive branch of government during a presidential election may organize his thoughts about each candidate’s platform (writing to learn), write a position paper on his preference (writing to demonstrate learning), and then present a speech promoting his favorite candidate to the entire student body (authentic writing).

Writing to Learn

The purpose of writing to learn is for the student to capture and express his thoughts, ideas, and questions about the content taught. When students are writing to learn, their attention focuses more on ideas than on “correctness.” Writing to learn emphasizes what is said (new ideas and concepts), rather than how it is said (correct spelling, grammar, and usage). Often less structured and more informal, writing to learn can take forms such as journals, summaries, responses to oral or written questions, observation logs, learning logs, free writing, and notes.
Writing to Demonstrate Learning

When writing to demonstrate learning, students convey what they have learned, how they have synthesized information, and what new understandings they have constructed. The purpose is for students to show what they know about the content and to make their knowledge understandable to an audience for a specific purpose. Some common examples of ways in which students can write to demonstrate learning include paragraphs, reports, constructed response and short answer items, essays, and research assignments.

Authentic Writing

Authentic writing asks students to synthesize, analyze, or evaluate what they have learned in order to communicate with a wider audience, usually outside the classroom. It is written with a specific, authentic purpose with awareness of authentic readers, in real-world forms such as short stories, letters, speeches, poems, editorials, articles, memoirs, brochures, reviews and digital storytelling. Students follow the steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Diverse Texts

The amount of reading that students do impacts their vocabulary, general knowledge, and spelling ability, as well as comprehension performance in all subject areas. Students in every classroom need access to a wide variety of relevant and motivating reading material on a broad range of topics that fits their diverse reading capabilities and interests. Students are motivated to learn when they encounter interesting, meaningful texts. In addition to textbooks, adolescents should have a choice of other content-related materials that have educational, cultural, social, and economic relevance for their lives. An extensive classroom library includes a variety of trade books, magazines, newspapers, technical materials, and various other types of print found in real-world contexts. Visual sources, including charts, graphs, the Internet, and other multimedia, are also engaging formats from which to learn. Key considerations for providing students with diverse reading materials are:

» Reading levels;
» Student interest and choice; and
» Accessibility.

Reading Levels

A classroom library should include reading material at the appropriate difficulty level for successful independent reading. High-interest, low-readability texts are necessary to engage students who are struggling with reading and to provide the daily practice required to improve reading outcomes (Biancarosa and Snow, 2006). For many years, a variety of American publishing companies have offered books that are written on a primary grade level, but treat themes and topics that are of interest to students of middle or high school age. An internet search with the terms *high-interest, low-readability texts* will lead to these resources, along with tips for motivating reluctant readers. Audio recordings and audio books should also be made available to students regardless of their reading levels.

Student Interest and Choice

One of the reasons many struggling readers don't read is because they have little or no interest in the materials available for them to read (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich 2004). A wide range of engaging topics and leveled materials for self-selected reading should be available. Using a reading interest survey, such as ([http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/tipsenc/reading_interest_survey.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/tipsenc/reading_interest_survey.pdf)), helps teachers determine the interests of students and the types of reading materials they prefer. Based on this data, teachers can make recommendations of books that are appealing and appropriate to students’ independent reading levels.

Accessibility

It is insufficient to provide excellent sources of information if a student lacks the skills to decode and comprehend the text. New technologies and media make it easier than ever to provide multiple alternatives for accessing a wide range of text and customizing teaching and learning. Drawing upon new knowledge of how the brain works, teachers can use flexible materials and media to maximize learning for every student.

Online tools, some of which are available at no cost ([http://bookbuilder.cast.org/](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/)), enable teachers to create and share digital books that engage and support diverse learners. In addition, commercial software with embedded supports such as text-to-speech, multi-media glossaries, electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias, and language translation capability is available.
Standards-Based Curriculum:
Examining Louisiana's Standards, Grade-Level Expectations, and the Comprehensive Curriculum through the lens of adolescent literacy

Louisiana’s Content Standards, Grade-Level Expectations, and the Comprehensive Curriculum serve as the foundation for instruction, and as a whole, encompass the basic skills that students should “know and be able to do” to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in the global marketplace. Every content area—and every non-academic kind of text, as well—has its own vocabulary, textual formats, stylistic conventions and ways of understanding, analyzing, interpreting and responding to words on the page (Heller and Greenleaf, 2007). Teachers of adolescents need the knowledge to integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills in all content areas to address these nuances. Additionally, research supports the need for teachers to make available diverse texts to engage students and support their learning of state and district curriculum (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

### Reading and Writing in All Content Areas

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<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO PLAN</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEGINNING TO PLAN</strong></td>
<td>• Study the characteristics of text structures, features, and styles used most frequently in each content area&lt;br&gt;• Identify and plan direct, explicit instructional strategies to teach text structures, vocabulary, and background knowledge students need to learn for each subject area&lt;br&gt;• Study a variety of strategies for incorporating writing in all disciplines <a href="http://www.adlit.org/article/27336">http://www.adlit.org/article/27336</a>&lt;br&gt;• Schedule professional learning for all teachers on research-based strategy instruction and rubrics to improve reading and writing&lt;br&gt;• Ensure curriculum is aligned with the standards</td>
<td>• Employ varied effective vocabulary development strategies to teach academic vocabulary in all disciplines&lt;br&gt;• Integrate reading and writing strategies and skill development necessary for achievement in all disciplines&lt;br&gt;• Support teachers’ use of reading and writing strategies in the classroom (coach, model, co-teach, observe and give feedback)&lt;br&gt;• Use a school-wide writing rubric that is aligned with state assessments to set clear expectations and goals for performance&lt;br&gt;• Make writing a daily activity in every class&lt;br&gt;• Teach and have students practice writing as a process (pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and publish)&lt;br&gt;• Provide variety and choice in reading materials and writing topics&lt;br&gt;• Develop meaningful opportunities for students to write, speak, and listen</td>
<td>• Monitor the use of instructional strategies to improve literacy through formal and informal observations (<a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15539.pdf">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15539.pdf</a>)&lt;br&gt;• Discuss exemplary samples with students to model features of quality writing&lt;br&gt;• Guide students to focus on their own improvement&lt;br&gt;• Increase the variety and choice in reading materials&lt;br&gt;• Teach word origins, roots, affixes and derivatives when presenting new content vocabulary&lt;br&gt;• Provide opportunities for reading varied genres and to build fluency, confidence, and understanding&lt;br&gt;• Integrate text comprehension strategies into instruction in all discipline areas (i.e., self-questioning, summarizing, predicting, inferencing, graphic organizers)&lt;br&gt;• Integrate a common theme across several disciplines, immersing students in the vocabulary connected to the topic&lt;br&gt;• Address workplace literacy skills across all content areas</td>
<td>• Ensure that leadership teams, literacy/content coaches, curriculum specialists, teachers, and support personnel receive ongoing professional learning in reading and writing instruction based upon teacher and student data&lt;br&gt;• Expand meaningful opportunities for students to write, speak, and listen (e.g., elocution contests, debates, speeches, and drama)&lt;br&gt;• Expand the types of writing across the disciplines (e.g., songs, manuals, captions, word problems, emails, ads, instructions, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• Differentiate writing assignments by offering student choice (<a href="http://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/Choice+Boards">http://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/Choice+Boards</a>)&lt;br&gt;• Create opportunities for peer observations, demonstration lessons, and dialogue to improve reading and writing instruction&lt;br&gt;• Organize professional learning and resources around teams of teachers in the same discipline&lt;br&gt;• Celebrate and publish good student writing products in a variety of formats (i.e., local newspapers, literary magazines, classroom and school libraries, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• Provide opportunities for parents to visit classrooms so they can observe instruction&lt;br&gt;• Host family nights that engage parents in activities that demonstrate the importance of reading and writing proficiency</td>
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<th>ELEMENT</th>
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<td>Diverse Texts</td>
<td>• Use assessment results to determine range of students’ reading levels</td>
<td>• Use leveling systems (<a href="http://www.lexile.com">www. lexile.com</a>), teacher judgment, and easy-to-use readability formulas (e.g., Dale-Chall, Fry) to determine readability and create leveled lists</td>
<td>• Allocate funding to increase the range and variety of reading material</td>
<td>• Allocate funding to update and renew classroom and school library book collections</td>
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<td>• Identify fiction and non-fiction texts of various reading levels on topics linked to the curriculum</td>
<td>• Select and incorporate into the curriculum high-interest texts that are age-and topic-appropriate and include a wide variety of cultural, linguistic, and demographic groups</td>
<td>• Collaborate with community resources to augment book collections (i.e., library, non-profits, private business, etc.)</td>
<td>• Continuously update lists of community resources</td>
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<td>• Inventory student interests and use results to select reading material (<a href="http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/valsa/teenreading/tipsenc/reading_interest_survey.pdf">http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/valsa/teenreading/tipsenc/reading_interest_survey.pdf</a>)</td>
<td>• Include audio recordings and online audio books that engage students and align with learning objectives</td>
<td>• Utilize parents and community members in diverse learning opportunities that promote literacy (i.e., guest authors, dramatic readings, book fairs, creative productions, etc.)</td>
<td>• Provide professional development on internet resources for free literacy enhancement tools that provide teaching and learning supports</td>
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<td>• Enlist the support of the librarian/media specialist to acquire additional texts and resources at various reading levels</td>
<td>• Ensure that all classes have libraries that include a wide range of topics at various reading levels</td>
<td>• Broaden the types and formats of texts students read and write about (e.g., magazines, newspapers, online text, picture books, primary sources, blogs, email, audio books, manuals, etc.)</td>
<td>• Seek local, state or federal grants for technology that will support literacy enhancement tools</td>
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<td>• Analyze instructional materials for alignment with standards, grade-level expectations, assessments, and learner needs</td>
<td>• Create opportunities that allow students choice of a variety of texts and multimedia to complete authentic tasks</td>
<td>• Support struggling readers’ equitable access to content by using audio- and video-enhanced software and internet resources with built-in teaching and learning supports (e.g., <a href="http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov/AccessGuide/Home.aspx">http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov/AccessGuide/Home.aspx</a> and <a href="http://www.cast.org/products/index.html">http://www.cast.org/products/index.html</a>)</td>
<td>• Provide families access to diverse resources that will allow students to function more independently (i.e., <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html</a>)</td>
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<td>• Organize classroom libraries considering difficulty levels, student interests, relevance to content and strategy demonstration and modeling</td>
<td>• Ensure access to available technologies (i.e., computers, assistive technology) by rotating students into learning stations</td>
<td>• Teach students and parents how to use Find a Book (<a href="http://www.lexile.com/fab/">http://www.lexile.com/fab/</a>) to build individualized reading lists at interest and developmental levels</td>
<td>• Provide families access to diverse resources that will allow students to function more independently (i.e., <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html</a>)</td>
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<td>• Provide professional learning on determining text readability levels, including Spanish text (e.g., use of <a href="http://lexile.com/analyzer/">http://lexile.com/ analyzer/</a>)</td>
<td>• Schedule quality, independent reading time, allowing students to self-select and enjoy reading materials</td>
<td>• Allocate funding to update and renew classroom and school library book collections</td>
<td>• Continuously update lists of community resources</td>
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<td>• Schedule quality, independent reading time, allowing students to self-select and enjoy reading materials</td>
<td>• Develop lessons that provide students with daily sustained experiences with diverse texts in a variety of genres</td>
<td>• Collibrate with community resources to augment book collections (i.e., library, non-profits, private business, etc.)</td>
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<td>• Seek local, state or federal grants for technology that will support literacy enhancement tools</td>
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<td>• Broaden the types and formats of texts students read and write about (e.g., magazines, newspapers, online text, picture books, primary sources, blogs, email, audio books, manuals, etc.)</td>
<td>• Provide families access to diverse resources that will allow students to function more independently (i.e., <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html</a>)</td>
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<td>• Support struggling readers’ equitable access to content by using audio- and video-enhanced software and internet resources with built-in teaching and learning supports (e.g., <a href="http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov/AccessGuide/Home.aspx">http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov/AccessGuide/Home.aspx</a> and <a href="http://www.cast.org/products/index.html">http://www.cast.org/products/index.html</a>)</td>
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<td>• Provide families access to diverse resources that will allow students to function more independently (i.e., <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/eia/1538.html</a>)</td>
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A comprehensive assessment system is a critical element of an effective plan for improving literacy instruction in late elementary, middle, and high school. Key to meeting this goal is accurate, timely assessment that allows the teacher to differentiate instruction according to individual students’ needs. For example, struggling readers are unlikely to profit from instruction that assumes skill mastery that has not been attained. Similarly, strong students will not achieve higher levels of literacy skills without appropriate challenges. Creating an effective plan necessitates reviewing and updating current assessment practices to ensure multiple forms of data collection. Measurement choices should be made after determination of what information is needed and why you need to know it. To that end, informed decisions need to be made about what measures to use and in what combinations (Brookhart, 2009).

