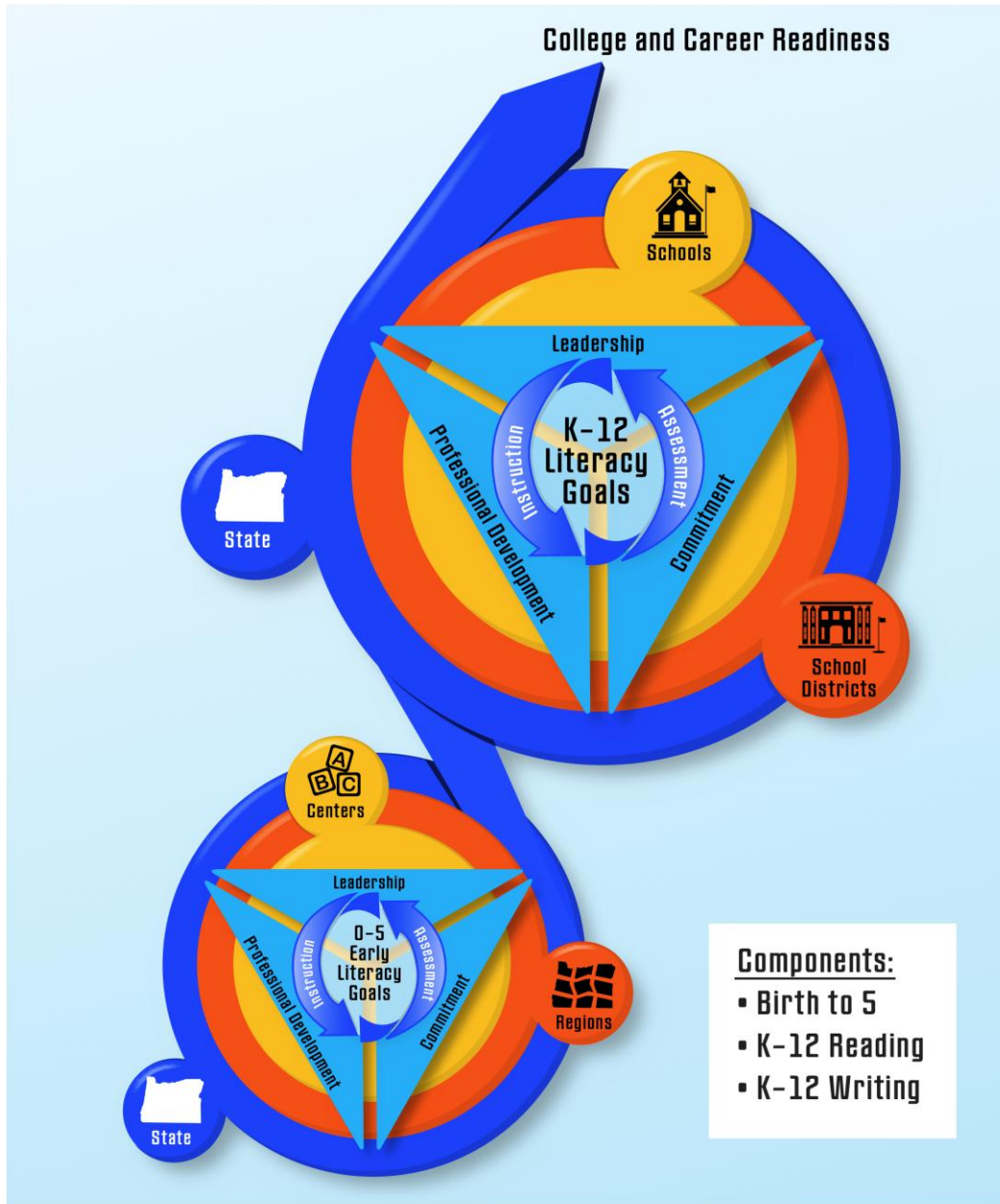


Oregon Literacy Plan



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Literacy Leadership State Team (LLST)

Swati Adarkar, Executive Director, Children's Institute

Julie Anderson, Education Specialist: English Language Arts, ODE

Dr. Gina Biancarosa, Assistant Professor, College of Education, University of Oregon

Linda Bishop, Principal, Mooberry Elementary School

Dr. Martha Buenrostro, Education Specialist, ODE

Colin Cameron, Director of Professional Development, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA)

