



Alabama's

Action Plan for Literacy:

Birth Through Grade 12





ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • JOSEPH B. MORTON, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION • MARCH 2011

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*Literacy
development
is the shared
responsibility
of all literacy
stakeholders.*

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Foreword

The mission of the Alabama Department of Education is to provide the standards, resources, and support local education agencies need to ensure all students graduate college- and/or career-ready. Literacy skills provide the foundation for all learning and these skills begin to develop at birth.

In 1998, Alabama began a K-12 reading initiative focused on improving literacy skills. This statewide initiative, the Alabama Reading Initiative, currently provides differentiated levels of support, including professional development, onsite support, and school literacy coaches, to over 1,000 schools. The initiative focuses intensely on three aspects of the teaching of reading: preventing reading difficulties, identifying struggling readers and intervening to help them become proficient readers, and expanding the reading power of all students. During this past decade, a number of other entities have provided direction, education, and support to literacy experiences of children from birth to preschool. The cooperative development and implementation of *Alabama's Action Plan for Literacy: Birth Through Grade 12* affords us a critical opportunity in a new decade to combine all available resources and commit to a cohesive and systematic framework and actions to ensure that every child has the literacy skills necessary to be successful in school and to graduate college- and/or career-ready.

I thank the State Literacy Team for its expertise, commitment, and time devoted to the development of this Plan. The members of this team have thoughtfully studied current research on Birth through Grade 12 literacy as well as the plans developed by other states. Their work in the development of Alabama's Plan will help parents, caregivers, community agencies, schools, local education agencies, the state education agency, and all applicable state agencies to identify specific essential elements that support literacy and work together to strengthen those elements. Our joint efforts will assure that our citizens are literate, well-educated, and successful in school and in life. Alabama's children will be the beneficiaries of this work. They deserve no less.

Joseph B. Morton
State Superintendent of Education



Introduction

*A capacity and
taste for reading
gives access to
whatever has already
been discovered
by others.
- Abraham Lincoln*

The purpose of *Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy* is to provide a framework for action by defining the expectations that support literacy development for learners from Birth through Grade 12. Literacy development is the shared responsibility of all literacy stakeholders. Literacy stakeholders include parents, family members, caregivers, representatives from community organizations and agencies, and educators. All literacy stakeholders are encouraged to use this Action Plan for Literacy to ensure that every student has the literacy skills necessary to graduate college- and/or career-ready.

SECTION 1, Developmental Literacy Continuum—All stakeholders are encouraged to read this section to see how the big picture for literacy develops. Based on the work of Dr. Jean Chall (1996), Alabama’s continuum outlines five stages of literacy development including important accomplishments of learners in each stage, instructional implications, and suggestions for what family members can do to support learners in each stage. While these stages are generally associated with chronological development, literacy development is an individual accomplishment. It is important to note that learners progress through the stages at individual rates. The continuum can be helpful in assessing the stage of literacy development for an individual learner in order to plan and/or support effective literacy instruction.

SECTION 2, Data Review—Provides a look at Alabama’s recent progress in literacy development as measured by state assessments. The data indicate that student progress is moving in the right direction but not at an acceptable pace. Alabama students enter kindergarten with a wide variance in literacy skills, making it more difficult to help all students achieve high levels of proficiency. *Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy* provides a framework for collaboration to provide more support to children during the critical preschool stages of early literacy development.

SECTION 3, Conceptual Framework—Features one of the foundational documents of the Alabama Reading Initiative. The graphic illustrates the interrelationships of the system of meaning, the system of language, and the system of print. These systems work together to support learning at every stage of literacy development. All stakeholders are invited to use this conceptual framework to help identify interferences to learning related to meaning, language, and print and to build comprehension. The conceptual framework applies to everyone in all areas of learning.

SECTION 4, Essential Elements—Is intended as a guide for local educators in all literacy settings. The five elements – Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction and Intervention, Assessment, Professional Development, and Collaborative Leadership – serve as the basis of an effective literacy program. The elements are presented separately in order to help local educators identify specific action steps related to each one. When implemented in concert with each other, the expectations for these elements contribute to a powerful program of literacy development for all learners. A reflection tool is provided for each element to help local educators assess the current level of practice and to identify challenges to full implementation.

SECTION 5, Action Planning—Is intended to help literacy stakeholders focus on actionable literacy goals for continuous improvement. The reflection tools for each of the five essential elements can be used to develop specific action steps in all literacy settings. All local educators are urged to partner with literacy stakeholders in support of an effective literacy program.

Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy is based on several nationally recognized research reports. These reports are cited throughout the document and are listed in the **Resources**. Some additional documents that support the implementation of this Action Plan for Literacy are included in the **Appendices**. These include the *Alabama Quality Teaching Standards*, *Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders*, and *Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development*.

SECTION 1

Continuum of Literacy Development

Adapted from Chall, J. S. (1996). Stages of reading development (2nd ed.). Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace.

Important Considerations When Looking at this Continuum:

- The instruction provided at home and/or in the classroom has a considerable effect on how and to what extent reading develops along the continuum.
- The reading stages are not necessarily age- or grade-dependent.
- The stages are not discrete. Skills introduced in one stage will continue to develop throughout the continuum.

Implications for Individualization of Instruction:

- Each stage is dependent upon adequate development at prior stages.
- Assessments must be used to determine students' levels of development.
- Instruction must start where the students are and build on that to move to higher levels.

Pre-Reading

In this stage of literacy development, the learner gains familiarity with the language and its sounds and symbols.

Accomplishments and Evidences:

- Develops listening skills in order to comprehend.
 - Follows simple spoken directions.
 - Responds to questions.
 - Follows conversations and responds appropriately.
 - Understands a story's meaning and can retell the story.
- Grows in knowledge and use of spoken language.
 - Expresses thoughts and ideas for multiple purposes.
 - Progresses in speaking English (for English language learners).
 - Engages others in conversations.
- Exhibits an increasing control of vocabulary.
 - Identifies and names people and objects to express needs and wants.
 - Increases vocabulary through everyday conversations across settings.
 - Uses new words correctly and in a variety of contexts.
- Develops a beginning understanding of the sound structures of words (sounds associated with the letters).
 - Identifies words that rhyme.
 - Hears syllables in words.
 - Recognizes words that sound the same at the beginning or the end.
 - Understands that spoken words can be broken into parts and put together to form whole words.
 - Invents words by manipulating sounds.



- Develops a beginning knowledge of print.
 - Draws/writes letter-like forms or scribbles producing some features of English writing symbols.
 - Recognizes own name in print.
 - Learns names of letters of the alphabet, especially letters in own name.
 - Prints name and random letters.
 - Plays with books, pencils, paper.
 - Shows an increasing awareness of print in all environments.
- Begins to understand the concept of books.
 - Pretends to read.
 - Holds the book right-side up.
 - Recognizes certain words.
 - Understands that print is read from left to right, top to bottom.
- Begins to understand that the print carries meaning.
 - Understands that print is used to communicate thoughts, feelings, and information.
 - Distinguishes differences between drawing and writing.
 - Scribbles, draws, and/or writes to tell about a story, activity, or event.
 - Retells story from pictures or communicates what was heard when read aloud.
 - Associates spoken words with written words by following print as it is read aloud.

Instructional Implications:

- Create meaningful opportunities to listen and respond for a variety of purposes.
- Prompt story retell with puppets, dramatic play, story cards, and student illustrations; allow English learners to respond to readings in their first language with others who can interpret.
- Engage children throughout the day in interesting conversations and language games, and model effective communication skills.
- Provide rich concept-building experiences that promote vocabulary and reasoning skills.
- Plan for purposeful and spontaneous conversations with children throughout the day.
- Expand children’s vocabulary by intentionally selecting and using new words and repeating new words throughout the day.
- Model sound and word play by repeating rhymes and alliteration; play games with the beginning and ending sounds of words and with the sounds in children’s names; clap syllables.

- Model appropriate writing and use the names of the children on work, drawings, learning centers, and charts to help draw children’s attention to print.
- Provide alphabet/letter manipulatives – cards, tiles, puzzles, alphabet books, and writing utensils.
- Bring attention to and use environmental print and functional print (labeling).
- Promote purposeful literacy-related play and performance activities.
- Read aloud to model reading behaviors and purposeful reasons for reading throughout the day.
- Provide opportunities to interact with a wide variety of books and learning center activities that expand central themes, concepts, and vocabulary.
- Provide purposeful literacy-related activities using paper, pencils, letters, and technology in a print-rich environment.
- Model writing of simple stories, new and useful words, experiences, etc.

What Parents and Family Members Can Do:

- Engage in language activities throughout the day.
 - Have daily conversations with children; listen and encourage them to respond.
 - Use a rich vocabulary when talking with children; speak in complete sentences.
 - Name the people, objects, and activities that are encountered.
 - Expose children to sophisticated vocabulary and share a love of words.
 - Sing or say nursery rhymes, simple songs, and finger plays.
 - Encourage children to retell experiences and describe ideas and events that are important to them.
- Read to children every day, throughout the day.
 - Read, read, read to children for fun and learning throughout the day.
 - Read aloud, discuss, and reread predictable stories – let children join in with rhyming words.
 - Read aloud nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and high-quality literature to children.
 - Visit the library with your child regularly.
 - Be a reader – let your children see you reading.
- Provide opportunities for children to draw and print, using markers, crayons, pencils, and technology.
 - Encourage scribbling, pretend writing, and pretend reading of that writing.

- Make connections between spoken and written language – children describe their drawings and dictate the description to you.
- Involve children with you in word processing and drawing applications on the computer.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see
 Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs. (2009). *Alabama Performance Standards for 4-Year-Olds: Preparing Children “4” Lifelong Learning*. Montgomery, AL: Alabama Office of School Readiness.
<http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/PerformanceStandards2009-2010.pdf>

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.
<http://niel.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>

Alabama State Department of Human Resources. (no date given).
The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines.
http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/large_docs/AELG.pdf

Initial Reading or Decoding

At this stage, the learner becomes aware of the relationship between sounds and letters and begins applying the knowledge to text.

Accomplishments and Evidences:

- Demonstrates understanding that a spoken word consists of a sequence of phonemes.
- Merges spoken syllables into a word; then can count the number of syllables in a word.
- Produces another word that rhymes with a spoken word.
- Writes many uppercase and lowercase letters independently.
- Demonstrates a general understanding of the spelling-sound system.
 - Identifies letters and matches them with the correct sound.
 - Begins to use knowledge of consonants and vowels to blend or segment simple words.
 - Accurately decodes (print-sound mapping) regular one-syllable and nonsense words.
 - Sounds out unknown words when reading text.
 - Combines phonemic awareness and knowledge of letters to create spelling.