Two additional considerations in guiding the selection of specific assessment measures should be reliability and validity. Reliability refers to how consistently a test measures a skill or ability. Validity refers to the extent to which it measures the skill or ability in question. The process of selecting a measure for use within a comprehensive assessment system should always include consulting the test manual, as well as independent reviewers, for information about the reliability and validity of the measure.

Assessment is often divided into formative and summative categories, based on the intended use of the assessment. Formative and summative assessments are designed to be used in the learning context as assessment for learning and assessment of learning respectively.

A balanced, comprehensive assessment plan is not necessarily one that can be quickly implemented. However, a blueprint for taking progressive steps toward thoughtful, data-driven decision making provides a foundation upon which to develop such a plan. In an “ideal” system, schools identify and use valid, reliable formative assessments to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose student needs to target instruction effectively. This ideal system also uses summative reading outcome measures to indicate how well students have learned or how well they have met performance standards.

**Formative Assessment**

Formative assessments check students’ progress toward grade-level standards, beginning early in the school year to identify students who may be “at risk,” and continuing throughout the instructional year to help guide instruction and intervention efforts. These simple, time-efficient, and objective measures mirror the type of instruction or intervention the student is receiving (e.g., accuracy, fluency, comprehension, etc.) and produce data, including reading levels, to inform judicious real-time instructional decisions.

**Screening and progress monitoring** assessments are examples of formative measures. Interim assessments are a form of progress monitoring and may include curriculum-based and benchmark measures (www.LouisianaEAGLE.org). The assessments evaluate how well the student has learned the material to date and provide decisive information to guide teaching efforts. Professional dialogue about common interim assessments should center first on standard setting for determining mastery of skills, then on rapid analysis of student results and discussion of instructional strategies used or needed.


**Diagnostic measures** are another type of formative assessment. If a student is not progressing with current instructional and intervention efforts, specific diagnostic measures provide more in-depth information useful in planning more targeted instruction.

Screening and progress monitoring measures can be administered by anyone – teachers, paraprofessionals, retired teachers, school counselors, media specialists, etc. – trained to administer them correctly. Typically, teachers administer the tests to their own students, or the school creates a school-level assessment team of four to eight people (depending on school size) to administer the tests. There are advantages to both approaches. Using an assessment team disrupts instruction less. However, the big advantage of having teachers administer the tests is that they may acquire information from directly observing the way students respond that goes beyond a test’s basic score. Depending on the circumstances, schools could elect to blend the approaches, using teachers to administer the tests to some of their students, while the school-level team assesses the rest of the students. Diagnostic measures are best administered by a school psychologist or by a teacher or reading coach with extensive training in their administration and interpretation.
Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are outcome measures that are frequently group administered. These assessments provide accountability data to guide the evaluation and progress of the school’s literacy program. State-mandated assessments and End-of-Course tests are examples. The data from such tests allow reporting of student progress by the individual, class, school, and other groups to stakeholders such as the LDOE, BESE, local communities, private groups, parents, and students.

**Figure 1:** Common Forms of Formative and Summative Assessments

![Assessment System Diagram]

Organizing Resources

To implement a comprehensive assessment system that includes both formative and summative assessment, the following tasks must be routinely accomplished each year:

» A master schedule should specify the weeks during which each assessment will be administered;

» All testing materials must be ordered or reproduced in time to reach those who will administer them;

» All teachers or members of the assessment team need to receive adequate training in administering the tests;

» A person needs to be designated to do the necessary follow-up and coordination to ensure that the testing is accomplished during the time periods specified in the master testing schedule; and

» A plan for scoring all assessments, as well as a plan for entering and summarizing the data, must be developed and executed.

Data Management and Use

In order to use testing data most effectively, a comprehensive assessment system needs a school-level data management plan. A number of web-based data management resources allow schools to enter data locally and produce data summaries and individual student charting that are helpful in interpreting test data. These services typically charge a small fee (e.g., one dollar per student per year), but they add significantly to the ease with which student data can guide both classroom and school-level decisions. Another approach is to use programs such as Microsoft Excel or free resources such as the data management program ChartDog (http://www.jimwrightonline.com/php/chartdog_2_0/manual/chartdogman.html) to manage and summarize student data.

The larger point is that finding an efficient way to manage and use the data is as important as gathering the data in the first place. Key in this process is “the need for all assessors and users of assessment results to be assessment literate – to know what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate uses of assessment results – thereby reducing the risk of applying data to decisions for which they aren’t suited” (Chappuis, Chappuis & Stiggins, 2009).
Assessment System:
Identifying and using valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose literacy needs to target instruction

Comprehensive assessment practices to support effective instruction must include both assessment for learning (formative) and assessment of learning (summative). Solid comprehensive assessments are a cornerstone of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. RTI is an organizational framework for instructional and curricular decisions and practices based on students’ responses. This process integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-leveled prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral issues. Formative assessment is ongoing and is used to provide information about student progress and to make effective instructional adjustments, while summative assessment is used to evaluate programs and for accountability purposes. As Stiggins (2007) states, “Changing schools from places that merely sort pupils based on achievement into places that assure that all pupils will meet standards brings with it the challenge of rethinking the dynamics of assessment.”

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<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td>• Research and select effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools to identify struggling readers, determine response to intervention, and gain in-depth knowledge of specific deficits</td>
<td>• Develop a formative assessment calendar based on local, state, and program guidelines, including specific timeline for administration and persons responsible</td>
<td>• Have a person or persons responsible for ensuring fidelity to all formative assessment procedures and timelines</td>
<td>• Provide continued professional learning to all staff who will administer assessments to ensure standardized procedures and accurate data recording</td>
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<td>• Identify common curriculum-based assessments (formal, informal, performance based) that include a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay)</td>
<td>• Administer assessments and input data according to the established timeline</td>
<td>• Analyze student data in teacher teams to develop and adjust instructional plans</td>
<td>• Acknowledge staff’s efforts to improve their use of assessment data to inform instruction</td>
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<td>• Define a process for selecting appropriate interventions for struggling readers</td>
<td>• Provide timely, descriptive feedback to students with opportunities to assess their own learning</td>
<td>• Use technology capacity to share relevant student progress data with parents and caregivers in an easily interpreted user-friendly format</td>
<td>• Make data-driven budget decisions aligned with literacy priority</td>
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<td>• Identify and purchase assessment and intervention materials aligned with students’ needs</td>
<td>• Create procedures and expectations for staff to review and analyze assessment results</td>
<td>• Implement a system for communicating data to the district literacy leadership team in a timely manner</td>
<td>• Advocate for alignment of district and school policies, procedures, and actions that support improvement and achievement efforts</td>
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<td>• Identify and train all staff who will administer assessments to ensure standardized procedures and accurate data recording</td>
<td>• Use results to make informed decisions about student placement and adjust instruction</td>
<td>• Use student assessment data to assist students and teachers in setting learning goals and monitoring progress toward those goals</td>
<td>• Provide parent seminars that focus on ways to support literacy at home</td>
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<td>• Have all materials and procedures in place prior to start of the school year</td>
<td>• Differentiate instruction in all content areas to customize literacy support, matching students’ needs to instruction and text</td>
<td>• Disaggregate data by subgroups to determine if instructional plans are addressing the needs of all students</td>
<td>• Host family learning nights to improve motivation and confidence in students and adults to become effective learners</td>
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<td>• Make a data collection plan for storing, analyzing, and disseminating assessment results</td>
<td>• Use screening, progress monitoring, and curriculum-based assessments to influence instructional decisions regarding flexible 3-tier service options (RTI)</td>
<td>• Integrate student-led conferences where students articulate their progress toward individual learning goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELEMENT</td>
<td>BEGINNING TO PLAN</td>
<td>BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT</td>
<td>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summative Assessment</td>
<td>• Analyze previous year’s outcome assessments (state-mandated, End-of-Course) to determine broad student needs and serve as a baseline for improvement</td>
<td>• Develop a summative assessment calendar based on local, state, and program guidelines, including specific timeline for administration</td>
<td>• Offer effective professional learning on ways to address specific skills identified as class, grade, subject, or school wide weaknesses</td>
<td>Based on analysis of summative assessment data:</td>
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<td>• Use analysis of previous year’s assessment to identify teachers that need to adjust teaching strategies</td>
<td>• Administer summative assessments at scheduled intervals</td>
<td>• Analyze summative data to identify Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of subgroups</td>
<td>• Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies</td>
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<td>• Identify summative assessments (i.e., end-of-unit or chapter tests and end of grading period tests) that will be used to measure progress toward content standards</td>
<td>• Provide timely feedback of the results to students and parents</td>
<td>• Apply protocols for looking at student assessments and evaluating student progress (see Teacher Teams in Leadership component for more information)</td>
<td>• Redefine school improvement goals</td>
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<td>• Use assessment results to monitor performance of individual students</td>
<td>• Plan lessons and re-teaching and intervention activities that target areas of need</td>
<td>• Adjust curriculum alignment to eliminate gaps</td>
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<td>• Focus discussions during teacher team meetings on changes that can be made to improve the instructional program for all students</td>
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<td>• Ensure students are placed appropriately in specific programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Plan time to review assessment results in teacher teams to identify program and instructional adjustments as needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognize and celebrate individual student’s significant improvements and reaching designated standards of achievement</td>
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</table>
When instruction is high in quality, the information being presented makes sense to students, is interesting to them, and is easy to remember and apply (Slavin, 1995). Effective instruction incorporates several factors necessary to support the literacy development of adolescents: explicit instruction, motivation, text-based collaborative learning, strategic intervention, intensive writing, and technology. Together, each of these contributes to the success of a high-quality literacy plan at the local level.

**Direct, Explicit Instruction**

In direct, explicit instruction (i.e., intentional instruction) the teacher models and explains the strategy and when to use it, provides support and corrective feedback as students practice the strategy, and offers opportunities for students to apply the strategy initially with a partner or in small groups and then, independently. Direct, explicit instruction engages students as active participants in using the appropriate literacy strategy to meet the demands of each content area while simultaneously building their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

**Fluency**

Fluency is made up of at least three key elements: *accurate* reading of connected text at a conversational *rate* with appropriate *prosody*. The terms automaticity and fluency are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same – that is, automaticity (accuracy and pace) are necessary to be a fluent reader, but not sufficient. When reading connected text, prosody is also essential. Prosody refers to the reader’s ability to make the passage sound like natural speech with appropriate rhythm, intonation, and expression at the phrase, sentence, and text levels.