Jeandre Carbone, Striving Readers Project Director, Portland Public Schools

Dr. Dianna Carrizales, Director, Special Education Monitoring, Systems, and Outcomes, ODE

Vicki Chamberlain, Director, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission

MaryKay Dahlgreen, Library Development Program Manager, Oregon State Library

Laurie Danahy, Education Specialist: Prekindergarten, ODE

Felicity Elworthy, Family and Community Partnership Manager, Southern Oregon Head Start

Dr. Patricia Evenson-Brady, Superintendent, Willamette ESD

Laura Foley, Teacher and Instructional Coordinator, Career and Technical Education Programs, South Salem High School

Dr. Peggy Freund, Program Administrator, Northwest Regional ESD

Dr. Nancy Golden, Superintendent, Springfield Public Schools

Don Grotting, Superintendent, David Douglas School District

Catherine Heaton, Education Specialist, ODE

Dr. C. Michelle Hooper, Director, Teaching and Learning/Systems Management, ODE

Jennell Ives, Education Specialist: Health Sciences and Student Support, ODE

Nancy Johnson-Dorn, Director, Early Childhood Education, ODE

Doug Kosty, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment and Information Services, ODE

Dr. Nancy Latini, Assistant Superintendent, Student Learning and Partnerships, ODE

Vicki LaRock, Senior Research Associate, RMC Research Corporation

Dr. Susan Lenski, Professor, Portland State University, Graduate School of Education

Keith Menk, Deputy Director, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission

Dr. Colleen Mileham, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Improvement and Innovation, ODE

Kimberly Miles, Instructional Coach, Hillsboro School District

Betsy Ramsey, Board Member and Past-President, Oregon Branch of the International Dyslexia Society

Dr. Amanda Sanford, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Portland State University

Rob Saxton, Superintendent, Tigard-Tualatin School District

Dr. Lori Rae Smith, Director, Student Achievement, Bethel School District

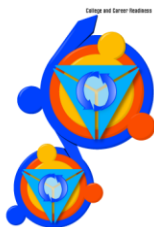
Michelle Smith, Staff Development Coordinator, Klamath County School District

Dr. Gerald Tindal, Department Head and Castle-McIntosh-Knight Professor of Education, Education Methodology, Policy, and Leadership, Behavioral Research and Teaching, College of Education, University of Oregon

Lisa Wallace, Area Supervisor, Child & Family Development Programs, Community Action Team

Stephanie Whetzel, Student Services Coordinator / Early Childhood Programs, Salem-Keizer School District

Kara Williams, Education Specialist, ODE



Introduction

Oregon Literacy Plan

Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program Overview

The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program (SRCL) is a comprehensive literacy development and education program to advance literacy skills for students from Birth through Grade 12. In accordance with the statute (CFDA Number: 84.371C), the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) is reserving \$10 million of Striving Readers funds for formula grants to assist states in creating or maintaining a State Literacy Team with expertise in literacy development and education for children from Birth through Grade 12 and to assist states in developing a comprehensive literacy plan. This Introduction provides a brief description of the SRCL, Oregon's State Literacy Team, and an overview of Oregon's State Literacy Plan.

According to the specifications of the SRCL, the comprehensive literacy plan must address the literacy needs of children from Birth through Grade 12, including students who are English learners and students with disabilities. It should also improve alignment and transition between grades. The plan should include the use of clear content standards in the areas of preliteracy, reading, and writing and may include a system of screening assessments to inform instruction; guidance for the selection and use of evidence-based reading and writing curricula and targeted interventions; evidence-based teacher preparation and professional development aligned with standards; and a system of data collection, evaluation, and program improvement.

Development and Functioning of the State Literacy Team

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) used funding from the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Program State Formula Grant to reconstitute and expand a State Literacy Team charged with overseeing the development, adoption, and implementation of the Oregon Literacy Plan (Plan). The State Literacy Team in Oregon, now called the *Literacy Leadership State Team (LLST)*, is comprised of 40 education leaders from around the state. As specified in the Request for Applications, the members of the LLST have "expertise in literacy development and education for children from Birth through Grade 12." The LLST met the requirements specified in the formula grant in terms of membership constitution and outcomes.