- Builds a base of conventional spellings and common irregularly spelled words.
- Reads simple texts.
- Uses letter cues in the word to self-correct mispronunciations.
- Creates own spellings independently using knowledge of the spelling-sound system for self and others to read.
- Shows an increasing word consciousness and word curiosity.
- Expands language as evidenced by word choice and word use.
- Demonstrates comprehension during read-alouds by asking and answering questions and discussions with peers and adults.
- Monitors and self-corrects own reading; recognizes when meaning breaks down.
- Reads appropriate grade-level fiction and nonfiction to answer simple written text-related questions.
- Creates own written texts for self and others to read.
- Produces a wide variety of writings for multiple purposes (journals, descriptions, stories, lists) demonstrating knowledge of how text fits with illustrations, graphics, and simple text features.

Instructional Implications:

- Read aloud to model different purposes for reading and to model reading behaviors.
- Plan for explicit and systematic phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling instruction.
- Provide oral phoneme blending and oral phoneme segmentation exercises.
- Integrate multiple opportunities to blend words to read and segment words to spell.
- Practice with decodable text following the core reading program phonics progression.
- Provide books with a good picture/text correspondence for English learners.
- Provide repeated oral readings of connected text to achieve fluency and comprehension.
- Prompt thinking with critical questions and discussion about a text.
- Plan for connected independent writing following instruction.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for conversation throughout the day to expand language skills and vocabulary.
- Provide many opportunities for children to write to express ideas and feelings related to what they are reading.

- Monitor student progress frequently to guide planning of explicit instruction and intervention.

What Parents and Family Members Can Do:

- Engage children in frequent conversations using complete sentences and rich vocabulary.
- Provide opportunities for children to read daily and talk and write about favorite storybooks.
- Read/discuss/reread predictable stories and grade-level text.
- Read aloud fairy tales, poems, informational text, and high-quality literature.
- Visit the library with your child regularly.
- Provide opportunities for children to write to friends and relatives, make grocery lists, take food orders, write family members' names, label household objects, and write stories and poems.
- Become involved in school activities.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see Alabama Department of Children's Affairs. (2009). *Alabama Performance Standards for 4-Year-Olds: Preparing Children "4" Lifelong Learning*. Montgomery, AL: Alabama Office of School Readiness. <http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/PerformanceStandards2009-2010.pdf>

National Reading Panel. (2001). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubskey.cfm?from=reading>

and Alabama State Department of Human Resources. (no date given).

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines. http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/large_docs/AELG.pdf

Confirmation, Fluency, Automaticity

At this stage, the learner improves decoding skills to include more complex spelling patterns and expands the number of words recognized by sight to build fluency.

Accomplishments and Evidences:

- Exhibits consolidation of the decoding stage.
 - Applies knowledge of the alphabetic principle to read most words automatically.
 - Accurately reads many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings.

- Uses knowledge of print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.
- Accurately decodes orthographically regular, multisyllable words and nonsense words.
- Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge and structural analysis to decode words.
- Infers word meaning from known roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Reads passages with ease and expression.
 - Demonstrates more fluent reading of simple stories.
 - Exhibits oral reading that is more fluent and sounds more like talking.
 - Reads longer fiction and nonfiction selections, chapter books, and poetry independently.
- Demonstrates growth in processing meaning.
 - Combines sight words and decoding to process meaning.
 - Reads approximately 3,000 words.
 - Has a listening vocabulary of approximately 9,000 words.
 - Comprehends text more effectively through listening than through reading.
 - Reads and comprehends appropriate texts for the grade level.
 - Demonstrates aptitude in interpreting fiction; discusses story elements.
 - Notices text features, illustrations, and graphic elements which enhance understanding of nonfiction texts.
- Produces a variety of written work.
 - Incorporates newly acquired vocabulary and language patterns in own writings; incorporates information from multiple sources when producing compositions, reports, and letters.
 - Independently reviews own writing; discusses with peers and responds to help other students' compositions.
 - Participates in creative responses to texts such as writing stories, poems, and plays.

Instructional Implications:

- Provide explicit instruction in advanced decoding skills, including morphology.
- Develop language, vocabulary, and concepts by exposure to higher-level reading materials.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for conversation throughout the day to expand language skills and vocabulary.

- Provide many opportunities to read instructional and independent level materials.
 - Choral reading (e.g., reading aloud together as a group).
 - Student-adult reading (e.g., reading to each other).
 - Tape-assisted reading (e.g., reading along with a tape).
 - Partner reading (e.g., a fluent partner provides a model of fluent reading, helps with word recognition, and provides feedback).
 - Independent reading.
- Structure rereading opportunities to build fluency and automaticity.
- Provide a wide variety (genre) of texts with rich vocabulary and multiple opportunities for students to respond orally and in writing.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking through conversations and discussions about what they are reading with peers and adults.
- Provide multiple and purposeful opportunities for written response to readings.

What Parents and Family Members Can Do:

- Engage children in frequent conversations and stimulating discussions.
- Engage children in activities that require reading and writing for information and for pleasure; model your expectations.
- Continue to read to children and encourage them to read to you and discuss what they are reading.
- Provide opportunities for children to write to friends and relatives, make detailed written plans, keep a journal, write stories and poems, and use technology to communicate.
- Visit the library with your child regularly.
- Become increasingly involved in school literacy activities.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see National Reading Panel. (2001). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubskey.cfm?from=reading>

Reading for Learning

At this stage, the reader has enough reading skill to focus on content and learn new information and facts from reading.

Accomplishments and Evidences:

- Demonstrates growth in vocabulary and background knowledge.
- Begins to acquire new knowledge, information, thoughts, and experiences by reading.
 - Expresses new ideas and experiences.
 - Speaks from single point of view.
 - Comprehends with more equal efficiency from either listening or reading.
- Reads from an increasingly broad range of materials.
 - More interested in independent reading for a variety of purposes.
- Writes with increasing sophistication, reflecting appropriate use of rich vocabulary and incorporating new ideas and learning.

Instructional Implications:

- Provide opportunities to read more complex text and different genres.
- Provide opportunities to react to text through conversations, discussions, and writing.
- Provide explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and multiple opportunities to practice.
- Provide exposure to unfamiliar vocabulary and syntax.
- Structure many opportunities for conversation and discussion.

What Parents and Family Members Can Do:

- Engage children in frequent conversations.
- Build a love of language in all its forms.
- Support a child's specific hobby or interest with reading materials and references.
- Stay in regular contact with teachers about progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/ReadingNext.pdf>

Construction, Viewpoints, and Judgment

The reader at this stage begins to analyze what is read.

Accomplishments and Evidences:

- Reads selectively and forms own opinions about what is read.
 - Reads widely from a variety of complex materials.
- Starts to confront different viewpoints and begins to analyze and critique written expository and narrative texts critically.
 - Looks for multiple viewpoints.
- Integrates one's knowledge with that of others to synthesize it.
- Begins to exercise conscious control of the reading process based on one's purpose as a reader and demands of the text.
- Monitors comprehension.
 - Recognizes how material is organized.
 - Determines and synthesizes main ideas.
 - Relates details to main ideas.
 - Adjusts reading rate or rereads when necessary.
- Reads with comprehension that is equal to or better than listening comprehension of difficult material.

Instructional Implications:

- Provide systematic study of words and word parts.
- Provide exposure to a wide variety of texts with structured opportunities for discussion.
- Create formal and creative writing opportunities.

What Parents and Family Members Can Do:

- Discuss books and interesting ideas with readers.
- Encourage appropriate expression of differing viewpoints and judgments.
- Maintain communication with teachers about your child's literacy progress.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see
Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006).
Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York (2nd ed.). Washington, DC:
Alliance for Excellent Education.
<http://www.all4ed.org/files/ReadingNext.pdf>

SECTION 2 Data Review

In 2007, Alabama made history by making higher gains in 4th Grade Reading than any other state in the nation and in the history of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) state-level Reading assessment.

(Alabama Department of Education Press Release March 24, 2010)



Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT)

In Alabama, more students can read and comprehend grade-level text than ever before. Over the last ten years, the state has made much progress in literacy education. This is due in part to the work of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) beginning in 1998 and to the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* legislation beginning in 2003. Alabama made national headlines when 2007 scores were released for the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), the “Nation’s Report Card.” Fourth grade students in Alabama made more gains in reading than any other state had ever made. Even with those historic gains, however, Alabama still remains below the national average.

The results of Alabama’s efforts in literacy have been widely praised. The chart below shows the results of the state accountability measure for Grades 3-8. The direction of the data is right but the pace is not acceptable.

Levels 3 and 4 Reading

Grade	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010
Grade 3	84%	85%	85%	86%	87%
Grade 4	84%	85%	87%	87%	87%
Grade 5	81%	85%	84%	85%	86%
Grade 6	83%	85%	86%	86%	86%
Grade 7	75%	77%	79%	81%	83%
Grade 8	72%	72%	74%	75%	74%

Stanford Achievement Test – 10th Edition

The *Stanford Achievement Test*, 10th Edition (Stanford) is also given to students in Grades 3-8. The primary purpose of this test is to compare individual and group performances with others across the nation. Additionally, the Stanford provides data to study changes in performance over time. As with the ARMT, the direction is right but the pace is not acceptable. The chart below shows the last five years of state data.