Automatic word recognition significantly affects students’ ability to comprehend what they are reading (Torgeson, et al., 2001). If a student is accurate, but lacks appropriate speed, then one-minute speed drills with a list of carefully chosen words is often a useful method. However, if a student lacks accuracy, decoding instruction in targeted spelling patterns will provide students with insight into how words are put together. For a student who reads with both accuracy and speed, but lacks prosody, then direct instruction using intonation, phrasing and chunking, and scooping strategies may be helpful.

Read alouds and repeated readings are two instructional strategies proven to improve reading fluency. Read alouds provide students with good models of fluent reading. After the teacher models how to read the passage, the students then reread it aloud, silently, or with a partner. Repeated reading of the same passage allows students to increase the number of words they can read automatically. In fact, research states that in order to establish and improve fluency, students, especially struggling adolescent readers, may need to read the passage 3 to 4 times (Samuels, 2002). Effective repeated reading practice includes cuing students before reading to focus on either reading for speed or reading for comprehension, or both, and providing corrective feedback during or after the repeated reading.

Teachers select text to read aloud and for repeated reading from the textbook, narrative chapter books, informational texts, newspapers, magazines, picture books, poetry, and other appropriate ancillary text. When selecting text to read aloud, choose readings that relate directly to the content, activate student interest, enhance student understanding, and foster further discussion. Additional approaches that teachers can use to help students develop fluency are described in detail at [http://www.adlit.org/article/27878](http://www.adlit.org/article/27878) (NIFL, 2008).

**Vocabulary**

Students who lack adequate background knowledge and vocabulary necessary to “make sense” of the text they read will benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction (Kamil, et al., 2008). Explicit vocabulary instruction is a name for a family of strategies that include two complementary approaches: direct instruction in word meaning and instruction in strategies to promote independent vocabulary learning skills.
Direct instruction in word meaning helps students develop in-depth knowledge of strategically selected terms needed to fully comprehend the unit or concept of study. Direct instruction utilizes intentional teaching methods that promote active engagement in learning. Marzano's (2004) six-step process (www.doe.in.gov/lmmp/pdf/09conference/Six_Step_Process.doc) is a framework that provides direct instruction in word meaning. In the six-step process, teachers:

1. Pre-assess vocabulary knowledge to determine what students already know;
2. Provide multiple exposures to develop full knowledge of the new word. Learners often require up to 12 or more repetitions in various contexts and at varying intervals in order to really learn a word (Beck, et al., 2005);
3. Teach multiple meanings of words including a variety of ways words are used;
4. Engage students in tasks such as creating definitions in their own words, using graphic representations, providing examples and non-examples, creating mental pictures, and acting out definitions with charades to provide additional practice with vocabulary words;
5. Provide opportunities for students to use the vocabulary words verbally in discussions and in writing about what they are reading and learning; and
6. Use computer resources such as online dictionaries and other reference materials, hyperlinks, and online games to access additional information quickly and extend understanding.

Direct, explicit instruction in vocabulary involves selecting the “right words” to teach. Selection of appropriate terms to be targeted in explicit vocabulary instruction will have a significant impact on the outcomes of instruction.

Beck, et al., (2002) describe a practical method of selecting terms for explicit instruction. This method includes categorizing:

- **Basic words** known by most students at a particular grade level (e.g., softly, beautiful, speaker)
- **High-utility words** that students encounter frequently in many contexts and content areas (e.g., regardless, examine, compromise)
- **Content-specific words** particular to a subject area that often lack generalization to other subject areas (e.g., biogenetics, polynomial, foreshadowing)

Basic words rarely require instruction. High-utility words are recommended as the focus of explicit vocabulary instruction in reading and English language arts classes. Teachers select high-utility words for instruction based on each word’s importance to understanding the text and students’ conceptual understanding of the word. For example, “benevolent” might be a good word to target for instruction since students know what it means to be “nice.” Content-specific words are best learned in the subject area that students are most likely to encounter them. For content classes, vocabulary should be selected on the basis of how important the words are for understanding the concepts that students are expected to learn. For example, the word “mitochondria” might be selected for pre-reading instruction in a chapter on cell biology.

**Strategies to promote independent vocabulary learning skills** include analyzing semantic and syntactic context clues to derive the meaning of unknown words. Semantic clues provide information about a word’s meaning (often using background knowledge) and syntactic clues provide information about a word’s grammatical purpose (i.e., its part of speech).

Students should be encouraged to use dictionaries and other word reference materials, including electronic versions. This can be particularly important when writing – searching for appropriate synonyms, as well as clarifying and enriching the meaning of a known word (e.g., learning the differences between crying, sobbing, weeping, wailing) broadens vocabularies. Rich dialogue about words and topics creates deeper and more in-depth understanding of the meaning of words, so time should be allowed for discussions centered around text. Morphology, the study of the structure and form of words in language or a language, including inflection, derivation, and the formation of compounds, increases word knowledge by highlighting the similarities of meaning of parts of words (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis, photocopy).

Teaching vocabulary is complicated by the varying word knowledge levels of individual students. Rather than apply a “one size fits all” approach to vocabulary instruction, it is wise to assess students before the reading or other tasks involving text (Fisher et al, 2007). One method for accomplishing this is through vocabulary self awareness (see Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart at http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/14725.pdf). This awareness is valuable because it highlights for students their understanding of what they know and for teachers the words they can target for instruction. Teachers make vocabulary instruction a priority by allocating time during the lesson to focus on word acquisition. Research findings suggest that there is not a single best way to teach vocabulary; rather, using a variety of techniques that include repeated exposures to unknown word meanings produces the best results (Boardman, et al., 2008).
**Comprehension**

Direct, explicit instruction in comprehension provides students with strategies to use before, during, and after reading to build and activate their background knowledge, monitor their understanding, and review and reflect on what they have read. Comprehension strategies are taught explicitly by explaining and modeling the strategy, using the strategy in guided reading practice with feedback, and applying the strategy in independent practice. Comprehension strategies include:

- Summarizing;
- Asking and answering questions;
- Paraphrasing;
- Word learning; and
- Finding the main idea (Kamil, et al., 2008).

Students must actively participate in the comprehension process and learn how to apply the strategies to improve their reading comprehension skills. When selecting strategies, teachers should ensure that the strategy is appropriate for the text and that the text is appropriate for the reading level of students. The following websites provide suggestions for teaching comprehension strategies for use before, during, and after reading: [http://www.adlit.org/strategy_library](http://www.adlit.org/strategy_library) and [http://jc-schools.net/read6-12/ReadingCompStrategies.pdf](http://jc-schools.net/read6-12/ReadingCompStrategies.pdf).

**Motivation**

Motivation, engagement, and achievement are closely linked. Motivation leads to engagement; sustained engagement, bolstered by quality instruction, leads to improved student achievement.

To foster improvement in adolescent literacy, teachers should use strategies to enhance students’ motivation to read and engagement in the learning process. Kamil, et al. (2008), makes four recommendations to enhance students’ motivation to read and engage in the learning process:

- Set clear goals and expectations for reading and writing assignments;
- Provide variety and choice in topics, assignments, and reading material;
- Link content to students’ personal experiences and real-world applications; and
- Provide opportunities for students to interact through reading by allowing students to work in small groups and pairs.

Increasing long-term motivation does not result from a quick fix. Reading motivation strong enough to last across weeks, months, and years is not made in a day. However, when the classroom context contains the practices stated above, reading motivation grows and becomes self generating (Guthrie, et al., 2000).

**Text-Based Collaborative Learning**

During text-based collaborative learning, students work in small groups to discuss a topic and to interact with each other about what they are learning. The text may be self-selected or assigned reading around a common topic or theme. The discussions and interactions, which may include collaborative brainstorming, group summarizing, peer editing, and responding to others’ writing through blogging, help students gain a deeper understanding of the thinking processes involved in comprehension.

*Say Something* (Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988) is a specific instructional practice that promotes collaborative learning and keeps adolescent readers thinking as they read. Students are placed in small groups, take turns reading something, and occasionally stop and “say something” about what they read.

The IES Practice Guide *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices* (Kamil, et. al, 2008) makes four recommendations to engage students in high-quality discussions of text meaning and interpretation:

- Carefully prepare for the discussion by selecting appropriate texts. Use engaging texts that can stimulate and have multiple interpretations;
- Ask follow-up questions that help provide continuity and extend the discussion. Follow responses with other questions that lead to varying points of view;
Provide a task or a discussion format that students follow when they discuss texts together. Use the comprehension strategies that students have been taught and monitor the small groups to redirect and give feedback; and

Develop and practice the use of a specific discussion protocol (see link below). Identify steps that students follow to guide the discussion and to cause students to think deeply about the meaning of what they are reading.

Effective discussions focus on building a deeper understanding of the author’s meaning and critically analyzing the author’s conclusions. In effective discussions, students present and defend individual interpretations and points of view, use text content, background knowledge, and reasoning to support interpretations, and listen to the points of view of others. Resources helpful in applying these recommendations are available at http://educon21.wikispaces.com/page/pdf/Session+Protocols.

**Strategic Intervention**

Many adolescents struggle with complex texts. Students reading below grade level need strategic intervention to accelerate their literacy development.

Strategic intervention is often organized into levels that represent an increase in the amount of support students receive based on assessment data. The approach of assessing all students and using the data to modify their instruction is called Response to Intervention (RTI). Research demonstrates the benefits of implementing RTI in a standardized way, using common assessment and data management tools and a standard process to solve problems and accurately determine student needs (Torgesen, et al., 2001; VanDerHayden, Witt & Gilbertson, 2007). A standard protocol is a step-by-step process for identifying student strengths and weaknesses and determining appropriate intervention (e.g., http://isteep.com/). It helps professionals efficiently perform all the basic RTI tasks correctly. Another key aspect of RTI is frequent progress monitoring of students’ response to instruction to determine the intensity of support needed.

Schools implementing RTI in Louisiana use a three-tiered approach of instruction and intervention, as shown in Figure 1.

![Response to Intervention Model](image)

**Figure 1:** Response to Intervention Model

- **Tier I**
  - Literacy instruction provided to all students
  - Includes explicit instruction in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies embedded in ELA classes and in all content area classes

- **Tier II**
  - Literacy instruction provided to students who fail to meet reading benchmarks
  - Targeted, research-based instruction, *in addition to* Tier I

- **Tier III**
  - Intensive literacy instruction provided to students who have not responded adequately to Tier I and/or Tier II instruction, *in addition to* Tier I
  - Targeted, specific instruction based upon diagnostic measures

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Tier I

Tier I represents the literacy instruction provided to all students in both ELA and all content area classes. At this level of instruction, teachers provide high-quality, Standards-Based instruction to all students through a combination of informational and narrative texts, including primary source documents. Content area instruction supports specific Louisiana Comprehensive Curricula by emphasizing content area vocabulary and research-validated literacy practices, including using before, during, and after reading comprehension strategies, word learning, and other literacy strategies that facilitate learning course content.

Initially, faculty should select a few effective and readily-teachable strategies that target the most obvious needs. Research states that students benefit most when three to four strategies are taught consistently across all content areas (Torgesen, et al., 2007). These strategies allow students maximum access to rigorous curriculum regardless of literacy levels.

School-wide reading screening measures are used to identify those students experiencing reading difficulties. Classroom content area assessments are administered periodically to determine whether students are making progress or need extra support. These assessments provide data for planning scaffolded instruction delivered in flexible grouping (i.e., whole group, small group, partner and individual). Teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students — including providing text on a variety of reading and interest levels, using collaborative groups, and offering students choices in accessing curriculum and demonstrating learning. Outcome assessments are administered to all students to determine growth/gain over time.