In fall 2010, ODE applied for and received the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program State Formula Grant Application (CFDA Number: 84.371B) from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). The primary activity under this grant was to develop a comprehensive statewide Literacy Plan for children from Birth through Grade 12. Through a series of meetings in late fall 2010 and winter 2011, the LLST provided input for the Plan. A draft of the Plan was submitted to the USDOE on January 28, 2011, to meet the deliverable requirement. Based on feedback received during spring and summer 2011, the Plan

was updated and revised to further reflect implementation of the newly-adopted Common Core State Standards.

Basic Features of the Oregon Literacy Plan

Oregon's objective throughout this process has been to produce a State Literacy Plan that is both comprehensive *and* dynamic. It is comprehensive in that it addresses what the State and other agencies will do to address the literacy needs of *all* children from Birth through Grade 12, including meeting the needs of English learners and students with disabilities. At the same time, the Plan is dynamic in two important ways: First, it is dynamic in that much work remains to be done to implement and evaluate *this* Plan as it exists currently. Plan implementation and evaluation involve an integrated approach. Over time, the Plan will be reviewed extensively by educators, policy makers, parents, business leaders, and other stakeholders from across the state. Oregon's Literacy Plan will be checked to confirm alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that Oregon adopted in October 2010. The Plan will be submitted to the Oregon State Board of Education for full adoption. Finally, through possible legislation or other actions, resources will be sought to provide financing and support for thorough implementation and evaluation of the Plan.

Second, the Plan is dynamic in that it will be refined over time. Plan improvements will occur in response to changes to State demographics, as we learn more about how to provide effective services to all children, and as our scientific knowledge develops and deepens over time. The Plan will also be improved in response to rigorous evaluation data on implementation. It will change and be improved as new programs and practices are developed, as new technologies emerge that increase efficiencies, as better child assessments of language and literacy are developed, and as the CCSS are revised over time according to new evidence in an effort to maintain alignment of K–12 goals.

A great deal of work remains to be done to specify how the Oregon Literacy Plan will be implemented in Oregon and to move forward with official statewide adoptions of the Plan by the Oregon State Board of Education. Resources to implement and evaluate the Plan are needed, as are structures and recourses to develop processes and procedures for the ongoing reporting of Plan implementation and outcomes.

Evolution of the Oregon Literacy Plan

The process of developing the Oregon Literacy Plan began in 2004, when the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oregon, Susan Castillo, formed the Literacy Leadership State Steering Committee (LLSSC). The LLSSC was constituted using funding from *Oregon Reading First* and was responsible for keeping abreast of implementation and outcomes of the Oregon Reading First project. The LLSSC also kept current on developments related to a range of statewide literacy initiatives, and it provided input and direction into how these initiatives should be implemented and evaluated and where integration and collaboration could occur to increase outcomes and efficiencies.

By 2005, Oregon Reading First was beginning to generate credible data related to the implementation and outcomes of the Oregon Reading First program. The evidence of the program's success (Baker et al., in press; Baker et al., 2009; Baker et al., 2007), including outcomes that were being attained with

English Learners and students with learning disabilities, led the LLSSC to implement a series of actions to develop a statewide literacy framework for Oregon. The committee wanted a comprehensive literacy framework that would encompass K–12. Phase I of what became known as the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* focused on reading development and Phase II, scheduled to address writing development, has been completed as part of this Plan.

The Reading component of the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework (the “Framework”) was completed in 2009, and the Oregon State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Framework in December 2009. It is important to note that the structure of the Framework was used as a model for developing the sections of this Plan to ensure the alignment of the Framework and the Plan. While the original Framework was for Reading only, new K-12 sections for Reading and Writing, developed specifically for the Plan, have been added to the online Framework that is now complete. Also noteworthy is that during the writing of the Plan, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects were adopted by the Oregon State Board of Education (October 2010). That is why the new sections for Reading and Writing have not only been aligned to the CCSS but also feature CCSS implementation aligned to the Framework. Both new sections of the Plan provide CCSS resources for teachers and CCSS classroom-level snapshots of what evidence-based reading and writing look like in K-5 classrooms and in 6-12 classrooms for English Language Arts and for literacy in content-area classes.