Reading Comprehension Scores

Percentage of Students Scoring in Stanines 5-9 (ARI’s definition of proficiency)

Grade	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010
Grade 3	67%	68%	69%	70%	71%
Grade 4	68%	69%	70%	71%	72%
Grade 5	65%	67%	67%	69%	70%
Grade 6	59%	61%	62%	64%	64%
Grade 7	62%	64%	65%	67%	67%
Grade 8	60%	61%	62%	64%	64%

Alabama's students in K-2 are assessed using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS). The DIBELS is comprised of a developmental sequence of one-minute measures: recognizing initial sounds, naming the letters of the alphabet, segmenting the phonemes in a word, reading nonsense words, oral reading of a passage, retelling, and word use. The measures assess phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency in reading text, vocabulary, and comprehension (Kaminski & Good, 2009, www.dibels.org/dibels.html). DIBELS results can be used to evaluate individual student development, as well as to provide feedback on effectiveness of instruction. The direction of the DIBELS data is right but the pace is not acceptable.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Percent of Students at Benchmark

	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010
Grade					
K (NWF)*	86%	83%	89%	89%	88%
1 (ORF)**	76%	79%	80%	81%	80%
2 (ORF)	71%	64%	67%	66%	75%
3 (ORF)	64%	67%	69%	69%	69%

*NWF - Nonsense Word Fluency

**ORF - Oral Reading Fluency

College Remediation Data

In 2009, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education published a report of College Remediation Data, showing the number of students in Alabama public colleges and universities who were enrolled in remediation courses. On average, over 32% of students enrolled required remediation classes in reading. One school had as many as 88% of its graduates in remediation classes, illustrating the critical need for more rigorous literacy instruction through high school.

	# Graduates	# Enrolled	# Remediation	% Remediation
All Public Schools	41,869	23,397	7,661	32.7%
Schools with the Largest Percentage of Students Requiring Remediation				
School #1	31	18	16	88.9%
School #2	12	6	5	88.3%
School #3	54	35	27	77.1%
School #4	188	46	34	73.9%
School #5	50	18	13	72.2%
Schools with the Smallest Percentage of Students Requiring Remediation Seven schools (with more than ten graduates) had less than 10% of their students that needed remediation.				

The foundation for literacy skills is established long before students ever enter school. According to the longitudinal study by Drs. Hart and Risley (1995),

About one out of three (32%) of Alabama's students who graduate and enroll in a public college or university requires remediation courses in reading.

(Alabama Commission on Higher Education)

*Major findings of 1995
Vocabulary Study by
Hart & Risley*

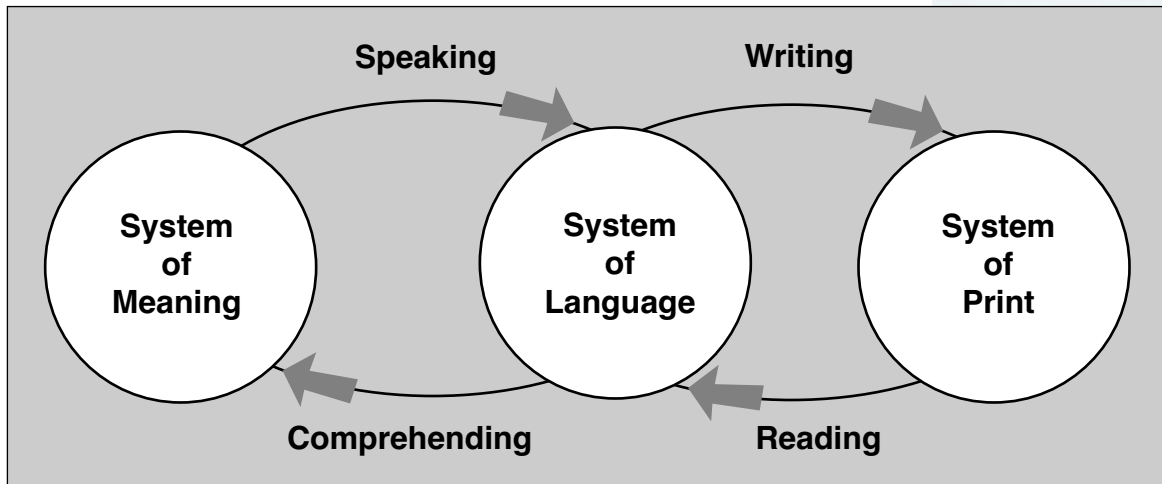
- 1. The variation in children's IQs and language abilities is relative to the amount parents speak to their children.*
- 2. Children's academic successes at ages nine and ten are attributable to the amount of talk they hear from birth to age three.*
- 3. Parents of advanced children talk significantly more to their children than parents of children who are not as advanced.*

there is a significant link between the academic success of a student and the number of words spoken to the child before age three. Recent studies also suggest that 100% of the achievement gap in reading originates before a student's first day of kindergarten (Fielding, Kerr and Rosier, 2007). Alabama's Reading First data follow this research trend. From 2004-2008, approximately 90 Alabama schools with the highest rates of poverty and school failure were eligible to participate in the Alabama Reading First Program. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was given to entering Kindergarten students in these Reading First schools. Most of these incoming students scored in the at-risk category for vocabulary skills with many entering kindergarten with the vocabulary of a three-year-old. It is difficult to make up that language disadvantage.

Considering both the national research findings and the data from Alabama schools, it is critical that *Alabama's Action Plan for Literacy* includes support for children from Birth through Grade 12. Literacy is everyone's responsibility and together we must make a difference for Alabama's students.

SECTION 3

Conceptual Framework



The Conceptual Framework is one of the foundational documents of the Alabama Reading Initiative. This graphic illustrates the processes that are required for learners at every age to make meaning from spoken or from written language. The intent of this framework is to help teachers better understand how to design instruction that supports each of these processes and how to identify the interferences that can cause meaning to break down. (See Appendix 1 for a Summary of Interferences.)

Skillful reading at any age requires the employment of three systems—the system of meaning, system of language, and system of print. Recent advances in medical technology allow the study of how the brain functions during reading. This brain research (Wren 2000) confirms the interrelationship of these three systems in supporting comprehension.

The **System of Meaning** is the sum total of one’s background knowledge and experiences. Sometimes known as background knowledge, prior knowledge, or schema, the system of meaning includes knowledge, experiences, emotions, understandings, and opinions.

Meaning comes first in development, with infants beginning to develop their systems of meaning within minutes after birth. Meaning is not static. Expanding and refining meaning is a life-long endeavor. All learners continue to add meaning throughout our lives.

Comprehending is the act of turning language into meaning. It is the avenue through which learners are able to expand or refine meaning. Meaning is the bigger goal of comprehension.

Accurate decoding and the skillful use of comprehension strategies do not guarantee new or expanded meaning. A reader must have some background knowledge or experience with a subject in order to make any meaning. Educators at every stage of literacy development should be concerned with building and expanding the reader’s system of meaning.

The **System of Language** consists of signs, symbols, gestures, and rules used



Educators at every stage of literacy development should be concerned with building and expanding the reader's system of meaning.

for the expression of meaning. Reading instruction builds upon the language competence of oral language users. Learners will comprehend if their system of language (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, syntax, idioms) overlaps sufficiently with the author's expression.

Just as meaning is the bigger goal of comprehension, language is the bigger goal of vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to words and what they mean. Language refers to words and how they are used to express meaning. Comprehension, then, belongs to the spoken language.

The ability to understand language, whether written or spoken, is an underlying ability required for reading. Learning to understand the meaning of what a text communicates depends a great deal on our capacity for understanding spoken language.

Comprehension is dependent upon the reader's systems of meaning and language. Comprehension requires effort. Readers must intentionally and purposefully work to create meaning from what they read. Skillful readers become so fluent and automatic at strategic comprehension processing that one rarely "sees" the work they are doing. To help readers acquire and use strategies for understanding the print sources they will encounter in their lives, readers must be taught how to use text to think and learn. Learners also need strong instructional opportunities to help them develop the deep levels of word knowledge needed to express thoughts effectively.

Proficiency with the **System of Print** ensures that the reader develops the ability to easily change printed symbols into spoken language (reading) and to change spoken language into print (writing).

In pre-school and in the early grades, especially K and 1, there is a major emphasis on helping students become proficient with the system of print.

By the end of Grade 2, readers should be:

- Accurate – able to pronounce words correctly using knowledge of the alphabetic principle (letters represent sounds).
- Automatic – able to recognize words quickly by sight with minimal analysis.
- Fluent – able to read smoothly, accurately, and with correct expression.

Readers who are accurate arrive at the correct pronunciation of a word on the first attempt or after self-correction because they understand the alphabetic principle (i.e., they know that letters represent sounds). They decode multisyllabic words by breaking them into recognizable units that can be reconstructed. Writing and spelling are an indication of the level of mastery of the alphabetic principle.

Automaticity refers to knowing how to do something so well that it doesn't require conscious thought. The significance of achieving automaticity in reading is that the reader can devote all cognitive resources to the important task of comprehending the text.

Reading fluency refers to the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. A fluent reader is able to chunk a text in order to make the meaning more accessible. The ability to decode and understand individual words does not guarantee fluency or comprehension. The meaning often lies in a passage's phrases more than in the individual words. Fluent oral reading helps the reader transfer phrasing in speech to appropriate phrasing in written text.

Readers at any age will continue to struggle with comprehension if they are not accurate, automatic, and/or fluent readers. When a reader must concentrate on the print code, he cannot attend to the meaning. Intervention that is focused on the system of print is needed to help these students become successful with all content reading materials.

At every stage of literacy development, educators must be able to identify whether interferences to comprehension of a specific text stem from the system of print, the system of language, the system of meaning, and/or from inattention. Educators must make certain that readers also recognize the source(s) of the interferences and have the strategies necessary to overcome each type of interference.

The significance of achieving automaticity in reading is that the reader can devote all cognitive resources to the important task of comprehending the text.