Tier II

Tier II refers to targeted research-based supplemental instruction that is provided in addition to core ELA instruction. This instruction is aimed at improving academic achievement of students who are reading below grade level in one or more critical areas of reading as determined by a review of statewide assessments and school-wide screening procedures. This double dosing of literacy instruction is necessary to help struggling students catch up to grade level standards and reading levels, and is often the last chance for adolescents to gain the skills necessary for graduation, advanced learning opportunities, and career readiness.

Typically, a class period is scheduled during the regular school day to provide the additional reading instruction required by students in Tier II. These classes should follow intervention program recommendations for class size and should be implemented with fidelity by a trained professional.

Progress monitoring for Tier II students should be conducted frequently, using an appropriate measure (see Assessment section) that is external to the intervention program being used. When a Tier II student meets the benchmark goal(s), the intervention can be discontinued, but progress should be carefully monitored to ensure continuation of adequate growth.

Tier III

This level of intensive intervention is for a small percentage of students who have not responded adequately (based upon individual, pre-determined goals) from the instruction provided in Tier I and/or Tier II. Tier III intervention is scheduled during the school day, and is in addition to core instruction. This tier usually includes students who have severe reading difficulties. Groups should be very small and the intervention should be implemented with fidelity by a qualified professional. Diagnostic and weekly progress monitoring measures are utilized with this group of students to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and check progress toward goals. If progress monitoring data show that a student is not making progress, the student may be referred for further evaluation and additional services.

Note: Louisiana’s RTI webpage can be accessed at [http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lan/2999.html](http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lan/2999.html).

Intensive Writing

Adolescents need instruction in writing as a process (e.g., planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing), but they especially need that instruction to be connected to the kinds of writing tasks they will have to perform in high school and beyond. Attention therefore should be given not only to increasing the amount of writing instruction students receive and the amount of writing they do in all classes, but also to increasing the quality of writing instruction and assignments.

The 6 + 1 trait writing model of instruction and assessment ([http://www.thetraits.org/definitions.php](http://www.thetraits.org/definitions.php)) gives students clearly defined expectations for improving writing skills. These traits — ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation — define criteria for good writing and provide teachers with a consistent vocabulary and approach for teaching intensive writing across all content areas and grade levels.
Effective adolescent literacy programs use technology as both an instructional tool and instructional topic. As a tool, literacy software can provide instructional reinforcement and opportunities for guided practice to help students improve fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. As a topic, technology requires new reading and writing skills once unimaginable.

The Internet and other forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are redefining the nature of reading, writing, and communication. Some of the most common ICTs impacting students’ lives today include search engines, Web pages, e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, podcasts, and e-books. Integrating these new technologies into the curriculum helps students to develop the skills they need to be successful in a global community – thinking critically, problem solving, and communicating and collaborating effectively in this fast-paced, networked world.
Instruction and Intervention (RTI): Implementing research-based strategies, promoting active student engagement, and establishing systems of support

High-quality instruction and intervention, also called Response to Intervention, is key to improving literacy achievement for all adolescents (Kamil, et al., 2008). Explicit instruction (i.e., intentional instruction), which includes modeling and student opportunities to practice in authentic contexts, is an important characteristic of high-quality instruction. Excellent instruction also enhances students’ motivation to read, and offers opportunities to engage students in text-based discussions, meaningful writing assignments, and technology use. Strategic intervention, matched to the needs of students, is also important for literacy learning.

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<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO PLAN</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</th>
<th>SUSTAINING THE PLAN</th>
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<tr>
<td>Direct, Explicit Instruction</td>
<td>• Compile classroom observation data (e.g., using a checklist <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15539.pdf">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15539.pdf</a>) to show current practice in reading and writing instruction</td>
<td>• Use research-based instructional strategies that support diverse needs</td>
<td>• Review observation and assessment data to improve and enhance teaching practices</td>
<td>• Remain focused on improved student learning by continuously analyzing data for impact of teaching strategies on student achievement</td>
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<td>• Examine observation data to determine quality of instruction focused on features in checklist above</td>
<td>• Select carefully the text to use when beginning to teach a given strategy</td>
<td>• Share effective lessons and strategies in teacher team meetings</td>
<td>• Provide support to new teachers on explicit instructional strategies</td>
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<td>• Examine student data to focus on instructional areas of greatest need (e.g., fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)</td>
<td>• Ensure that the text is appropriate for the reading levels of the students</td>
<td>• Create opportunities for peers to observe and demonstrate explicit lessons within the school as well as with schools in close proximity</td>
<td>• Invest in professional books to stay abreast of current research and new findings related to explicit instruction</td>
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<td>• Agree upon literacy instruction students will receive in each content area</td>
<td>• Provide frequent feedback and coaching to staff, based upon fidelity checks</td>
<td>• Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts, not just to one type of text</td>
<td>• Refine or modify strategies based on new developments</td>
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<td>• Plan and provide professional learning on direct, explicit instructional strategies that build students’ fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills</td>
<td>• Tell students specifically what strategies they are going to learn; tell them why it is important for them to learn the strategies; model how to use the strategies; provide guided and independent practice with feedback so students have opportunities to use the strategies</td>
<td>• Address both academic and workplace literacy skills across all content areas and provide students with knowledge of a variety of career pathways</td>
<td>• Repurpose staff based on the literacy needs of students</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• Survey students to determine what motivates them to read or write for a school assignment (<a href="http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/tipsenc/reading_interest_survey.pdf">http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/tipsenc/reading_interest_survey.pdf</a>)</td>
<td>• Make available and allow students choices of supplemental reading materials (including high interest/low readability) and writing activities</td>
<td>• Help students create attainable goals that are measurable and observable to them</td>
<td>• Revisit content area literacy agreements based on student performance results on reading and writing assessments</td>
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<td>• Study strategies to enhance students’ motivation to read and engage in the learning process</td>
<td>• Use a variety of strategies to increase background knowledge and encourage wide reading such as The Why Files (<a href="http://whyfiles.org/">http://whyfiles.org/</a>)</td>
<td>• Give students specific feedback about their progress that conveys realistic expectations</td>
<td>• Expand opportunities for teachers to observe explicit lessons within the school as well as in other schools</td>
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<td>• Redesign instruction so that it is more relevant to students’ interests, everyday lives, and current events</td>
<td>• Integrate curriculum with real-world applications that are important to adolescents (e.g., use current events to build</td>
<td>• Analyze summative and formative data for student achievement and allow students to see and use the data</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for students to tutor others and read aloud to younger students</td>
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<td><strong>continued</strong></td>
<td>• Plan to include opportunities for students’ choice of materials, research topics, assignments, curriculum access, and demonstration of knowledge</td>
<td>• Connect with every student to optimize participation and achievement (i.e., mentoring by caring adult)</td>
<td>• Expand the depth and breadth of collaborative learning opportunities</td>
<td>• Use tools that enable students to reach out globally and engage in projects with students worldwide <a href="http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tech/international/index.html">http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tech/international/index.html</a></td>
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<td>• Conduct an internet search with the terms <em>high interest</em> and <em>low readability</em> texts to access resources and tips for motivating reluctant readers</td>
<td>• Acknowledge student effort and the learning process by allowing redoing, retaking, and revising</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for students to share work products in authentic situations and with audiences beyond the classroom</td>
<td>• Keep abreast of research and strategies to enhance students’ motivation in the learning process</td>
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<td>• Research and purchase curricular materials that are relevant for adolescent learners</td>
<td>• Provide a supportive learning environment that views mistakes as growth opportunities</td>
<td>• Capitalize on students’ interest in technology and media by using digital tools and Web quests to conduct research, presentation software to demonstrate learning, word processing to edit, code, and mark text, and e-mail to encourage communication</td>
<td>• Continue to provide feedback to students that encourage them to reflect on how they learn, what they do well, and what they need to improve</td>
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<td>• Examine assignments for authentic purpose, audience, and critical thinking</td>
<td>• Provide a positive learning environment that promotes student autonomy, empowering students to make decisions about topics and forms of communication</td>
<td>• Bring active community members into the school to share their success stories so students can see the benefits of achievement</td>
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<td>• Plan to include opportunities for students’ reading and writing skills)</td>
<td>• Emphasize active student engagement with significant content by using hands-on activities</td>
<td>• Examine grading practices to increase elements that students find motivating such as structured choice or an authentic purpose for reading or writing</td>
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<td>• Form literacy-related clubs such as book, writing, debate/speech, and media clubs based on student interests and popular trends</td>
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<td>• Focus and build upon small student successes</td>
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<td>• Provide students with reasons for assignments</td>
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<td>• Define expected outcomes and standards of achievement and help students set goals to achieve them</td>
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<td><strong>Text-Based Collaborative Learning</strong></td>
<td>• Examine and develop classroom management, organization, and routines to support meaningful student collaboration</td>
<td>• Create learning opportunities using the structures and strategies for collaborative learning based on text and clear curricular goals in all content areas</td>
<td>• Develop and/or use a fidelity checklist to monitor implementation of collaborative learning across the curriculum</td>
<td>• Introduce students to global networking through organizations such as Global Schoolhouse (<a href="http://www.globalschoolnet.org/">http://www.globalschoolnet.org/</a>) to develop cultural understanding and global awareness</td>
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<td>• Plan and provide staff with professional development on structures and strategies that encourage collaborative learning (e.g., questioning techniques)</td>
<td>• Develop rubrics that students can use to monitor their current group functioning and work products</td>
<td>• Differentiate and provide follow-up professional development based upon classroom observations</td>
<td>• Budget funding for provision and expansion of engaging and diverse reading texts</td>
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<td>• Utilize literacy coach to provide support by modeling, observing, and providing feedback</td>
<td>• Determine effectiveness of the collaborative process on student achievement</td>
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<td>ELEMENT</td>
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<td>BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text-Based Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>• Provide diverse texts to ensure all students in the group can gain meaning of the content</td>
<td>• Administer universal screening to all students (or to a subset of students such as those who failed the state assessment)</td>
<td>• Ensure fidelity to the overall instructional plan by conducting walk-throughs and observations (e.g., <a href="http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/15540.pdf">http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/15540.pdf</a>)</td>
<td>• Jointly plan inter-disciplinary collaborative learning opportunities to reinforce vocabulary and conceptual development across multiple texts</td>
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<td>• Assign roles within each group to ensure collaboration and effective use of time</td>
<td>• Consult multiple forms of data to identify struggling readers</td>
<td>• Institute assessment protocols that explain to students the importance of the test, what the results are used for, and what the results mean</td>
<td>• Elevate student group discussions to include debates on current issues in content areas</td>
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<td>• Provide questions that encourage students to think reflectively about texts</td>
<td>• Determine which students struggle with decoding and which ones need extra help with comprehension</td>
<td>• Create and implement a goal-setting process with students, including explanation of data and next steps for improvement</td>
<td>• Ensure every student receives mentoring by a staff member or community member who can guide the student in reaching individual goals</td>
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<td>• Provide formats and specific steps for students to follow to guide the discussion</td>
<td>• Select a few purposeful literacy strategies that address student needs and require all content area teachers to use them</td>
<td>• Have a person(s) responsible for ensuring the intervention program(s) are implemented with fidelity</td>
<td>• Reallocate funding to replenish assessment and intervention materials, continue professional development, and maintain and hire highly-qualified intervention staff</td>
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<td>• Require group response to text in writing (or other representation) that communicates and applies new knowledge gained through collaboration</td>
<td>• Provide literacy-rich instruction for all students in all subject areas (Tier I)</td>
<td>• Monitor student attendance in intervention and time on task</td>
<td>• Continue to provide substantial professional development and follow-up on the use of intervention program(s)</td>
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<td>• Design specific opportunities for groups to share with other groups, classrooms, and grade levels the concepts and facts acquired through collaborative discussions</td>
<td>• Provide additional literacy intervention (e.g., an additional reading class as an elective, one-on-one tutoring, computer-assisted instruction, or before- or after-school program) by well-trained professionals for those students who need more targeted support (Tiers II and III)</td>
<td>• Continue to monitor individual student growth targets (i.e., chart aim line and progress monitoring data points)</td>
<td>• Continue to monitor individual student growth targets (i.e., chart aim line and progress monitoring data points) and use the data to drive instruction</td>
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<td>• Continue to build teacher skills by creating opportunities for staff to experience collaborative discussions around the meaning and interpretation of text</td>
<td>• Establish and monitor individual student growth targets (i.e., chart aim line and progress monitoring data points)</td>
<td>• Collect and analyze data (e.g., chart aim line and progress monitoring data points) and use the data to drive instruction</td>
<td>• Collect and analyze data (e.g., chart aim line and progress monitoring data points) and use the data to drive instruction</td>
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<td>• Jointly plan inter-disciplinary collaborative learning opportunities to reinforce vocabulary and conceptual development across multiple texts</td>
<td>• Keep intervention classes small</td>
<td>• Provide feedback and coaching to all content area teachers, including follow-up support for those students who need even more targeted support (Tier IV)</td>
<td>• Provide feedback and coaching to all content area teachers, including follow-up support for those students who need even more targeted support (Tier IV)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Elevate student group discussions to include debates on current issues in content areas</td>
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Strategic Intervention