Organization of the Oregon Literacy Plan

The Oregon Literacy Plan is divided into three major sections: (a) School Readiness, Birth to Age 5, (b) Reading Proficiency, Kindergarten through Grade 12, and (c) Writing Proficiency, Kindergarten through Grade 12. These three sections are bound together by four common dimensions that provide structure and coherence to the Plan:

- λ First, each section includes multiple levels of service delivery (school/center, district/region, and State), so that services and supports for children are comprehensive and unified.
- λ Second, within each section, six integrated components (goals, assessment, instruction, leadership, professional development, and commitment) define essential considerations for comprehensive service delivery for children’s learning and development.
- λ Third, each section is organized into three tiers of services and supports for children based on their needs (for children at grade level, for children who are somewhat below grade level, and for children who are significantly below grade level), so that effective services and supports can be provided efficiently and effectively.
- λ Fourth, each section provides both the underlying empirical rationale for the service and support model proposed, as well as the specific actions that will allow for high-quality services and supports for all children.

Differentiated services and supports.

By definition, providing effective services and supports for *all* children necessarily includes providing effective services and supports for *each* child. The concept that drives effective services and supports for

all children and for each child is *differentiation*—particularly, *differentiated instruction*. Because our goal is to provide Oregon’s children with the services and supports that are most effective, these services and supports must be matched to the specific needs of individual children. Because not all children need the same level or type of service to reach optimum rates of learning and development, it is necessary to individualize the services and supports provided in order to meet the specific needs of individual children.

Comprehensive evaluations.

If our goal is to provide services and supports that are effective, then we must define effective, and we must measure it as precisely as possible. In other words, we must first *evaluate* whether the services and supports we intended to provide were actually provided. We must also evaluate whether the outcomes that result from the implementation of the services and supports we provide are reaching the outcomes we intend for Oregon’s children.

In the Oregon Literacy Plan, implementation and outcomes of services and supports will be evaluated regularly, using methods of evaluation that allow for accurate conclusions to be drawn and that provide the information necessary to systematically improve the quality of services and supports provided over time. All children receiving services and supports will be included in these evaluations, and the data will be disaggregated in multiple ways so that we can understand how different groups of children are affected by the services and supports provided. Essential groups of children for whom disaggregated data will be compiled and analyzed include:

- λ Children who are English learners
- λ Children with disabilities
- λ Children who live in high poverty environments
- λ Children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, and
- λ Children who are at risk of *not meeting* the goals and benchmarks necessary to ensure they are on track for successful learning and development.

Other important groups of children may be identified for separate analysis purposes, and the LLST will provide input into these decisions.

Levels of Service Delivery

Effective services and supports that are comprehensive in nature require the coordinated efforts of multiple government and private agencies and organizations, each of which aims to provide effective services and supports for children. But if multiple agencies are working at cross purposes, perhaps because they have different definitions of what effective services are or because they have different ideas of what evaluations should focus on or how those evaluations should be conducted, many children will receive services that are mediocre and/or ineffective. Each agency intends to provide the service and support that it believes to be in the best interests of children, but because multiple agencies are involved, efforts must be carefully coordinated and integrated or else children will pay the price by not getting the service and support necessary to foster adequate learning and development.

It is the responsibility of agencies to systematically and actively coordinate their efforts to ensure that children benefit to the maximum extent possible. In an era when efficiency and effectiveness are essential, the agencies and groups that work with children must integrate and coordinate their efforts and work toward shared goals and objectives in the best interest of children.

Nested services and supports.

The intended roles different agencies play can be thought of as being arranged hierarchically (i.e., in a nested manner) where different types of services are provided, or vertically, where the same types of services are provided by different agencies and organizations. In all three sections of the Oregon Literacy Plan, both hierarchically arranged and vertically arranged service and support models will be used. The Plan focuses primarily on how to provide effective levels of service and support within a service delivery system that is nested, or hierarchically, arranged.

A clear example of a nested service delivery arrangement occurs in the public school system. The school, district, and State form the different nested levels that constitute the service delivery system. These three levels are designed to provide organized and coordinated services and supports to children, and each level (school, district, and State) has a different set of responsibilities and priorities. In a simple rendition of how this system is designed to be organized and coordinated, the school's primary purpose is to provide direct service and support to children. Within the school, teachers work directly with children in classrooms on a daily basis by providing instruction. The instruction teachers provide is one of the strongest determinants of whether children will reach important goals that define essential learning and development.

Outside of the classroom setting, all other functions in the school, as well as all functions that go on at the district level, and all functions that go on at the State level, should be in the service of supporting and improving teaching and learning in the classroom. This most essential function of the public school system—teaching and learning in the classroom—is the conceptual, organizational, fiscal, and procedural glue that unifies the entire public school system.