SECTION 4

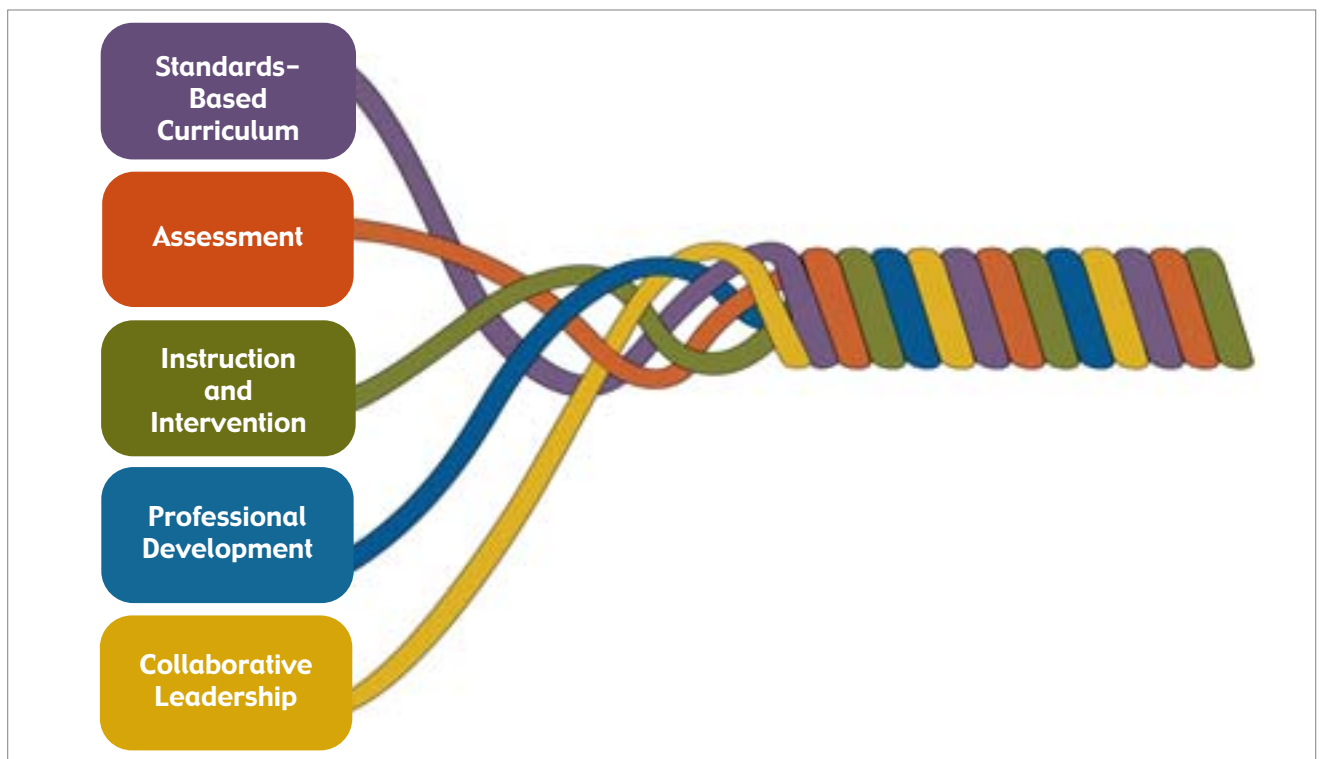
Essential Elements

Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy

The mission of the Alabama Department of Education is to provide the standards, resources, and support local education agencies need to ensure all students graduate college- and/or career-ready. *Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy: Birth Through Grade 12* supports the mission of the Alabama Department of Education by providing a framework of action for all stakeholders that ensures every student develops the literacy skills necessary to graduate college- and/or career-ready. These literacy skills, which begin to develop at birth, include the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and use appropriate language in a variety of content areas.

The goal of *Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy: Birth Through Grade 12* is to help parents, caregivers, community agencies, schools, and local education agencies identify specific essential elements that support literacy development at all ages from Birth through Grade 12; assess the current level of implementation of those elements; and take specific actions to strengthen those elements as necessary to ensure that every child is successful in school and beyond.

These essential elements are addressed in *Alabama’s Action Plan* as five separate strands: Standards-Based Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction and Intervention, Professional Development, and Collaborative Leadership. These elements are presented separately to help identify specific action steps related to each one. As the rope graphic illustrates, the strength of these strands is vastly multiplied when woven together into a system of literacy support that begins at birth and continues through Grade 12, resulting in every student having the literacy skills necessary to graduate college- and/or career-ready.



Standards-Based Curriculum

A **Standards-Based Curriculum** is the roadmap for knowing where students are headed and how to get there. A standards-based curriculum includes goals, objectives, and standards that are the vision for what it means to be a literate person. Standards define what students are expected to learn and be able to do and serve as the basis for aligning instruction, materials, and assessments to support learning.

Standards-based curriculum alignment implies that there has been a consensus regarding academic content standards, performance assessment, and a comprehensive curriculum that will enable students to achieve high levels of proficiency on assessments aligned with standards. A standards-based curriculum is valued when:

- Everyone knows what all students are expected to know and be able to do at each stage of their schooling.
- Educators are supplied with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to support student learning.
- There is evidence of student achievement.

Having a standards-based curriculum provides a clear definition of what students should know and be able to do while establishing high expectations for schools, teachers, and students. Articulation of the curriculum with all stakeholders, especially the community, is critical to ensure students are fully prepared for the future.

State literacy standards – refers to the age/grade-level expectations adopted by the state of Alabama for the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

For birth to age four these standards are the **Alabama Early Learning Guidelines**, a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Human Resources and various stakeholders concerned with early literacy.

For four-year-olds, these are the **Alabama Performance Standards for 4-Year-Olds**, revised in 2009-2010 by the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs, Office of School Readiness.

For Grades K-12, these standards are contained in the 2011 **Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts (COS)**. Along with specific Alabama standards, the Alabama COS includes the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts*. The Common Core Standards were published in 2010 as a joint effort of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association and were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education on November 18, 2010. These Common Core Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The Common Core Standards have been adopted for use by 40 states as of December 30, 2010.

A standards-based curriculum – includes the materials, instruction, and assessments used to ensure that all students meet age/grade-level expectations as identified in the state-adopted literacy standards.

Literacy stakeholders – every person who is concerned with the literacy development of learners from Birth through Grade 12 (may include parents, caregivers, teachers, and school and community leaders).

Educators – every person who provides learning experiences to learners Birth through Grade 12 (may include parents, caregivers, teachers, and leaders).

Scope and sequence – a document that designates all content and/or skills that will be taught and the order in which they will be taught in a given literacy setting.

Pacing guide – a document that tells when content and/or skills will be taught, how much instructional time will be devoted to each, and when proficiency in the content/skills will be assessed.

Literacy setting – every setting in which learners from Birth through Grade 12 have the opportunity to develop literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (may be home, day care, school, or community activity).

The Alabama Department of Education will:

1. Define the developmental milestones, literacy skills, and proficiency levels needed to ensure that students are college- and/or career-ready.
2. Adopt research-based standards for learners from birth through pre-K in literacy settings.
3. Adopt research-based literacy standards for Grades K-12 which include the Common Core State Standards.
4. Develop curriculum materials and assessments to support implementation of the state-adopted guidelines and standards.
5. Review core reading programs and provide guidance to local education agencies in the selection and adoption of core reading programs that are aligned with state-adopted literacy standards.
6. Collaborate with teacher preparation programs to ensure that state-adopted literacy standards are included in coursework and field experiences.
7. Collaborate with community-based partners to build public awareness and advocacy for state-adopted standards and assessments.
8. Provide the professional development and ongoing support necessary for effective implementation of the state-adopted guidelines and standards.

Local educators will:

Local educators refers to the teachers and leaders in all literacy settings.

1. Commit to using state-adopted, research-based standards as the basis for the curriculum.
2. Align instruction, materials, and assessments to state-adopted, research-based standards.
3. Develop a comprehensive scope and sequence aligned to the state-adopted standards.
4. Identify or develop pacing guides that support implementation of the standards-based curriculum.
5. Adopt and use core reading and intervention programs that are aligned to the state-adopted standards.
6. Provide common learning opportunities based on the state-adopted standards for all local literacy stakeholders to ensure supportive transitions from one literacy setting to the next.
7. Determine who has the primary responsibility in every literacy setting for implementation of state-adopted standards.

Community partners will commit to partner with local educators in support of the standards-based curriculum.

Community partners refers to individuals, local businesses, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with literacy development.

See page 36 for possible action steps related to the Essential Elements.

Reflection Activity for Local Educators Current Practices and Challenges

Following are the expectations for a standards-based curriculum. Read each statement and answer the following two questions.

1. To what extent is this expectation practiced in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = clearly present throughout literacy setting and 1 = not present at all.)
2. How challenging will it be to achieve full implementation of this expectation in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = very challenging and 1 = very easy.)

Extent to which expectation is practiced in my literacy setting (circle one)	Expectations for the Standards-Based Curriculum	Degree of challenge to achieve full implementation of expectation in my literacy setting (circle one)
5 4 3 2 1	Commit to using state-adopted, research-based standards as the basis for the curriculum.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Align instruction, materials, and assessments to state-adopted, research-based standards.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Develop a comprehensive scope and sequence aligned to the state-adopted, research-based standards.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Identify or develop pacing guides that support implementation of the curriculum.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Adopt and use core reading and intervention programs that are aligned to the state-adopted standards.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Provide common learning opportunities based on the state-adopted standards for all local literacy stakeholders to ensure supportive transitions from one literacy setting to the next.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Determine who has primary responsibility for implementation of standards.	5 4 3 2 1

Assessment

Summative assessment – a means to determine at a particular point in time what students do and do not know; a measure of achievement providing evidence of student competence or program effectiveness.

Disaggregate – refers to looking at data that has been separated by specific groups of students (e.g., gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity).

Formal assessment – the collection of data using standardized tests or procedures under controlled conditions.

Informal assessment – the collection of data during classroom activities using observation, conferencing, student projects, and work samples.

Formative assessment – is critical to the instructional process. Teachers use many formative assessment strategies including active student engagement, observation, conferencing, quality questioning, and descriptive feedback. As teachers gather information formatively, they are better able to adjust the teaching and learning as both are happening. This practice becomes assessment for learning. Formative assessment is not simply a measure of learning but can contribute to the learning.

Assessment is the process of collecting data for the purpose of improving learning. Assessment may be formal or informal and may be conducted through a variety of methods. A comprehensive assessment system provides a framework that defines which assessments should be administered, when they should be administered, to whom they should be administered, and how the assessment results will be used.

A comprehensive assessment system includes both formative and summative assessments.

- Formative assessments guide current and ongoing instruction. The results of formative assessments such as screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic measures are used to adjust instruction to meet individual and group needs on a continuous basis. Formative assessments are used frequently throughout the year to determine which students are experiencing difficulties, which students are making progress toward desired outcomes, and which students should receive additional assessing to determine their instructional needs.
- Summative assessments are used to measure students' overall learning of the curriculum and content standards. Summative assessments are typically administered at the end of a course or larger unit of instruction. Summative assessments typically provide information to assist in the evaluation of group instruction and overall program effectiveness.

Assessment data should inform stakeholders of the effectiveness of instructional programs, should identify support and resources that are needed for improvement, and should provide information for individual needs as well as group needs. A comprehensive assessment system is a balance of formative assessments used in concert with summative assessments to ensure that all students are learning.