- Provide staff with professional development on Response to Intervention (universal screening, tiered model, data-driven decision making, progress monitoring, intervention adjustment based on data)
- Allocate ample time to research intervention programs (e.g., using http://www.louisianschools.net/lde/la2955.aspx)
- Purchase one or two research-based reading intervention programs; if only one is chosen, be sure it includes both decoding and comprehension components
- Provide substantial initial professional development on the chosen intervention program(s) and plan for ongoing, job-embedded coaching
- Ensure the school procures all equipment necessary to operate the program(s)
- Inquire about recurring costs of materials and technology services
- Build the master schedule early to accommodate the number of intervention classes needed
- Continue to monitor individual student growth targets (i.e., chart aim line and progress monitoring data points) and use the data to drive instruction

Jointly plan inter-disciplinary collaborative learning opportunities to reinforce vocabulary and conceptual development across multiple texts.

Elevate student group discussions to include debates on current issues in content areas.

Reallocation funding to replenish assessment and intervention materials, continue professional development, and maintain and hire highly-qualified intervention staff.

Continue to provide substantial professional development and follow-up on the use of intervention program(s).

Ensure every student receives mentoring by a staff member or community member who can guide the student in reaching individual goals.
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<th>ELEMENT</th>
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</table>
| Strategic Intervention       | • Select intervention teachers who have a proven record of success with struggling students  
   [continued]                   | • Implement intervention programs with fidelity                                        | • Collaboratively evaluate student writing assignments during team meetings and reassess strategies used for creating proficient writers  
   |                                                                              | • Provide follow-up professional development on the intervention program, supplemental materials, and literacy support strategies for all teaching staff  
   |                                                                              | • Design a fluid system of intervention that allows easy flow of students into and out of the various levels of support  
   |                                                                              | • Use progress monitoring assessment data to inform instruction  
   |                                                                              | • Assign specific writing assignments for content learning (i.e., journal/log entries, verbal descriptions of math problems, note-taking, reflection, summaries, instructions for science experiments, captions for historical event pictures, etc.)  
   |                                                                              | • Establish a schedule to implement varied writing assignments in all content areas so students have experience in all three kinds of writing  
   |                                                                              | • Plan and use school-wide benchmark writing assessments  
   |                                                                              | • Teach the components of the school-wide rubric to students so they can judge the quality of their own writing  
   |                                                                              | • Provide students with good models of writing to examine  
   |                                                                              | • Teach students revision and editing strategies that include quality writing traits such as organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions  
   |                                                                              | • Monitor fidelity to the overall plan and writing schedules  
   |                                                                              | • Acknowledge staff efforts to implement the writing plan and to enhance student writing proficiency  
   |                                                                              | • Maintain student portfolios with samples of writing that move with them from grade to grade  
   |                                                                              | • Plan periodic student review of their writing portfolios with reflection on growth in specific writing skills  
   |                                                                              | • Allow students to compose with word processing software to encourage revising and editing  
   |                                                                              | • Share teacher testimony and antidotes on practices that improved student achievement  
   |                                                                              | • Review formative and summative data for student growth  
   |                                                                              | • Provide ongoing differentiated professional development activities to existing staff and foundational training to new staff  
   |                                                                              | • Make efforts to communicate writing successes to the external community (publish in local newspapers, post in local library)  
   |                                                                              | • Arrange to have authors visit schools and discuss their books and writing methods with students  
   |                                                                              | • Invite local community and business leaders to visit classrooms and describe the types of writing used in their work  
   |                                                                              | • Use web resources for articles, lesson plans, and unique ideas for encouraging writing (http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/resources/encourage_writing.csp)  
<p>| | |
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<th>ELEMENT</th>
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<td><strong>BEGINNING TO PLAN</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Survey staff on knowledge and use of technology integration in instruction</td>
<td>• Provide staff with professional development on technology skills and use of multimedia to support instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop a professional learning plan based on staff technology survey</td>
<td>• Coach teachers in the classroom on how to use technology to enhance instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Inventory current hardware, software, and other technologies available at the school</td>
<td>• Designate a campus technology coordinator to help teachers troubleshoot technology issues and to coordinate with district technology staff to help integrate technology into instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Plan to incorporate available technology resources into content area lessons</td>
<td>• Utilize all available technologies to address the needs of learners in all content areas (e.g., free text-to-speech software, digital text)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop a long-range technology plan (standards of use, assessments of effectiveness, plans for periodic updates of hardware and software, and a program to protect students from inappropriate material) <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lcet/1583.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lcet/1583.html</a></td>
<td>• Ensure all students have access to available technologies to improve their reading and writing skills in all content areas</td>
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<td>• Investigate technologies that provide learning supports for all students (e.g., text-to-speech, speech recognition technology, etc.)</td>
<td>• Develop and use communication tools on the internet to connect with students and parents outside the classroom (e.g., e-mail, Blackboard, instant messaging, class webpage, lectures, and videoconferencing)</td>
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<td>• Give students access to the internet to obtain high-quality curricula, topical experts, and multimedia tools (e.g., Web Quests, virtual fieldtrips, digital glossaries, interactive manipulatives, etc.) <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lcet/350.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lcet/350.html</a></td>
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<td>• Use the Louisiana K-12 Educational Technology Standards performance indicators to integrate technology into all content areas</td>
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<td>• Implement the beginning components of the technology plan</td>
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<td>• Create and use computer-based games such as Jeopardy and Hollywood Squares to review content <a href="http://people.uncw.edu/ertzbergeri/ppt_games.html">http://people.uncw.edu/ertzbergeri/ppt_games.html</a></td>
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<td>• Ascertain the effectiveness of the digital tools and resources on student achievement and engagement by surveying students and teachers, and analyzing data</td>
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<td>• Explore new technologies that engage students and provide new learning opportunities (e.g., graphical data visualizations, Blogs, wiki pages, Eports, Googlenaps, Googledocs, Podcasts, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stay abreast of educational research and emerging trends regarding effective use of technology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Establish strategic partnerships to expand opportunities for students to access technologies both in school and out of school</td>
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<td>• Investigate distance learning and online courses as a vehicle for literacy professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUSTAINING THE PLAN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ascertain the effectiveness of the digital tools and resources on student achievement and engagement by surveying students and teachers, and analyzing data</td>
<td>• Coordinate existing funds and explore new sources of revenue to maintain existing technologies and to obtain new digital tools aligned with the technology plan and curricular goals <a href="http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lcet/325.html">http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lcet/325.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore new technologies that engage students and provide new learning opportunities (e.g., graphical data visualizations, Blogs, wiki pages, Eports, Googlenaps, Googledocs, Podcasts, etc.)</td>
<td>• Recruit and retain highly competent personnel who use technology creatively and proficiently and use their skills to advance capacity of all staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stay abreast of educational research and emerging trends regarding effective use of technology</td>
<td>• Maintain a robust infrastructure for technology including systems to support management, operations, teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish strategic partnerships to expand opportunities for students to access technologies both in school and out of school</td>
<td>• Utilize Louisiana’s Teaching, Learning and Technology Centers to access professional learning opportunities and links to other technology resources <a href="http://www.tltc.ppsb.org/index.pl/regional_tltcs">http://www.tltc.ppsb.org/index.pl/regional_tltcs</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investigate distance learning and online courses as a vehicle for literacy professional development</td>
<td>• Write grant proposals to various companies (e.g. Microsoft, Apple, Texas Instruments, etc.) to increase technology capacity</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Key to improving adolescent literacy at the local level is adequate teacher preparation, professional growth, and support. For substantial change to occur, effective professional development is essential. Effective professional development is described as learning opportunities that result in improvements in teachers’ and school leaders’ knowledge and practices, and, most importantly, in improved student learning outcomes.

Research highlights the importance of both formal professional development and other opportunities for professional learning — such as common planning time, shared opportunities to examine student work, and tools for self-reflection — that may occur outside the bounds of formal professional development (Wei, et al., 2009). Easton (2008) asserts that the most powerful learning opportunities are active learning opportunities embedded in teachers’ work, which begins with teachers’ assessments of what their students need and, subsequently, what teachers identify as areas for their own learning. Professional learning, therefore, is a broad term that includes formal professional development and job-embedded activities.

Resources and coordinated support are also imperative to sustain literacy improvement efforts. Such support might take conventional forms, in terms of funds or personnel, or a more innovative form, such as a policy climate for change to encourage school, family, and community partnerships that work together to connect, coordinate, and leverage resources to improve literacy learning and teaching.

**Professional Development**

The National Staff Development Council’s (NSDC) Standards for Staff Development ([http://www.nsdc.org/standards/](http://www.nsdc.org/standards/)) are based on research findings confirming that well-designed professional development can influence teacher practice and student performance. It is important to consider context (the “learning environment”), process (the “how”), and content (the “what”) dimensions for designing professional learning that improves student learning.

**CONTEXT**

**Commitment of All Stakeholders to Improve Teaching and Learning**

Teacher involvement in the planning and design of professional development greatly increases the level of buy-in and commitment to the plan. Teachers and the literacy leadership team should work together to determine needs, decide on a course of action, and implement and support a plan that will lead to improved teaching and learning (Guskey and Huberman, 1995).

Adult learners have preferences that make them different from other learners. This is especially true for teachers seeking professional development. Every session must include time to allow participants to make real-world connections to their everyday work. High-quality professional learning environments make learning relevant for teachers and school leaders through a variety of media—Web-based, face-to-face, online, text-supported – as well as through a variety of methods – book studies, action research, data analysis, collaborative planning, reflective questioning, model lessons, peer dialogues, journaling, and conferencing (Fogarty and Pete, 2010).

**Professional Learning Communities**

Regularly scheduled team meetings are necessary for staff to share knowledge, plan literacy-rich lessons in their content area, reflect on their work, analyze data, and explore new literacy practices. When staff sense that professional learning is a major priority, they are more likely to get on board early and to expend genuine effort. Research shows that staff who engage in collaborative professional learning feel confident and well prepared to meet the demands of teaching (Holloway, 2003). Moreover, teachers who collaborate with peers become interested in and learn from each other’s practices. Technologies such as blogs, Wikis, video conferencing, SKYPE, iPods, Google Docs, etc. allow school staff to share and collaborate in real time.
PROCESS

**Intensive and On-Going Support**

Changes in teacher practice and, subsequently, gains in student learning, require rigorous professional learning that is applied daily to teachers’ planning and instruction. Literacy coaches, lead teachers, library media specialists, speech-language pathologists, and district appraisal staff, for example, form support teams that are available and accessible to mentor and support pre-service, new, and experienced teachers in improving student outcomes. The literacy coach should be a professional who has skilled knowledge of and extensive classroom experience with reading, as well as excellent interpersonal/communication skills and knowledge of working effectively with adults. In upper grades, the literacy coach’s primary responsibility is to enhance the literacy-related knowledge and skills of teachers in all content areas.