This means that within the school building, the principal and other school leaders should prioritize the support and professional development teachers need to maximize the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. It means that district and State leaders should prioritize the support and professional development that school and district personnel, respectively, need to provide a system of support and service that maximizes teaching and learning in the classroom. At every level, professional development should focus on evidence-based practices and align with the Common Core State Standards. The focus of the Oregon Literacy Plan is on how nested services, from the State to the district to the school to children, or from the State to the regional office to the early childhood center to children, can be provided in a way that is coordinated, efficient, and maximally effective.

Vertically arranged services may also be provided at each of these levels. Multiple State agencies might intend to provide the same types of services to early childhood centers or parents. Schools may provide direct instructional support to children in classroom settings, and many of those students may also receive instructional support outside of the classroom from volunteers or paid tutors. In these vertical arrangements, it is essential that services be coordinated for maximum benefit for children and to reduce the possibility of negative and potentially harmful effects that occur when different service delivery systems work at cross purposes. It is the responsibility of adults in these different groups to make sure

that the services and supports children receive are always integrated, conceptually coherent, and directed toward the same essential outcomes.

Integrated Components that Define Oregon’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Each section of the Oregon Literacy Plan—Birth to Age 5, Reading K–12, and Writing K–12—is organized around an integrated set of components that in essence define what it means to provide a comprehensive system of supports and services to children that will enable them to reach strong levels of learning and development. Each level of service delivery—the State, the district or region, and the school, childcare center, or preschool—will organize the services they provide around these six components. In addition, evaluations of implementation and outcomes associated with the Oregon Literacy Plan will align with these six components. The six components are:

- λ Goals
- λ Assessment
- λ Instruction
- λ Leadership
- λ Professional Development
- λ Commitment

Connections among the Six Components

Goals.

These six components are systematically connected, and the connections are easy to understand conceptually. The integrated connection begins with Goals. Measurable child-oriented goals anchor the framework and make it possible to achieve consensus among the various agencies and organizations intending to provide effective services and supports to children on whether these services and supports are actually effective. Measurable goals are essential in knowing what supports and services are effective and should be maintained and in determining any supports and services are ineffective and should be changed or modified.

Assessments.

Assessments that are reliable and valid for their intended purpose are used to determine if children have reached a level of knowledge, performance, and behavior that defines essential goals in learning and development. Assessment data are used to help determine the services and supports children need to maximize their opportunities to reach essential goals. The purposes of assessment data include determining which children might require additional support, monitoring child progress, and determining if children are reaching essential learning and development goals and milestones.

Services and supports.

In public school settings, these services and supports are organized primarily around the concept of *classroom instruction*. The amount and intensity of instruction that children need is dictated by each child's need, and this need is determined largely through formative and summative assessments administered directly to children.

In settings serving children from Birth to Age 5, the services and supports children receive are organized around a range of activities designed to promote healthy learning and development. The physical environments themselves are designed so that child-directed exploration will result in frequent opportunities for learning and development. As children explore and become engaged in activities in these environments, effective teachers interact with children directly and look for opportunities to promote peer interactions in ways that promote healthy learning and development. In other cases, teachers and other adults adopt more directive roles with children and establish more focused instructional routines that are intended to promote learning and development in specific and targeted areas.

These learning opportunities for children, whether highly intentional and instructional as they are in public school classrooms or more varied and diverse as they are in Birth through Age 5 settings, have a shared focus. In all of these settings, it is the responsibility of adults (teachers, child care providers, etc.) to organize environments and routines (e.g., instructional routines, social interaction routines, and play routines) that promote successful learning and development.

Leadership.

It is the central role of leadership to make sure these learning environments, be they classrooms or playgrounds, are established and managed in the interest of healthy child learning and development. Education leaders must ensure these environments are set up as intended and are achieving the child outcomes desired. How these environments are established and managed should be based on scientific research and ongoing experience. To the greatest extent possible, when using ongoing experience as part of an evaluation, it should be based on rigorous evaluation data, rather than anecdotal evidence.

Professional development.

Evaluation data and other sources of evidence provide the information necessary to know whether learning environments are being organized and managed as intended and whether the desired learning and development outcomes for children are being achieved. This information is used to drive professional development. Ongoing high-quality professional development is the vehicle that ensures teachers, education leaders, and other adults who work to provide effective services and supports to children get the training, support, and collaboration they need to provide the best services possible for children.

Commitment.