A **comprehensive assessment system** includes assessments to accomplish four purposes:

1. Screening – determines the level of mastery of state-adopted grade-level literacy standards.
2. Progress monitoring – determines if students are making adequate progress or need more intervention to master grade-level literacy standards.
3. Diagnostic – provides in-depth information about a student's strengths and instructional needs.
4. Outcome – provides a bottom-line evaluation of how proficient students are with literacy expectations.

An assessment system should also include details about why each assessment has been chosen; when they should be administered; to whom they should be administered; how the assessment results will be used; and how the results will be communicated to all stakeholders.

The Alabama Department of Education will:

1. Identify formative and summative assessments to support state-adopted guidelines, standards, and expectations.
2. Provide technical assistance to educators in the selection, administration, and use of formative and summative assessments that support literacy development.
3. Develop a data system that makes longitudinal and current data readily available to all stakeholders.
4. Use multiple forms of data to differentiate state support to local education agencies and organizations.
5. Collaborate with teacher preparation programs to ensure that teacher candidates have the knowledge and skills to use assessment data to deliver high-quality literacy instruction.

Local educators will:

Local educators refers to the teachers and leaders in all literacy settings.

1. Align all assessments to the state-adopted, research-based standards.
2. Implement a comprehensive assessment system that includes both formative and summative assessments.
3. Increase adults' capacity to assess learning by scheduling frequent opportunities for data analyses and discussions.
4. Disaggregate and analyze data for instructional decision-making.
5. Communicate assessment results in a timely manner to all literacy stakeholders in a format that is easily understandable.
6. Collaborate with all literacy stakeholders to ensure that assessment results are available when students transition from one literacy setting to the next.
7. Utilize a comprehensive plan to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program and to guide adjustments for improvement.

Community partners will commit to partner with local educators in support of the assessment system.

Community partners refers to individuals, local businesses, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with literacy development.

See page 36 for possible action steps related to the Essential Elements.

Reflection Activity for Local Educators Current Practices and Challenges

Following are the expectations for assessment. Read each statement and answer the following two questions.

1. To what extent is this expectation practiced in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = clearly present throughout literacy setting and 1 = not present at all.)
2. How challenging will it be to achieve full implementation of this expectation in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = very challenging and 1 = very easy.)

Extent to which expectation is practiced in my literacy setting (circle one)	Expectations for Assessment	Degree of challenge to achieve full implementation of expectation in my literacy setting (circle one)
5 4 3 2 1	Align all assessments to the state-adopted, research-based standards.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Implement a comprehensive assessment system that includes both formative and summative assessments.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Increase adults' capacity to assess learning by scheduling frequent opportunities for data analyses and discussions.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Disaggregate and analyze data for instructional decision-making.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Communicate assessment results in a timely manner to all literacy stakeholders in a format that is easily understandable.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Collaborate with all literacy stakeholders to ensure that assessment results are available when students transition from one literacy setting to the next.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Utilize a comprehensive plan to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program and to guide adjustments for improvement.	5 4 3 2 1

Instruction and Intervention

Instruction is the action or process of teaching. Instruction must be focused on the right content and be delivered, organized, and managed in a way that is consistent with what has been learned from research. High-quality instruction that is both systematic and explicit will meet the needs of most learners.

- **Systematic instruction** refers to a carefully planned sequence for instruction. The plan for systematic instruction is carefully thought out, strategic, and designed before activities and lessons are developed. Lessons build on previously taught information, from simple to complex, with clear, concise student objectives that are driven by ongoing assessment.
- **Explicit instruction** provides a direct explanation of what is to be learned, why it is being learned, and how it will be learned. Explicit instruction incorporates modeling to demonstrate the learning, opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback, and scaffolding to guide the learner to independence.

Developing the literacy skills of all learners is a shared responsibility among all educators. All students should receive high-quality instruction that is designed and differentiated to meet their needs.

Intervention is provided to students who may need to receive additional instruction that is designed to meet their specific needs while at the same time accelerating their growth toward grade-level expectations. Intervention instruction usually focuses on one or more key areas of literacy development and is typically provided for a short duration. The goal of intervention is to respond quickly to students who may be at risk of not meeting standards and to get them back on track. Good core instruction should meet the needs of most students, but an efficient system for providing high-quality intensive intervention is required to meet the needs of all students.

Alabama Quality Teaching Standards

See Appendix 2

(http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/alqts_full.pdf)

1. **Content Knowledge:** Teachers master the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry related to their teaching fields; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.
2. **Teaching and Learning:** Teachers design a student-centered learning environment and use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.
3. **Literacy:** Teachers use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.

Instructional practices – established ways of doing something, especially one that has developed through experience and knowledge.

Literacy components – reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language use.

Active engagement – providing opportunities for students to meaningfully talk and listen, write, read, and reflect on the content, ideas, issues, and concerns in all content areas.

Formative assessment – ongoing assessment of student progress with adjustment to the instruction and accompanying feedback in order to help improve the student's performance.

Tiered instruction – academic interventions based on student needs that increase in intensity by adjusting the time, group size, materials, and/or instructional delivery.

Differentiation – process of designing lessons based on identified student needs; lessons include varied learning outcomes, grouping practices, instructional strategies, assignments, materials, etc.

Flexible grouping – instructional groups that are formed and reformed based on systematic and frequent progress monitoring.

Systematic instruction – is orderly, planned, and gradually builds from basic elements to more complex structures.

Explicit instruction provides:

- *Direct explanation – teacher tells learners why, when, and how strategies should be used.*
- *Modeling – teacher demonstrates the strategy.*
- *Guided practice – teacher assists learners.*
- *Application – learners practice the skill independently.*

Ample practice – sufficient applications of content and/or skills in various contexts to achieve effortless application.

Report of the National Reading Panel (2000)

<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/summary.html>

Five essential components of reading instruction that support literacy development at any stage of learning:

- *Phonemic awareness: ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.*
- *Phonics: instruction in the relationships between the letters of written language (graphemes) and the sounds of spoken language (phonemes).*
- *Fluency: the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression.*
- *Vocabulary: the words needed to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.*
- *Text comprehension: the ability to understand what is read.*

4. **Diversity:** Teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs; exceptionalities; and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.
5. **Professionalism:** Teachers engage in continuous learning and self-improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the *Alabama Educator Code of Ethics* and federal, state, and local laws and policies.

Alabama's Strategic Teaching Framework

There are five features to the strategic teaching framework:

1. **Focus on state standards and outcomes:** Outcomes are stated in student-friendly terms so learners know what is expected of them for the particular lesson.
2. **Chunk content material and facilitate student discussion:** All content is “chunked,” or broken into smaller pieces for easy acquisition, and teachers provide opportunities for students to discuss concepts with their teachers and peers.
3. **Plan lessons in a before, during, after format:** All lessons begin with a “before” or introductory strategy; transition to a “during” or developmental strategy; and end with an “after” or culminating strategy. These are lesson phases that foster appropriate pacing and opportunities for continuous formative assessment to drive further instruction.
4. **Employ explicit instruction:** The explicit instruction model (direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, application) is part of every lesson though it is not always necessary to employ the entire sequence during each lesson. The level of explicitness depends upon the content and the needs of the learners.
5. **Foster student engagement via the components of active literacy (reading, writing, talking, listening, and investigating):** Lessons are strategic when they actively engage all learners. Stephanie Harvey and Ann Goudvis (2007) outline the components of active literacy as reading, writing, talking, listening, and investigating.

When the strategic teaching framework is in place daily in every classroom across the curriculum, learning becomes visible for students, teachers, and observers. Purposefully incorporating these components throughout the before, during, and after phases of the lesson assures that students are actively engaged in content learning, the learning is visible to all observers, and assessment is occurring frequently to inform immediate or long-range instructional adjustments.

High-Quality Instruction

The Alabama Reading Initiative views high-quality instruction as a set of practices that are applicable to both the earliest instruction for children and adult learning principles across all disciplines. When employed simultaneously in any learning environment, these practices make the learning observable in terms of both process and product and maximize the retention of concepts and content. The Alabama Reading Initiative views high-quality instruction as teaching that is:

- Based on multiple forms of data
- Focused to meet standards-based outcomes
- Considerate of developmental stages
- Systematic
- Explicit
- Intended to foster active engagement
- Structured to include research-based strategies
- Planned to include formative assessments from beginning to end
- Designed to increase student learning

Alabama's Guidance for Response to Instruction (RtI) (https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/154/RESPONSE_TO_INSTRUCTION_)

Alabama's Core Support for All Students provides guidance for development of a district-wide RtI plan. An RtI plan combines core instruction, assessment, and intervention within a multi-tiered system to increase student achievement and reduce behavior problems.

Tier I – research-based core instruction (both whole-group and small-group) provided to all students in all content areas.

Tier II – targeted interventions provided to small groups of students who are not making adequate progress in Tier I. Materials and strategies are specialized to meet the specific needs of students.

Tier III – Intensive interventions provided to individual students or groups of two or three who are not responding to Tier I or II instruction and interventions. Tier III interventions are skill-specific and are delivered by a specialized teacher who is highly skilled in the area of need.

The Alabama Department of Education will:

1. Set expectations and guidelines for high-quality instruction and intervention for all learners.
2. Create and disseminate the materials needed to prepare educators to deliver high-quality literacy instruction and intervention for all learners.
3. Review core reading programs and provide guidance to local education agencies in the selection and adoption of core reading and intervention programs that support high-quality literacy instruction and intervention.
4. Identify and provide technical assistance resources that support educators in delivering high-quality literacy instruction and intervention.
5. Collaborate with teacher preparation programs to ensure that teacher candidates have the knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality literacy instruction, assessment, and intervention.

Local educators will:

Local educators refers to the teachers and leaders in all literacy settings.

1. Align instructional practices with *Alabama Quality Teaching Standards*.
2. Plan effective instruction based on the state-adopted standards to include all components of literacy, which require learners to read, write, listen, and speak in all curriculum areas.
3. Focus instruction in all curriculum areas on the essential developmental literacy skills (see Section I, Developmental Literacy Continuum).
4. Implement high-quality instructional practices.
 - a. Use the adopted core reading program and intervention programs to implement the instruction and intervention expectations during reading instruction.
 - b. Use the strategic teaching framework to implement the instruction and intervention expectations across the curriculum.
 - c. Emphasize small-group instruction based on desired outcomes and the needs of the learners.
 - d. Provide instruction that is systematic and explicit.
 - e. Provide instruction that actively engages students.
 - f. Use flexible and varied grouping formats based on formative assessment.
 - g. Differentiate instruction in order to maximize student learning.
 - h. Include ample and appropriate practice opportunities.
5. Establish and support tiered instruction in all curriculum areas to meet the intervention needs of all learners.
6. Collaborate with all local literacy stakeholders to identify children who are likely to need intervention services when they transition from one literacy setting to the next.