Professional learning is ongoing when teachers regularly collaborate with one another, reflect on practice, learn from data, and study the effects of their instruction on student learning during regularly-scheduled team meetings. A long-term implementation plan that occurs consistently and continually over time sends the message that teaching is a dynamic profession that requires keeping abreast of new knowledge and refining pedagogical skills.

**Evaluation**

In order to improve professional learning and determine its effectiveness in achieving the desired literacy outcomes, an evaluation process must be implemented. Guskey (2000) suggests including five levels of evaluation to assess the strengths and weaknesses of professional learning. The five levels are:

» Participants’ reaction

» Participants’ learning

» Organization support

» Participants’ use of new knowledge and skills

» Student learning outcomes

Guskey suggests that when professional learning is successful, it is because teachers are supported and held accountable to use the new practices. Moreover, when teachers begin to see that the new practice works, more often than not, they eventually “practice themselves into change.”

CONTENT

**School Improvement Priorities and Goals (With Student Learning as the Focus)**

In effective schools, principals, teachers, and support staff use a data-driven approach to improve students’ literacy skills. Data on student learning are gathered and analyzed from a variety of formal and informal sources (e.g., state assessments, progress monitoring measures, student work samples) to guide the selection and prioritization of school improvement goals and the professional learning that is necessary to achieve these goals. As a result, data-driven professional learning is an integral part of the total school improvement effort – and the ultimate measure of success is student achievement.

**Content Knowledge**

Professional learning opportunities that give teachers the knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality differentiated literacy instruction in their content areas are more likely to be fully incorporated into teachers’ pedagogical repertoires. This design takes into account the knowledge and experience the teachers bring to professional learning and helps them more fully implement their curricular standards (Dutro, et al., 2002).

One of the keys to improving adolescent literacy is adequate teacher preparation and support. Determining what teachers need to know, ensuring they have opportunities to learn, and supporting them in implementing that knowledge in classrooms is basic to achieving the goal of literacy for all. In Time To Act (2009), five basic areas of a core knowledge are identified. Teachers of adolescents should possess a working knowledge of:

1. How literacy demands change with age and grade;
2. How students vary in literacy strengths and needs;
3. How texts in a given content raise specific literacy challenges;
4. How to recognize and address literacy difficulties; and
5. How to adapt and develop teaching skills over time.
Knowledge of effective adolescent literacy instruction cannot be gained through a single course or series of in-service workshops. Rather, a systemic approach to building teacher knowledge and expertise is necessary. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) have summarized new research on methods of teacher preparation that offers support for a developmental view of teacher learning in which clinical practice, supervised internships, mentoring relationships, and other forms of ongoing scaffolded support for pre-service and novice teachers all play essential roles in building expertise.

**Coordinated Support**

A coordinated system of support is essential to ensuring higher academic achievement, narrowing the achievement gap, and preparing students to be college- and career-ready. This element of the literacy plan is closely aligned to leadership because school leaders ensure the required resources are planned for and utilized to ensure all students receive the instruction they need. School leaders who are dedicated to the goal of improving literacy advocate for resources from the district, the state, and the local business community and ensure that regularly recurring district, state, and federal funds are optimized to support adolescent literacy efforts. According to Irvin, et al. (2007), important literacy support resources include:

- Time for literacy learning, assessment, planning, and instruction;
- Use of support personnel, such as literacy coaches, library media specialists, speech-language pathologists, district appraisal staff, and paraprofessionals to work with teachers and students;
- Professional development for all teachers in content-related literacy instruction;
- Instructional materials and technologies to support differentiated literacy instruction; and
- Adequate funding to support ongoing literacy initiatives.

Effective coordinated support also initiates or augments collaborations with out-of-school organizations and the local community to provide more broad-based interactions and greater support for students. Together, schools, families, and communities facilitate learning by alleviating barriers, both external and internal, that interfere with learning and teaching. See [http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15044.pdf](http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15044.pdf) (pages 17-18) for specific examples. These collaborations further secure student motivation by providing students with a sense of being cared for in and out of school.

Additionally, resource coordination and allocation is an important factor in the success of the school-wide literacy improvement process. Creative approaches are necessary to overcome issues related to limited time, space, personnel, materials, and technology. Strategic allocation of resources is a tool for achieving teacher, student, parent, and community support for literacy.
Professional Learning and Resources
Developing learning opportunities, Web resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for students and educators

Efforts to improve student literacy achievement can succeed only by building the capacity of teachers and school leaders to improve their practice and the capacity of school systems to advance professional learning (Wei, et al., 2009). An effective adolescent literacy plan at the local level provides sustained and intensive professional development that is connected to practice; focuses on teaching and learning of specific content; aligns with other school improvement priorities; and builds strong working relationships among staff to solve complex issues. This requires substantial resources and a comprehensive, coordinated support system.

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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>• Schedule blocks of time within the school day for teachers to collaboratively plan lessons, examine student work, share expertise, and reflect on practice</td>
<td>• Plan to provide choice and differentiated learning opportunities for teachers based on needs</td>
<td>• Partner experienced teachers with preservice and beginning teachers</td>
<td>• Continue to hire the best teachers possible</td>
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<td>• Use student achievement data to prioritize areas for professional learning</td>
<td>• Meet in collaborative teams regularly to plan lessons, monitor student progress, and share successful literacy strategies</td>
<td>• Revisit and revise professional learning topics yearly, based on student assessment data</td>
<td>• Analyze Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to evaluate current efforts and to plan future professional learning</td>
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<td>• Develop a school improvement plan with specific and measurable goals for improving literacy</td>
<td>• Use various media to deliver professional learning – for example, face-to-face, Web-based, text-supported, and online</td>
<td>• Use formal and informal observations (e.g., <a href="http://www.louisianschools.net/ide/lan/2800.html">http://www.louisianschools.net/ide/lan/2800.html</a>) to monitor and improve the use of literacy strategies in all content areas</td>
<td>• Actively seek to provide resources for professional learning</td>
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<td>• Encourage every teacher to develop a professional growth plan based on a self-assessment of professional learning needs (e.g., <a href="http://www.louisianschools.net/ide/lan/2800.html">http://www.louisianschools.net/ide/lan/2800.html</a>)</td>
<td>• Ensure that professional development sessions include time for teachers to make real-world connections to their everyday work</td>
<td>• Use formative and summative assessment data to evaluate effectiveness of literacy instruction and professional learning programs and practices</td>
<td>• Videotape important professional development sessions</td>
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<td>• Secure a literacy coach to provide a high level of support for teachers</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for teachers to practice techniques in non-threatening situations</td>
<td>• Use classroom observations to identify and support individual teachers with follow-up coaching, conferencing, and mentoring</td>
<td>• Expand and strengthen school-university partnerships to build networks of support for literacy programs</td>
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<td>• Take inventory of currently available professional learning resources</td>
<td>• Develop a plan to ensure all teachers, including paraprofessionals and interventionists, have access to new research and knowledge in the teaching of literacy</td>
<td>• Continue program-specific professional development each year for new and experienced teachers</td>
<td>• Advocate for a shift in focus of teacher training programs from an emphasis solely on content coursework with practicum to a clinical literacy framework—beginning in the first year</td>
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<td>• Align the strengths of teachers with the needs of students when making staffing decisions</td>
<td>• Conduct collaborative sessions in which the literacy coach co-plans, models, practices, and co-teaches with teachers</td>
<td>• Utilize available online training for cost effectiveness and accessibility</td>
<td>• Use mentors to continue to build the capacity of teachers to integrate literacy instruction in content area classes</td>
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<td>• Include paraprofessionals and substitute teachers in professional development sessions</td>
<td>• Encourage teacher participation in successful professional development programs such as the National Writing Project (<a href="http://www.nwp.org/">http://www.nwp.org/</a>)</td>
<td>• Continue to encourage “professional talk” among staff and provide time for discussions</td>
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<td>• Actively participate in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices and programs</td>
<td>• Encourage all teachers to share information learned at professional learning sessions</td>
<td>• Replace ineffective practices with research-based, teacher-tested, proven best practices.</td>
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| **BEGINNING TO PLAN** | books, journals, magazines, videos, etc., that teachers can readily access for professional growth  
• Develop a strong relationship with feeder schools |
| **BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT** | Identify learning supports in the community that target student improvement (e.g., tutoring)  
• Design responses to help connect students to the proper service providers in the community  
• Create a well-designed infrastructure to provide guidance and support for students and families  
• Establish a work group (school counselors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and drop out counselors, health educators, special education staff, after school program staff, bilingual and Title I coordinators, safe and drug free school staff, union representatives, classroom teachers, non-certified staff, parents, older students, community representatives) that focuses specifically on how learning supports are used, including all major resources  
• Provide professional learning to develop the understanding that a comprehensive system of learning supports differs from a case by case, fragmented approach and to enhance motivation and capability of the critical mass of stakeholders  
• Utilize all staff to support literacy instruction (e.g., staff that is not instructing or tutoring can handle other duties)  
• Use literacy coaches and other support personnel such as speech-language pathologists, district appraisal staff and library media specialists to mentor and support teachers |
| **EXPANDING EMPHASIS** | Evaluate the effectiveness of after-school tutoring programs and partner with community and faith-based groups to accommodate more students  
• Fill program/service gaps and pursue economies of scale through collaborative outreach linkages among families of schools (e.g., a feeder pattern, schools in close proximity)  
• Ensure institutionalization by maintaining the system of supports (accountability, data collection and evaluation) to enhance productive changes  
• Develop strategies for maintaining momentum and progress of the Comprehensive Learning Supports System  
• Provide for professional development and resources that support differentiated learning opportunities for all students  
• Open school buildings for adult learners from the community in the evenings, encouraging a community of learners  
• Establish a mentoring system from within and without the school so that every student has someone who supports their achievement  
• Provide English language services that extend beyond the classroom  
• Provide family-focused services and outreach that engage parents and family members in literacy programs and services  
• Host Family Literacy Nights that include fun activities for students and parents to engage in together |
| **SUSTAINING THE PLAN** | Keep the focus (fiscal and instructional) on literacy development even when faced with competing initiatives  
• Galvanize local capacity to provide for support students and families need  
• Advocate for new capacity in the community to help students and families  
• Adjust implementation of the Comprehensive Learning Supports System as needed via input from staff  
• Continue to focus proactively on broad issues that may prevent students from learning  
• Pursue additional funding sources for specialized literacy staff and materials  
• Provide a literacy resource room for parents and caregivers in the school  
• Include academic supports such as tutoring, co-curricular activities, and extended learning opportunities such as summer programs, after-school and Saturday academies to enhance literacy learning  
• Ask local businesses to help heighten awareness about reading or literacy topics (e.g., a supermarket chain may agree to print a literacy message on its shopping bags; utility suppliers might feature tips in their monthly statements)  
• Ask local bookstores to donate books to the school  
• Foster relationships among schools, postsecondary education institutions, the workforce, families, and communities |