The goal of truly providing effective services and supports so that all children can reach the highest levels of learning and development is one of the most important and difficult tasks facing any state. Based on child outcomes, Oregon has a significant distance to go before we, as a State, get close to reaching this goal. This goal will not be reached unless there is a serious and universal commitment to it. The

commitment must be made by every agency and organization charged with providing effective services and supports to children. This commitment must be coherent, so that all agencies and organizations are working toward common goals and objectives. And the commitment must also be renewed regularly and publicly so that our urgency of purpose is maintained and that we guard against the drift and disappointment that so often accompanies the pursuit of any formidable goal.

A Multi-Tiered System of Service and Support

The integration of the six components is designed to provide comprehensive and effective services and supports for *all* Oregon's children. As noted in the discussion of differentiated services and supports on page 3, providing effective services and supports for *all* our children means, by definition, providing effective services and supports to each child. And as noted previously, these services must be individualized to meet the unique needs of individual children. However, a system in which every child has his or her own individualized service and support plan would be extremely inefficient and prohibitively expensive.

The way services and supports can be tailored to meet the learning and development needs of all children, as well as the needs of each child, is through a system that includes multiple tiers of organized support. In Oregon, three tiers of supports and service will be provided in Birth to Age 5, Reading K–12, and Writing K–12.

The three tiers of services and supports within each of these areas are integrated. In moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 to Tier 3, the level of service and support provided to help children reach essential learning and development outcomes becomes increasingly intense. The purpose of increasing the intensity is to align the level of service provided with the needs of the child. Many children, for example, will reach all of the goals and outcomes associated with learning and development with Tier 1 support and service. Furthermore, options within the Tier 1 support system will provide additional opportunities for children to maximize their learning and development outcomes. For some children, the more intense service and support provided in Tier 2 will be necessary for them to reach essential learning and development goals. Tier 3 provides the most intense level of service. Tier 3 services and supports will include a set of standard options as part of the Tier 3 system, as well as flexible options to develop highly individualized service and support opportunities for individual children.

Addressing the Needs of English Learners

Multiple tiers of service and support is the mechanism Oregon will use to make sure the needs of all children are met. Just as the Common Core State Standards at each grade include students who are acquiring English, the Oregon Literacy Plan includes the needs of identified groups of children, including English learners (ELs). In K–12, for example, the needs of many ELs will be met through a combination of Tier 1 and Tier 2 services. For instance, ELs may struggle with aspects of reading development that non-ELs typically do not face because of the challenges of learning a new language. Some aspects of reading development, such as mastering the alphabetic system, may be as easy or difficult for them as they are for non-ELs, but other aspects of reading development, such as reading with deep comprehension, may be substantially more difficult because ELs have not yet developed the English vocabulary knowledge

necessary for reading with deep comprehension. To address these specific scenarios, a school may provide core reading instruction (Tier 1) to all children, including ELs, and small group reading and language instruction (Tier 2) to ELs, focusing in particular on vocabulary and comprehension instruction.

Although the system of tiers a school uses should be clear and readily explainable, it may vary in somewhat complicated ways for groups of children based on anticipated needs. For example, it is reasonable to assume and entirely predictable based on research, that ELs might need more instructional time and intensity than non-ELs to learn English vocabulary at an acceptable rate and level of knowledge. A school could manage this expectation by incorporating a system of tiered instructional supports in which Tier 1 vocabulary instruction looks different for ELs and non-ELs. For instance, as part of Tier 1, ELs may receive daily vocabulary instruction that would represent a combination of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 instructional supports for non-ELs.

An important part of the support and service provided to ELs includes serious consideration given to the language used in providing those services. Particularly in the Birth to Age 5 settings, services and supports that help ELs develop proficiency in their native language and in English are desirable. ELs who have strong native language skills when they begin public school in kindergarten are far more likely to be successful academically than ELs who begin kindergarten with gaps and deficits in their primary language.

When ELs begin kindergarten, the schools they attend will have supports and services that take into consideration their language-learning needs as well as their academic content needs. In some cases, these services and supports may come in the form of native language instruction. In other cases, it may come strictly in the form of English instruction, and in still other cases it may come in the form of instructional supports and services that are provided in both the child's native language and in English. Districts and schools must make decisions about the language of instruction based on the number of children in the building who are ELs, the native language of the ELs, and allocations of the resources, knowledge, and materials necessary to provide high-quality services and supports to their ELs. The overriding principle is ensuring that ELs receive the services and supports necessary to reach essential learning goals. This principle will be an important implementation and evaluation focus in the Oregon Literacy Plan.

Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities

The Oregon Literacy Plan will also address the specific needs of children with disabilities. Assessment data will be disaggregated for children with disabilities, and within specific disability categories in which there are sufficient numbers of children (e.g., students with a specific learning disability), the data will be further disaggregated so that outcomes can be evaluated according to disability type. The way the data are disaggregated is important for several reasons. The disability category is broad, and the services and supports children need to meet essential goals vary substantially across disability categories as well as within a disability category. For example, the needs of children with significant cognitive impairments may differ from the needs of children with emotional problems. Moreover, the needs of children within the largest disability category, specific learning disability, may vary substantially from one child to another within that category. Data will be disaggregated in ways that make the most sense for understanding how well the needs of children with disabilities are being met and in ways that foster effective decision making to systematically improve the services and supports provided to children with disabilities.

The Common Core State Standards clearly require that all K–12 students have the opportunity to meet the same high standards, so the same goals and objectives that define successful language and literacy development for students without disabilities will be used to define successful language and literacy development for many students with disabilities. This includes all children within some disability categories, including children whose primary diagnosis is a specific learning disability. Our expectation is that children with learning disabilities can reach the same goals and outcomes as students without disabilities when they are provided with effective education services and supports. There is ample scientific verification for this assertion, as well as substantial scientific evidence demonstrating the types of services and supports that should be a consistent part of the plans for these students.

For example, students with learning disabilities require instruction that is more systematic and explicit to learn essential literacy content than other students. It may also take students with learning disabilities more time, on average, to learn essential content than it takes students without disabilities. Schools can act on this knowledge by providing more instructional time to students with learning disabilities, by providing more opportunities for these students to learn in small teacher-directed instructional groups, by using an explicit, research-based curriculum, and by ensuring that students get extensive feedback from teachers on how they are doing in learning essential content.

For other children with disabilities, the same goals that define successful literacy and language development for students without disabilities may not comprise a system of optimal goals and objectives. Other literacy and language goals may be paramount. However, all children regardless of disability or disability category will have an education plan that includes a focus on literacy and language goals and development and the services and supports that are needed to make sure these goals are achieved. For example, children with severe cognitive impairments may not be working toward the same literacy goals as children without disabilities, but literacy goals and objectives should be a central part of the plan for these children as well. More functional literacy goals, perhaps in which the focus is on recognizing and responding to environmental print in a variety of settings outside of the school and outside of standard presentation formats such as textbooks, may better define important and essential goals for some children with disabilities.

Moving from Rationale to Implementation

Each section in the Oregon Literacy Plan—Birth to Age 5, Reading K–12, and Writing K–12—is presented in two major parts. In the first part of each section, the empirical, theoretical, and organizational rationale is laid out for that section. This includes how information is organized according to multiple tiers of support and how the Plan is comprehensive in nature by virtue of its alignment with the six components.

The second part of each section focuses on a planning and evaluation tool that defines strong and essential education practice in a particular area. These elements vary depending on the level targeted. So elements vary depending on whether the focus is on the early childhood center or the regional office, the school or the district, or the State. The tool is presented as a self-assessment device so that a particular entity such as a school can rate itself in terms of development and practice on each essential element. Three rating dimensions quantify and describe the depth of implementation achieved for each element. A system of *Fully in Place* (a score of 2), *Partially in Place* (a score of 1), and *Not in Place* (a score of 0) constitutes this self-assessment system.

The self-assessment tool has several important purposes. First, it represents an attempt to define essential practice in a particular area. As a result, an agency or organization intending to provide services and supports related to child literacy development will have a framework it can use to establish and systematically improve the services and supports it provides. Second, the tool represents an extremely high bar for any entity or organization. Getting all things *Fully in Place* will take time, but when we finally do achieve this goal, the literacy levels of children in the State will be substantially higher than they are now. Thus, the tool is intended to provide a road map, a clear way to gauge baseline performance and to prioritize elements that require the most serious attention. Third, the tool is intended to serve as a communication system that the target agency or organization can use internally and externally. Establishing a common vocabulary and vision among staff, along with a clear sense of direction, will enable the organization to move systematically toward full and strong implementation of all elements related to the healthy literacy and language development of children.

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