Community partners will commit to partner with local educators in support of high-quality instruction and intervention.

Community partners refers to individuals, local businesses, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with literacy development.

See page 36 for possible action steps related to the Essential Elements.

Reflection Activity for Local Educators

Current Practices and Challenges

Following are the expectations for instruction and intervention. Read each statement and answer the following two questions.

1. To what extent is this expectation practiced in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = clearly present throughout literacy setting and 1 = not present at all.)
2. How challenging will it be to achieve full implementation of this expectation in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = very challenging and 1 = very easy.)

Extent to which expectation is practiced in my literacy setting (circle one)	Expectations for Instruction and Intervention	Degree of challenge to achieve full implementation of expectation in my literacy setting (circle one)
5 4 3 2 1	Align instructional practices with <i>Alabama Quality Teaching Standards</i> .	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Plan effective instruction based on the state-adopted standards to include all components of literacy, which require learners to read, write, listen, and speak in all curriculum areas.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Focus instruction in all curriculum areas on the essential developmental literacy skills.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Implement high-quality instructional practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the adopted core reading program and intervention programs to implement the instruction and intervention expectations during reading instruction. • Use the strategic teaching framework to implement the instruction and intervention expectations across the curriculum. • Emphasize small-group instruction based on desired outcomes and the needs of the learners. • Provide instruction that is systematic and explicit. • Provide instruction that actively engages students. • Use flexible and varied grouping formats based on formative assessment. • Differentiate instruction in order to maximize student learning. • Include ample and appropriate practice opportunities. 	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Establish and support tiered instruction in all curriculum areas to meet the intervention needs of all learners.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Collaborate with all local literacy stakeholders to identify children who are likely to need intervention services when they transition from one literacy setting to the next.	5 4 3 2 1

Professional Development

Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development (Appendix 3)

Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development
<http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/standards.html>

Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leadership Development
<http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/standards.html>

Ongoing – activities that occur over a sufficient period of time to ensure skillful classroom application and that motivate continuous teacher growth.

Job embedded – professional development activities that support implementation of research-based practices (includes demonstrations, teacher practice, and coaching).

Professional Development is a key strategy for supporting improvements in education. When educators are provided with the knowledge and skills to reflect on their practice, to assess their effectiveness, to study research, and to make decisions about students, a community of continuous learning develops and goals are more likely to be achieved.

To meet the challenge of educating all learners to high levels, educators need professional development that is intensive, ongoing, and job embedded to increase their expertise. This type of high-quality professional development is influenced by a multitude of factors that can be classified into three categories:

- **Content** characteristics – the “what”—the knowledge, skills, and understandings that are the foundation for the professional development effort.
- **Process** variables – the “how”—the systems for planning, implementing, and refining the professional development; the driving force should always be student achievement and program implementation data.
- **Context** characteristics – the “who, when, where, and why”—high-quality professional development is supported by considering the link between the professional development and student outcomes; enhanced by a culture that promotes reflection and risk-taking; and reinforced by policies and resources to support the effort.

A coach can be a valuable asset in leading this high-quality professional development. The Alabama Reading Initiative invests over \$53 million annually to provide funding and support for a coach in every elementary building for the purpose of improving teacher practice in reading instruction so that all students learn and achieve at the highest levels.

Professional development is essential to continuous improvement and must be seen as an investment in life-long learning. The defining element of professional development must be its capacity to create professionals who change their practices when data indicate that what they are doing is not improving learning.

Coaching and Professional Development

See Appendix 5 for the Job Description of an Alabama Reading Initiative Coach

(http://www.eggplant.org/pamphlets/pdf/joyce_showers_peer_coaching.pdf)

According to the research of Joyce and Showers (2002), effective professional development includes presentation of theory, demonstration, practice, and coaching of skills and strategies. Transfer to practice rarely occurs without the full array of these professional development elements. Coaching provides educators with authentic opportunities to learn from and with one another inside the school and will improve the classroom experience of both teachers and students. Coaching, a vital component of effective professional development, can increase the instructional capacity of schools and teachers and, in turn, increase student learning.

The Alabama Department of Education will:

1. Provide professional development to all literacy stakeholders for effective implementation and/or support of *Alabama's Action Plan for Literacy*.
2. Ensure that all professional development sponsored by the Alabama Department of Education is supportive of *Alabama's Action Plan for Literacy*.
3. Fund and support a coach for every elementary school with the responsibility of facilitating professional development to improve literacy teaching and learning.
4. Develop, deliver, and assess the effectiveness of professional development opportunities to increase the literacy expertise of all stakeholders.
5. Collaborate with Regional In-service Center personnel to determine local literacy needs and to plan, develop, and deliver professional development opportunities.
6. Collaborate with teacher preparation programs to ensure seamless pre-service and in-service support for high-quality literacy learning experiences for all learners Birth through Grade 12.
7. Collaborate with local education agencies to identify and leverage all professional development resources in support of literacy development.
8. Collaborate with literacy stakeholders to provide appropriate learning opportunities in support of *Alabama's Action Plan for Literacy*.

Local educators will:

Local educators refers to the teachers and leaders in all literacy settings.

1. Apply the state-adopted *Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development* when planning and implementing professional development.
2. Utilize the *Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development* and the *Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development* when planning and implementing professional development for educators K-12.
3. Use multiple sources of student and teacher data when planning and implementing professional development.
4. Structure professional development that is ongoing and job-embedded.
5. Develop expertise of educators in the use of high-quality curricular materials and assessments.
6. Implement a support structure for professional learning through coaching.
 - a. Peer coaching (Birth–Grade 12).
 - b. Literacy/Reading coach (See Job Description, Appendix 5).
 - c. Shared teaching (Birth–Grade 12).
7. Provide common learning opportunities for all literacy stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition as students move from one literacy setting to the next.

Community partners will commit to partner with local educators in support of ongoing professional development.

Community partners refers to individuals, local businesses, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with literacy development.

See page 36 for possible action steps related to the Essential Elements.

Reflection Activity for Local Educators Current Practices and Challenges

Following are the expectations for professional development. Read each statement and answer the following two questions.

1. To what extent is this expectation practiced in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = clearly present throughout literacy setting and 1 = not present at all.)
2. How challenging will it be to achieve full implementation of this expectation in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = very challenging and 1 = very easy.)

Extent to which expectation is practiced in my literacy setting (circle one)	Expectations for Professional Development	Degree of challenge to achieve full implementation of expectation in my literacy setting (circle one)
5 4 3 2 1	Apply the state-adopted <i>Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development</i> when planning and implementing professional development.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Utilize the <i>Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development</i> and the <i>Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development</i> when planning and implementing professional development for educators K-12.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Use multiple sources of student and teacher data when planning and implementing professional development.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Structure professional development that is ongoing and job-embedded.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Develop expertise of educators in the use of high-quality curricular materials and assessments.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Implement a support structure for professional learning through coaching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer coaching (Birth–Grade 12). • Literacy/Reading coach. • Shared teaching (Birth–Grade 12). 	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Provide common learning opportunities for all literacy stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition as students move from one literacy setting to the next.	5 4 3 2 1

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative Leadership is the combined influence that organizational members and stakeholders exert on decisions that positively impact the performance of the organization. Successful and sustained literacy initiatives require involvement of leaders at all levels. This definition of leadership goes beyond the role of a single person to include others with responsibility for student learning. In educational settings, collaborative leadership will take the form of a literacy leadership team, including principal, coach, teachers and other staff, district or center personnel, parents, and possibly students.

The goal of a literacy leadership team is increased student learning. This is accomplished through two distinct functions:

- **Promoting an academic learning climate** includes developing and sharing a vision, mission, and goals for the school; establishing positive expectations and standards; providing incentives for teachers and students; and promoting professional development.
- **Developing a supportive work environment** includes developing staff collaboration and cohesion; creating a safe and orderly learning environment; providing opportunities for meaningful student involvement; securing outside resources in support of the school's goals; and forging links with the home and community.

Strong collaborative leadership at all levels of schooling – Birth through Grade 12 – is perhaps the single most important determining factor in successfully implementing and sustaining educational change.

Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders

(See Appendix 4) (http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/Alabama_Standards_for_Instructional_Leaders.pdf)

1. Planning for Continuous Improvement – Leaders engage the school community in developing and maintaining a shared vision for high levels of student learning.
2. Teaching and Learning – Leaders promote and monitor the success of every student by aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessments.
3. Human Resources Development – Leaders select, support, and evaluate faculty and staff to accomplish school and system goals.
4. Diversity – Leaders respond to and influence the school and community to address diverse student needs to ensure the success of all students.
5. Community and Stakeholder Relationships – Leaders identify the unique characteristics of the community to create and sustain faculty-school-community relations.
6. Technology – Leaders plan, implement, and evaluate effective integration of current technologies.
7. Management of the Learning Organization – Leaders manage organization, facilities, and financial resources to create a safe and effective learning environment.
8. Ethics – Leaders demonstrate honesty, integrity, and fairness in guiding school policies and practices.

Literacy leadership team – group of educators that works together to assess learner needs; establish goals and priorities for literacy; create a professional development plan to meet the goals; and actively support each other to implement the plan. The team includes the principal, coach, teachers and other staff, district or center personnel, parents, and possibly students.

Instructional leaders – anyone who accepts responsibility for making and supporting decisions regarding the literacy curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development.

Literacy culture – how a group acts collectively to address the literacy needs of learners. To support a strong literacy culture, this group should have a:

1. *Shared vision (sense of purpose).*
2. *Shared understanding of what it takes to achieve this vision.*
3. *Common commitment to do what it takes.*
4. *Common set of literacy-related practices.*

ARI Coach Job Description – (See Appendix 5.) Duties include working with school, LEA, and ARI leadership to:

- *Implement schoolwide literacy and intervention efforts.*
- *Facilitate professional development to improve teaching and learning.*
- *Influence a schoolwide commitment to 100% literacy.*

Community partnerships – collaborative group representing various individuals, businesses, organizations, and agencies working together to support the development of literacy for learners from birth through Grade 12.