**Professional Development (continued)**

• Define what the entire school must do to enable all teachers to teach and all students to learn effectively (http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15044.pdf)
• Map available fiscal and human resources related to support services, highlighting where gaps occur
• Develop a survey of needs from parents, students, teachers, and counselors that can be used to match available resources to actual need
• Appoint a person in a leadership role (positional authority) at the school who will be in charge of Comprehensive Learning Supports
• Build accountability into the Comprehensive Learning Supports (including reporting and monitoring the work through data collection and evaluation)
• Focus on what an integrated learning supports infrastructure should look like at the school level, weaving piecemeal and fragmented efforts into a comprehensive framework
• Evaluate all available funding sources to determine what can be leveraged to support literacy efforts
• Ensure that all appropriate stakeholders are at the table during critical planning and decision-making activities

**Coordinated Support**

• Provide family-focused services and outreach that engage parents and family members in literacy programs and services
• Host Family Literacy Nights that include fun activities for students and parents to engage in together
• Keep the focus (fiscal and instructional) on literacy development even when faced with competing initiatives
• Galvanize local capacity to provide for support students and families need
• Advocate for new capacity in the community to help students and families
• Adjust implementation of the Comprehensive Learning Supports System as needed via input from staff
• Continue to focus proactively on broad issues that may prevent students from learning
• Pursue additional funding sources for specialized literacy staff and materials
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• Foster relationships among schools, postsecondary education institutions, the workforce, families, and communities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO PLAN</th>
<th>BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>EXPANDING EMPHASIS</th>
<th>SUSTAINING THE PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated Support</td>
<td>• Provide parents with practical guidance to encourage regular reading habits at home</td>
<td>• Incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate two-way communications with parents and stakeholders</td>
<td>• Continuously upgrade tools and materials to keep pace with the changing economy, technology, and citizenship expectations</td>
<td>• Continuously develop teacher knowledge and skills to incorporate these changes into their instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[continued]</td>
<td>• Incorporate technologies to more creatively and effectively support stakeholder engagement (i.e., blogs, Twitter, electronic newsletters)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This word cloud is a visual depiction of the key words and ideas in Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan using the Wordle application (www.wordle.net). The size of the word indicates the frequency that it appears in the plan, highlighting our vision for improving adolescent literacy in Louisiana. Wordle is a free tool that teachers can use with students to analyze and summarize text.
Resources for English Language Learners and Students with Exceptionalities

**English Language Learners**


This document provides guidance and support for meeting the needs of English learners with limited language proficiency and/or learning disabilities. It focuses on identification and assessment of ELLs and their needs, as well as recommendations for instruction and intervention in the context of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. The authors suggest models of professional development that are essential for teachers of ELLs.


This resource outlines the challenges that adolescent English language learners (ELLs) face in trying to meet grade-level academic expectations while they are still acquiring the English language—and it recommends strategies to surmount them. The report is critical for all individuals who work with secondary ELLs, whether as classroom teachers, support teachers, or administrators.

**Students with Exceptionalities**


This article describes an effective aural reading approach for students with dyslexia who are inadequate visual decoders or readers. The approach uses audio texts to help students gain access to content and to expose them to the rich language of print.


This publication, beginning on page 95, provides the regulatory policy for assessment of students with special needs, adopted by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.


This fact sheet provides basic information about dyslexia, including its definition, diagnosis, causes and effects, signs, and treatment.


This fact sheet explains the rationale, evidence of effectiveness, and key principles of multisensory, structured language teaching.


This resource facilitates student access to the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum. It includes differentiated instructional support strategies, accommodations, technology tools, and online links. It also provides suggestions to maximize academic success for all students, including students with disabilities and advanced learners.

This site provides educators and family members of students with significant disabilities with links to presentations and webinars, as well as useful tools, tips, and ideas for providing literacy access to students with significant disabilities.

» National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (2010). Adolescent Literacy: What's Technology Got to Do With It? [link]

This article provides information on how technology tools can support struggling adolescents, including those with learning disabilities, to acquire background knowledge and vocabulary, improve their reading comprehension, and increase their motivation for learning. Ideas, suggestions, and tools are presented which help to differentiate instruction and support learners’ success with literacy tasks and promote independence.


This article presents a wide range of assistive technology (AT) tools that help students who struggle with reading. The tools help facilitate decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension by presenting text as speech. Categories include audio books and publications, optical character recognition, paper-based computer pen, speech synthesizers and screen readers, and variable-speed tape recorders.


This resource provides information on a wide range of assistive technology tools available to help students who struggle with writing. Categories include abbreviation expanders, alternative keyboards, graphic organizers and outlining programs, a paper-based computer pen, portable word processors, proofreading and speech recognition software programs, speech synthesizers and screen readers, talking spell-checkers and electronic dictionaries, and word prediction software programs.
### State Actions for Improving Adolescent Literacy

| Leadership and Sustainability | • Ensure the formation of a State Literacy Leadership Team made up of literacy experts and key stakeholders to support the implementation of Louisiana's Adolescent Literacy Plan  
• Involve educators at every level, including faculty representing teacher preparation programs, in the discussions on adolescent literacy  
• Build public awareness and advocacy for adolescent literacy  
• Develop and disseminate both print and electronic messages documenting the importance of adolescent literacy  
• Set expectations, guidelines, and oversight to ensure strong implementation of the adolescent literacy plan at the local level  
• Disseminate the adolescent literacy plan at professional meetings; post the literacy plan on the Louisiana Department of Education’s Web site  
• Encourage integration of the literacy plan with other school improvement efforts  
• Create funding streams to support adolescent literacy  
• Develop a technical assistance plan to support districts and schools with adolescent literacy improvement efforts  
• Establish guidelines for literacy coaches, interventionists, speech-language pathologists, library media specialists, and district appraisal staff to support local literacy efforts  
• Make advancing the literacy of all students, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities, a priority  
• Work with administrators of teacher preparation programs to ensure teacher candidates have the knowledge and skills to deliver strong, research-based literacy instruction  
• Evaluate the impact of adolescent literacy efforts and refine them based on multiple indicators of literacy performance |
| • Provide support for districts and schools to implement the English language arts (ELA) standards included in the Common Core State Standards Initiative  
• Convene teams of teachers, administrators, curriculum directors, library media specialists, etc., to discuss the ELA standards and implications for reading and writing in the content areas  
• Propose additions, if necessary, to the ELA common standards to explicitly target content area literacy instruction  
• Align the Comprehensive Curriculum with the common standards  
• Develop and disseminate curriculum resources and identify best practices for incorporating literacy into content area instruction  
• Assist teacher preparation programs in revising coursework to reflect literacy content expectations and adolescent literacy |
| Assessment System | • Build a statewide longitudinal data system to ensure assessment data collected from districts are captured in a central location  
• Strategically use data systems to track student performance, identify areas of need, design policies, and evaluate the impact of the literacy initiative on student performance  
• Provide information and technical support on the use of valid and reliable formative and summative assessments  
• Establish internal and external partnerships to facilitate the collection and use of data to inform instruction |
| Instruction and Intervention (RTI) | • Develop and disseminate information and provide professional development and technical support on high-quality literacy instruction and strategic intervention (RTI) to meet the needs of all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and emerging and advanced literacy learners
• Provide mechanisms for districts and schools to identify and intervene with students who are not demonstrating grade-level literacy skills within specific content areas
• Develop a system of tracking the response to intervention shown by students receiving supportive or intervention services
• Provide technical support on the use of current funding and securing additional funding and other resources for intervention services that support literacy
• Encourage credit-bearing reading intervention classes for students who are reading two or more years behind grade level |

| Professional Learning and Resources | • Create and disseminate materials, resources, and tools that prepare teachers to deliver high-quality literacy instruction
• Provide professional development for district and school leaders, literacy coaches, and teachers in the implementation of the literacy plan
• Support local literacy programs and additional literacy supports to address the specific learning needs of struggling readers and writers, including English language learners and students with disabilities
• Provide technical support to literacy providers (e.g., regional service centers) on implementing the plan to improve adolescent literacy
• Target intensive support for schools with the greatest need (as defined by poverty or low student literacy achievement)
• Design a literacy Web page with resources to support districts and schools with their literacy efforts to improve adolescent literacy
• Identify demonstration sites with strong adolescent literacy programs to serve as models that schools could visit
• Develop, deliver, and monitor professional learning opportunities for teachers and district and school leaders
• Provide professional development for library media specialists, speech-language pathologists, district appraisal staff, and paraprofessionals to support literacy efforts
• Continually update and add resources to enhance the state’s literacy plan
• Provide reports that include disaggregated data by subgroups on reading and writing achievement
• Promote connections between schools and public libraries to enhance literacy efforts
• Collaborate with higher education faculty regarding pre-service and in-service support for teachers on effective, content-based literacy
• Review pre-service coursework as well as Louisiana Licensure and certification requirements to inform recommendations for improvement |
## District Actions for Improving Adolescent Literacy

### Leadership and Sustainability

- Form a cross-curricular, multi-grade team of educators to support adolescent literacy within the district
- Articulate clearly the district’s goals for literacy improvement
- Create a plan to enhance content area literacy instruction, using literacy leaders at all levels and across all content areas
- Ensure that principals act as literacy leaders, keeping the focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes
- Provide leadership training as needed with a focus on literacy instruction
- Assist principals in the implementation and evaluation of the literacy plan
- Offer support programs for principals, such as study groups and mentoring partnerships that focus on improving instruction in literacy
- Encourage and support the development and implementation of literacy efforts in the school improvement planning process
- Continuously review current funding sources and explore new funding sources to support adolescent literacy goals
- Ensure careful implementation of sound literacy practices
- Ensure that schools have the flexibility and support to design organizational structures and schedules to differentiate literacy instruction and provide intervention based on students’ needs
- Assist schools in developing schedules that include time for teacher teams to meet and participate in professional learning
- Request the schools to report and document literacy progress to the superintendent or district level contact person at least monthly
- Monitor implementation of literacy programs and intervene in schools where students are not being well served
- Examine literacy improvement strategies being implemented across the district to determine their value and whether to expand or modify based on data
- Provide updates and information on literacy improvement efforts and progress to the school board at least monthly
- Provide networking opportunities for school-based staff to share stories of success and lessons learned from literacy efforts
- Engage higher education literacy leaders and professional literacy associations in the local adolescent literacy plan
- Attend teacher team meetings when possible to model support for literacy improvement efforts
- Encourage collaboration and provide opportunities among library media specialists and other literacy leaders to network
- Make advancing the literacy of all students, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities, a priority
- Define the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches, interventionists, speech-language pathologists, library media specialists, and appraisal staff to support school-based literacy efforts