The Alabama Department of Education will:

1. Make literacy development a priority for all learners from Birth through Grade 12.
2. Build public awareness and advocacy for widespread community support of literacy development for all learners from Birth through Grade 12.
3. Identify and/or establish community partnerships to identify and leverage resources in support of literacy development for all learners from Birth through Grade 12.
4. Set expectations for implementation of *Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy* by all stakeholders involved in literacy development.
5. Fund and support a coach for every elementary school with the responsibility of influencing a schoolwide commitment to 100% literacy.
6. Identify and coordinate the financial and human resources of state agencies to support literacy development.
7. Develop a technical assistance plan to support all stakeholders to implement *Alabama’s Action Plan for Literacy*.
8. Evaluate the impact of state education activities on literacy development for all learners from Birth through Grade 12 and adjust state efforts as indicated.

Local educators will:

Local educators refers to the teachers and leaders in all literacy settings.

1. Instructional leaders will align practice with the *Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders*.
2. Instructional leaders will support Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) coaches in following the ARI coach job description.
3. Instructional leaders will support and monitor all instruction and intervention expectations.
4. Instructional leaders will establish, equip, support, and lead a literacy leadership team.
5. The literacy leadership team will actively develop and nurture a strong literacy culture in the school and community.
6. The literacy leadership team will set measurable goals for academic improvement and monitor progress toward those goals.
7. The literacy leadership team will meet regularly to analyze school and student data to inform decisions about professional development, instruction, and intervention.
8. The literacy leadership team will communicate literacy goals and expectations to literacy stakeholders and collaborate to meet desired outcomes.

Community partners will commit to partner with local educators in support of collaborative leadership.

Community partners refers to individuals, local businesses, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with literacy development.

See page 36 for possible action steps related to the Essential Elements.

Reflection Activity for Local Educators Current Practices and Challenges

Following are the expectations for collaborative leadership. Read each statement and answer the following two questions.

1. To what extent is this expectation practiced in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = clearly present throughout literacy setting and 1 = not present at all.)
2. How challenging will it be to achieve full implementation of this expectation in my literacy setting?
(Rate from 1-5, with 5 = very challenging and 1 = very easy.)

Extent to which expectation is practiced in my literacy setting (circle one)	Expectations for Collaborative Leadership	Degree of challenge to achieve full implementation of expectation in my literacy setting (circle one)
5 4 3 2 1	Instructional leaders will align practice with the <i>Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders</i> .	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Instructional leaders will support ARI coaches in following the ARI coach job description.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Instructional leaders will support and monitor all instruction and intervention expectations.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Instructional leaders will establish, equip, support, and lead a literacy leadership team.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	The literacy leadership team will actively develop and nurture a strong literacy culture in the school and community.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	The literacy leadership team will set measurable goals for academic improvement and monitor progress toward those goals.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	The literacy leadership team will meet regularly to analyze school and student data to inform decisions about professional development, instruction, and intervention.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	The literacy leadership team will communicate literacy goals and expectations to literacy stakeholders and collaborate to meet desired outcomes.	5 4 3 2 1

Action Steps for Community Partners

Literacy development is the shared responsibility of all literacy stakeholders. Local partners play a vital role in supporting educators, parents, and learners in community literacy efforts. Strong literacy partnerships are an investment that can change lives and brighten the future of the community.

Community Partners will:

Community partners refers to individuals, local businesses, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with literacy development.

1. Commit to partner with educators.
2. Assess community needs for literacy services and identify gaps in services.
3. Establish a literacy coalition to enhance literacy support in the community.
4. Identify and/or leverage resources in support of local literacy activities.

Possible action steps in support of the essential elements:

Standards-Based Curriculum

- Collaborate with local educators to help build community awareness and advocacy for adopted standards and assessments in order to ease the transition from one literacy setting to the next.

Instruction and Intervention

- Collaborate with local educators to identify needs related to community support for instruction and intervention.

Assessment

- Collaborate with local educators to ensure that all early assessment results are shared as students transition from one literacy setting to the next.

Professional Development

- Collaborate with other partners to provide learning opportunities and coaching on literacy development to parents, caregivers, and educators.
- Collaborate with other partners to provide learning opportunities and coaching in support of *Alabama's Action Plan for Literacy* to parents, caregivers, and educators.

SECTION 5

Action Planning

Action Planning

- *Plan actions that are observable and measureable.*
- *Identify who is responsible for completion.*
- *List resources needed.*
- *Set target dates.*
- *Determine how the plan will be monitored/evaluated.*

Action Planning for Local Educators

An action plan for literacy is a specific, powerful, step-by-step plan to enhance high-quality instruction and improve student achievement. Action planning for literacy is a process that is intended to strengthen and support a school's existing Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

Step 1	Complete the reflection tools following each of the five Essential Elements.
Step 2	With the literacy leadership team, consider the ratings from each of the reflection tools. To what extent is there evidence of this practice in your literacy setting? What potential solutions can you suggest to address the challenges that you have identified?
Step 3	Using the Action Planning Template, respond to the two questions for each element. Based on the ratings and discussion, what expectations should be acted on immediately (give highest priority status)?
Step 4	Make the suggested adjustments to your Continuous Improvement Plan.

This activity is adapted from one described by Walsh and Sattes (2000). *Inside School Improvement*, p.133.

Action Planning Template for Continuous Improvement

Consider the following questions when planning action steps related to each essential element.

1. What current practices or processes will we adjust and how?
2. What new practices, processes, or strategies will strengthen our Continuous Improvement Plan?

Essential Elements	Standards-Based Curriculum	Person(s) Responsible
		Resources Needed
		Timeline

Essential Elements	Assessment	Person(s) Responsible
		Resources Needed
		Timeline

Essential Elements

Instruction and Intervention

Person(s) Responsible

Resources Needed

Timeline

Essential Elements

Professional Development

Person(s) Responsible

Resources Needed

Timeline

Essential Elements

Collaborative Leadership

Person(s) Responsible

Resources Needed

Timeline

Resources

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Appendices



1.
**Summary of
Interferences to
Reading
Comprehension**

2.
***Alabama Quality
Teaching Standards***

3.
***Alabama
Professional
Development
Standards***

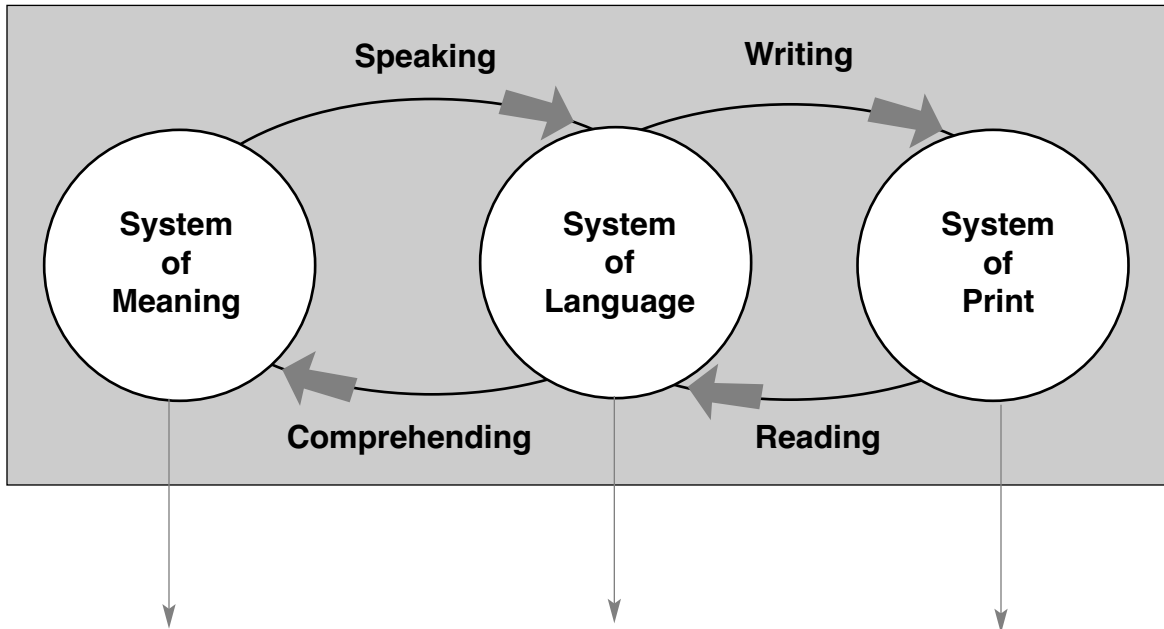
4.
***Alabama Standards
for Instructional
Leaders***

5.
**ARI Coach Job
Description**

6.
**Joyce and Showers
Research
Graphic**

Appendix 1

Summary of INTERFERENCES TO READING COMPREHENSION



<p>1. The reader's system of meaning does not overlap sufficiently with the author's system of meaning.</p>	<p>2. The reader's system of language (i.e., vocabulary, syntax, idioms) does not overlap sufficiently with the author's expression.</p>	<p>3. The reader lacks the power to say what each word requires. (Accuracy)</p> <p>4. The reader is cumbersome in word recognition and does not identify words instantly. (Automatically)</p> <p>5. The reader fails to read with ease, appropriate speed, and phrasing, and therefore is unable to devote sufficient attention to building meaning. (Fluency)</p>
<p>6. The reader does not attend to the degree needed to build meaning. (Attention/Motivation/Disposition)</p>		

IMPLICATION: At every stage of reading development, teachers must be able to identify whether the interferences to comprehension stem from the system of print, the system of language, the system of meaning, and/or from inattention. Teachers must make certain that students recognize the source(s) of the interference and have the strategies necessary to overcome each type of interference.

Appendix 2

ALABAMA QUALITY TEACHING STANDARDS

Pursuant to the mission of improving the academic achievement of all students in the public schools of Alabama, teachers will align their practice and professional learning with the following standards:

Standard 1 – Content Knowledge: To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.

Rationale. Researchers identify a strong relationship between teachers’ content knowledge and the achievement of their students. Three dimensions of content knowledge contribute to effective teaching: (1) deep knowledge of the academic disciplines related to the subjects of instruction, (2) an understanding of pedagogical content knowledge that is required to make the subject understandable and meaningful for all learners, and (3) knowledge of the state standards and district curriculum for subjects taught at particular instructional levels.