### Standards-Based Curriculum

- Provide support for schools to implement the English language arts (ELA) standards included in the Common Core State Standards Initiative
- Define the reading skills and proficiency levels needed to ensure students are college and career ready
- Align core curriculum to standards and assessments to support instruction grounded in research on effective practice
- Ensure that schools have the range of instructional materials, multimedia materials, diverse texts, and resources needed to improve students’ literacy skills
- Support teachers and literacy leaders in refining their skills to meet the needs of readers and writers across all content areas
- Ensure that all students have access to highly trained teachers, resources, and organizational supports to advance literacy throughout the curriculum
| Assessment System | • Support schools in the selection and administration of formative and summative assessments  
• Develop an assessment/data management system that maximizes utility of formative and summative data and minimizes the loss of instructional time  
• Develop a district-wide plan for collecting, interpreting, and using data to monitor and evaluate progress and make program adjustments  
• Ensure assessment data are presented in user-friendly formats and available in a timely fashion  
• Develop the skills of literacy leaders and teachers to interpret and use data to inform instruction  
• Provide structures/protocols for teacher teams to analyze and use data to improve the success of students  
• Use summative assessment data to evaluate the overall effectiveness of literacy efforts |
|---|
| Instruction and Intervention (RTI) | • Ensure a system of support for adolescents, including differentiation of instruction and interventions for all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and emerging and advanced literacy learners  
• Model a systemic process of intervention and monitoring student progress  
• Reallocate resources to support high-quality literacy instruction and intervention  
• Monitor instruction regularly and compile data from classroom observations to inform district- and school-level professional development  
• Support the use of technology as a tool and a topic to improve literacy outcomes  
• Assist schools in redesigning instruction to promote greater student engagement and motivation  
• Ensure schools increase the amount and quality of writing instruction |
| Professional Learning and Resources | • Ensure that professional development is based on student data and is supported by rigorous research  
• Provide professional development that is ongoing, job-embedded, and differentiated to meet the needs of individual schools and teachers  
• Require schools to schedule time for formal, structured collaboration and reflection on literacy practices (e.g., teacher teams)  
• Incorporate principles of adult learning, including structured collaboration and reflection, into professional development activities  
• Offer professional development sessions in a variety of formats (e.g., online, workshops, summer academies) and customize the sessions for each content area  
• Develop administrators’ skills to evaluate teachers’ use of effective literacy strategies  
• Develop partnerships with community-based organizations, including public libraries, to promote and support local literacy efforts  
• Partner with higher education faculty to provide supports to build the knowledge and skills of teachers to provide research-based literacy instruction  
• Support collaboration between literacy coaches and regional education service centers’ literacy coordinators  
• Extend professional learning opportunities to all literacy leaders to build capacity across the district and schools  
• Monitor the outcomes of professional development investments  
• Collect data to evaluate the impact of professional development on changes in teacher knowledge and instructional practice and student learning outcomes  
• Use data to inform future decisions about professional development  
• Establish a system for evaluating the quality of professional development literacy providers and work only with those providers that help the schools produce positive results |
1. **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a general education process that provides students with high-quality research-based instruction and interventions that are matched to the student’s specific needs. Data are used to drive decisions about student progress and to determine the appropriate instructional plan necessary for a student to achieve grade-level success. Daily instruction is delivered to maximize instruction and intervention benefits.

RTI in Louisiana follows a three-tiered process—Tier I provides high-quality instruction that is differentiated to meet each student’s needs in the general education setting. Tier II provides targeted interventions for students who need additional support in addition to Tier I instruction. Tier III, also in addition to Tier I instruction, provides intensive interventions for students significantly below grade level and/or students who do not respond to Tier II instruction. RTI is a dynamic process that has dramatically improved the skill level of students in Louisiana and across the country, as measured by state assessments.

2. **Data-Driven Decision Making**

Data-driven decision making is the ongoing process of collecting, analyzing, and using numerous types of data effectively. Changes driven by data have a better chance of assisting school leaders in meeting school improvement goals. For districts and schools to identify and meet the specific needs of students, detailed data must be collected and disaggregated (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2004).

3. **Job-Embedded Professional Development**

Job-embedded professional development (e.g., study groups, coaching, job shadowing) is also known as on-the-job learning. It occurs while school leaders and staff engage in their daily work. Research shows traditional methods of professional development, such as attending inservices and conferences, are not always effective. Job-embedded learning maximizes time efficiency, promotes immediate application of what is learned, and is more sustainable and cost-effective than “one-shot” workshops (e-Lead: Leadership for Student Success, 2005).

4. **Curriculum Alignment**

Curriculum alignment has been defined as the “congruence of the content, context, and cognitive demands present in the written, taught, and tested curriculum” (English & Steffy, 2001). Addressing curriculum alignment includes: 1) the scope of the content covered, 2) the level of sophistication and complexity of the content, 3) the sequence of the content to be presented, and 4) the richness of the content (Reeves, 2003; English & Steffy, 2001). Research indicates an aligned curriculum increases student achievement, engagement, attendance, and graduation rates. In addition, curriculum alignment allows teachers to focus on lessons and meaningful content (Reeves, 2003).

5. **Meaningful Engaged Learning (MEL)**

Current research indicates that students learn when they are highly involved in meaningful tasks. Student motivation is one aspect of MEL. However, motivation is more than a quality within students. In fact, motivation is greatly affected by the attitudes and actions of the educators themselves. Recognizing this and the changing needs of the 21st century, researchers have determined that reform of instruction and strategies is necessary. Three models that have been recognized as leaders in MEL are:

1. North Central Educational Laboratory (NCREL), which includes eight specific indicators of engaged learning: 1) Vision of Engaged Learning, 2) Tasks for Engaged Learning, 3) Assessment of Engaged Learning, 4) Instructional Models and Strategies for Engaged Learning, 5) Learning Context for Engaged Learning, 6) Grouping for Engaged Learning, 7) Teacher Roles for Engaged Learning, and 8) Student Roles for Engaged Learning (http://www.ncrel.org);

2. Schlechty Center for Leadership in School Reform, which is based on theories of change and of engagement; and

3. Mike Muir of the Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning (McMEL), which has identified four key components of MEL—Relationship and Rapport, Experience, Motivation, and Meaning.
School Literacy Capacity Survey

When planning to improve literacy instruction and outcomes for adolescents, principals and staff can complete this simple survey to help determine the school’s current literacy capacity. Analysis of the results can help determine the school’s current strengths and provide a starting point for the improvement process. It is important to rate each statement based on the degree to which the actions/activities are currently being utilized within your school.

The components of this survey mirror those of Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan and provide a systemic and holistic approach to establishing an effective literacy framework. Upon completion of the survey by all school staff, analyses of the responses will yield information about where the process can begin that will lead to improved literacy practices and increased student achievement.

Analyses of this Survey Monkey survey will be provided to schools upon request. When all staff has completed the survey online, contact LDOE staff members listed on Survey Monkey for school results.

Directions:

Step 1: Have all school administrators and staff complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/96VP9QG within a two-week period. In order to receive a customized school report, the survey must be completed online.

Step 2: Upon completion of the online survey by all school staff, the principal or designee should contact one of the LDOE staff members listed on Survey Monkey by email to request a customized report.

Step 3: Consult the Louisiana Adolescent Literacy Plan for detailed action steps for improving adolescent literacy, beginning with the component(s) the survey results identify as starting points.

Step 4: For additional information or assistance regarding Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan, please contact the LDOE staff members listed on Survey Monkey.

Current Practice Rating: 1 = An infrequent or rare occurrence at this school 5 = Frequent or common practice at this school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Practice at Our School</th>
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<td>1</td>
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Leadership and Sustainability

1. Extended time for literacy instruction is provided during the school day (intervention classes, use of literacy strategies in all content area classes).

2. Time is allotted during the school day for teachers to collaborate in teams (e.g., grade-level, vertical, and departmental).

3. Teacher teams use a specific protocol for examining student work.

4. A Literacy Leadership Team/School Improvement Team is in place and is actively involved in literacy improvement efforts.

5. Literacy is a primary focus in our School Improvement Plan.

6. Our school and district have a shared literacy vision that includes input from parents and community members.

7. Adequate fiscal resources are provided to support literacy improvement efforts.

Standards-Based Curriculum

1. The school uses Louisiana’s Content Standards, Grade Level Expectations, and the Comprehensive Curriculum as the foundation for academic literacy instruction.

2. Reading and writing strategies are present in all classes daily.

3. Students are provided with exemplary writing samples, as well as given exposure to real-world writing tasks.

4. Students write to demonstrate their learning.

5. All classes have libraries that include a wide range of topics at various reading levels.

6. All students are provided with access to the curriculum in appropriate and challenging formats (e.g., diverse texts, technology integration).

7. Teachers differentiate reading and writing assignments by offering students choice.
### Assessment System

1. Valid and reliable screening and progress monitoring measures are used to assess the reading skills of all students.
2. Diagnostic measures are used to provide more in-depth information for individual students when necessary.
3. Curriculum-based assessments in a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay) are used to measure student progress toward pre-determined performance standards.
4. Those who administer assessments are adequately trained in administration and data recording.
5. Data from assessments are effectively managed and disseminated to parents and other stakeholders in a timely and easily-interpreted manner.
6. Timely feedback is provided to students regarding their reading progress.
7. Assessment results are used to guide instruction and to evaluate effectiveness of instruction and programs.

### Instruction and Intervention (RTI)

1. Teachers model and explain literacy strategies and when to use them.
2. Teachers provide students with opportunities to apply literacy strategies and offer support and corrective feedback when needed.
3. Teachers use word study, repeating readings, and read-alouds to improve reading fluency (accuracy, rate, prosody).
4. Teachers provide direct instruction to students in word meaning and independent vocabulary strategies.
5. Teachers effectively use a variety of before, during, and after reading strategies to support learning and literacy.
6. Teachers use strategies to promote student motivation and engagement (choice in assignments, real-world applications, opportunities to work with peers, clear goal setting).
7. Students are encouraged to discuss text content and subject matter in small groups.
8. Students are provided with reading intervention during the school day to address individual needs.
9. Teachers monitor individual student growth and use the data to drive instruction.
10. The school has an intervention system in place which allows the flow of students in and out of various levels of support as needed.
11. The school uses a common framework and rubric to teach and assess writing to ensure a consistent approach across all content areas and grade levels.
12. Teachers use technology as an instructional tool and an instructional topic.

### Professional Learning and Resources

1. Professional development plans are based on identified student literacy needs.
2. Data from observation checklists are used to target professional development needs.
3. Teachers are involved in the planning and design of professional development.
4. Professional learning is ongoing (teachers meet to share knowledge, reflect on practice, learn from data).
5. Professional learning is provided through a variety of media (face to face, Web-based, text-supported) as well as a variety of methods (data analysis, model lessons, conferencing).
6. All teachers have a clear understanding of the literacy and developmental needs of adolescents.
7. The school has in place a coordinated system of support that fosters collaborations with out-of-school organizations and the local community to enhance literacy efforts.
Appendix F

Sample Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Template

Name: ___________________________________________  Position: ___________________________________________

This sample Professional Growth Plan (PGP) is designed to guide your thinking toward professional growth goals and objectives. It will also guide your planning and consultations. Ideally, your PGP should address literacy improvement and the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching [http://www.doe.state.la.us/Lde/uploads/5564.pdf](http://www.doe.state.la.us/Lde/uploads/5564.pdf). Electronic versions of this PGP can be accessed at [http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lan/2800.html](http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/lan/2800.html).

Part 1: Possible Goals

When thinking about possible goals for your PGP, consider the following questions:

» How do my knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances measure up against the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching?

» Where do I need to grow professionally in order to optimize my teaching effectiveness?

» What areas for professional growth will have the greatest potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning in my department, school, or district?

My Possible Goals (3-5)

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Part 2: District/School/Department Linkages

When aligning your professional goals with the known needs of your department, school, or district, consider the following:

» Which of my professional goals are most directly related to implementing the elements of the Louisiana Literacy Plan and increasing student achievement?

» For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?

» How will these goals be supplementary or complementary to the professional growth plans of colleagues in my school and/or district?

My goals relate to district/school/departmental improvement needs in the following ways:

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Part 3: Specific Goal(s) and Intended Outcomes

The specific goal(s) for my PGP and intended outcomes are:

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Part 4: My Plan

When developing your PGP, consider the following questions:

» What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
» What are the initial steps in my plan?
» What activities will help me achieve my goals and objectives?
» How will I make the time to do what I plan?
» What district and school resources will I need?
» What evidence will I collect to demonstrate achievement of my professional development goals and how will I organize my evidence?

A. I will engage in the following activities:

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

B. I will document my progress in achieving my professional development goal(s) with the following artifacts (e.g., logs, lesson plans, audio and videotapes) and/or outcomes (e.g., evidence of student learning):

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

C. I may require the following resources for the full implementation of my PGP:

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
References