KEY INDICATORS

A. Academic Discipline(s)

1. Knowledge of the structure of the academic disciplines related to the subject-matter content areas of instruction and of the important facts and central concepts, principles, theories, and tools of inquiry associated with these disciplines.
2. Knowledge of ways to organize and present content so that it is meaningful and engaging to all learners whom they teach (pedagogical content knowledge).
3. Ability to use students’ prior knowledge and experiences to introduce new subject-area related content.
4. Ability to identify student assumptions and preconceptions about the content of a subject area and to adjust instruction in consideration of these prior understandings.
5. Ability to help students make connections across the curriculum in order to promote retention and transfer of knowledge to real-life settings.

B. Curriculum

1. Knowledge of the content standards and of the scope and sequence of the subject areas of one’s teaching fields as defined in the Alabama courses of study for those teaching fields.
2. Ability to provide accommodations, modifications, and/or adaptations to the general curriculum to meet the needs of each individual learner.
3. Ability to select content and appropriately design and develop instructional activities to address the scope and sequence of the curriculum.

Standard 2 – Teaching and Learning: To increase the achievement of every student, teachers draw upon a thorough understanding of learning and development; recognize the role of families in supporting learning; design a student-centered learning environment; and use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.

Rationale. Instruction and assessment are the vehicles by which teachers design and deliver rigorous and relevant learning experiences for all learners. Research provides compelling evidence relating student achievement to teachers’ use of appropriate instructional strategies selected from a rich repertoire based in research and best practice. Researchers have also found a strong classroom learning culture that is strategically organized and managed to be essential to effective use of these strategies.

KEY INDICATORS

A. Human Development

1. Knowledge of the physical, emotional, and social development of young people and of the relationship of these to learning readiness and to cognitive development.
2. Knowledge of the role of language in learning.
3. Knowledge of the general characteristics of disabilities and of their impact on cognitive development and learning.
4. Knowledge of developmentally appropriate instructional and management strategies.
5. Ability to teach explicit cognitive, metacognitive, and other learning strategies to support students in becoming more successful learners.
6. Ability to use knowledge about human learning and development in the design of a learning environment and learning experiences that will optimize each student's achievement.
7. Ability to recognize individual variations in learning and development that exceed the typical range and use this information to provide appropriate learning experiences.

B. Organization and Management

1. Knowledge of the importance of developing learning objectives based on the Alabama courses of study and the needs, interests, and abilities of students.
2. Knowledge of the principles underpinning a sound age-appropriate classroom organization and management plan and of supportive behavior management strategies.
3. Knowledge of the components and characteristics of collaboratively designed and implemented individual behavioral support plans.
4. Knowledge of conflict resolution strategies, school emergency response procedures, and juvenile law.
5. Ability to plan and implement equitable and effective student access to available technology and other resources to enhance student learning.
6. Ability to plan teaching and learning experiences that are congruent with the Alabama courses of study and appropriate for diverse learners.
7. Ability to collect and use data to plan, monitor, and improve instruction.
8. Ability to organize, allocate, and manage the resources of time, space, and activities to support the learning of every student.
9. Ability to organize, use, and monitor a variety of flexible student groupings and instructional strategies to support differentiated instruction.

C. Learning Environment

1. Knowledge of norms and structures that contribute to a safe and stimulating learning environment.
2. Knowledge of factors and situations that promote or diminish intrinsic motivation.
3. Ability to develop a positive relationship with every student and to take action to promote positive social relationships among students, including students from different backgrounds and abilities.
4. Ability to communicate with parents and/or families to support students' understanding of appropriate behavior.
5. Ability to create learning environments that increase intrinsic motivation and optimize student engagement and learning.
6. Ability to use individual behavioral support plans to proactively respond to the needs of all students.
7. Ability to create a print-/language-rich environment that develops/extends students' desire and ability to read, write, speak, and listen.
8. Ability to encourage students to assume increasing responsibility for themselves and to support one another's learning.

D. Instructional Strategies

1. Knowledge of research and theory underpinning effective teaching and learning.
2. Knowledge of a wide range of research-based instructional strategies and the advantages and disadvantages associated with each.

3. Knowledge of strategies that promote retention as well as transfer of learning and the relationship between these two learning outcomes.
4. Knowledge of the importance of parents and/or families as active partners in planning and supporting student learning.
5. Ability to select and support the use of instructional and assistive technologies and to integrate these into a coherent instructional design.
6. Ability to make developmentally appropriate choices in selecting teaching strategies to assist diverse learners in meeting instructional objectives.
7. Ability to evaluate, select, and integrate a variety of strategies such as cooperative learning, discussion, discovery, problem based learning, and direct instruction into a coherent lesson design.
8. Ability to adjust instruction in response to information gathered from ongoing monitoring of performance via formative assessment.
9. Ability to use questions and questioning to assist all students in developing skills and strategies in critical and high order thinking and problem solving.
10. Ability to use strategies that promote the independence, self-control, personal responsibility, and self-advocacy of all students.

E. Assessment

1. Knowledge of the purposes, strengths, and limitations of formative and summative assessment and of formal and informal assessment strategies.
2. Knowledge of the relationship between assessment and learning and of how to integrate appropriate assessments into all stages of the learning process.
3. Knowledge of measurement related issues such as validity, reliability, norms, bias, scoring concerns, and ethical uses of tests and test results.
4. Knowledge of current Alabama assessment requirements and procedures.
5. Ability to design and use a variety of approaches to formal and informal assessment to plan instruction, monitor student understanding and progress toward learning, modify teaching and learning strategies, and measure and report student progress related to learning objectives.
6. Ability to collaborate with others to design and score common assessments and to use results to share and compare instructional practice and plan new instruction.
7. Ability to collaborate with others to incorporate accommodations into all assessments as appropriate.
8. Ability to provide a variety of ways for students with diverse needs, including students with disabilities, to demonstrate their learning.
9. Ability to develop rubrics and to teach students how to use them to assess their own performances.
10. Ability to develop and select appropriate performance assessments.
11. Ability to engage all students in assessing and understanding their own learning and behavior.
12. Ability to interpret and use reports from state assessments and results of other assessments to design both group and individual learning experiences.

Standard 3 – Literacy: To improve student learning and achievement, teachers use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.

Rationale. Research clearly indicates that one of the strongest correlates to effective teaching is a high level of literacy. Not only do effective teachers demonstrate effective use of the spoken and written language, reading, mathematics, and technology, they also model and actively teach their students the fundamentals of reading, writing, and oral communications across all content areas. Additionally, in this culture where technology is ubiquitous, teachers demonstrate mastery of appropriate instructional technology and integrate technology into instruction of their subject areas.

A. Oral and Written Communications

1. Knowledge of standard oral and written communications.
2. Knowledge of the impact of native language and linguistic background on language acquisition.
3. Knowledge of media communication technologies that enrich learning opportunities.
4. Ability to model appropriate oral and written communications.
5. Ability to demonstrate appropriate communication strategies that include questioning and active and reflective listening.
6. Ability to foster effective verbal and nonverbal communications during ongoing instruction using assistive technologies as appropriate.
7. Ability to integrate skill development in oral and written communications into all content areas that one teaches.
8. Ability to use effective nonverbal communication and respond appropriately to nonverbal cues from students.

B. Reading

1. Knowledge of strategies associated with accelerated, highly specialized, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension that significantly expands and increases students' pace of learning and competence in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
2. Knowledge of assessment tools to monitor the acquisition of reading strategies, to improve reading instruction, and to identify students who require additional instruction.
3. Ability to integrate reading instruction into all content areas that one teaches.
4. Ability to stimulate interest in and foster appreciation for the written word, promote reading growth, and increase the motivation of students to read widely and independently for information and pleasure.

C. Mathematics

1. Knowledge of the role that mathematics plays in everyday life.
2. Knowledge of the concepts and relationships in number systems.
3. Knowledge of the appropriate use of various types of reasoning, including inductive, deductive, spatial and proportional, and understanding of valid and invalid forms of reasoning.
4. Knowledge of both metric and customary measurement and fundamental geometric concepts, including shapes and their properties and relationships.
5. Ability to solve problems using different strategies, to verify and interpret results, and to draw conclusions.
6. Ability to communicate with others about mathematical concepts, processes, and symbols.

D. Technology

1. Knowledge of available and emerging technologies that support the learning of all students.
2. Knowledge of the wide range of technologies that support and enhance instruction, including classroom and school resources as well as distance learning and online learning opportunities.
3. Ability to integrate technology into the teaching of all content areas.
4. Ability to facilitate students' individual and collaborative use of technology, including classroom resources as well as distance and online learning opportunities when available and appropriate.
5. Ability to use technology to assess student progress and manage records.
6. Ability to evaluate students' technology proficiency and students' technology based products within content areas.

Standard 4 - Diversity: To improve the learning of all students, teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs; exceptionalities; and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.

Rationale. Teachers who respect and build upon diversity create a learning environment in which all students feel valued and supported in their learning. Respect for diversity grows out of knowledge of differences, including

differences in students' cultural, ethnic, language, social, and experiential backgrounds; differences in their physical, emotional, and social development; differences in their readiness for a particular curricular goal; and differences in their learning styles and strengths. Teachers have a rich understanding of these and other important areas of diversity as well as knowledge of curricular and instructional modifications that improve the learning of the wide range of individual learners in their classrooms.

KEY INDICATORS

A. Cultural, Ethnic and Social Diversity

1. Knowledge of the ways in which student learning is influenced by individual experiences and out-of-school learning, including language and family/community values and conditions.
2. Knowledge of cultural, ethnic, gender, linguistic, and socio-economic differences and of how these may affect individual learner needs, preferences, and styles.
3. Knowledge of the characteristics of one's own culture and use of language and of how they differ from other cultures.
4. Ability to develop culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, i.e., model, teach, and integrate multicultural awareness, acceptance, and appreciation into ongoing instruction.
5. Ability to communicate in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to diversity such as appropriate use of eye contact, interpretation of body language and verbal statements, and acknowledgement of and responsiveness to different modes of communication and participation.

B. Language Diversity

1. Knowledge of the process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English.
2. Ability to differentiate between learner difficulties that are related to cognitive or skill development and those that relate to language learning.
3. Ability to collaborate with teachers of English language learners and to assist those students with full integration into the regular classroom.

C. Special Needs

1. Knowledge of the major areas of exceptionality in learning, including the range of physical and mental disabilities, social and emotional disorders, giftedness, dyslexia, and attention deficit disorder.
2. Knowledge of the indicators of the need for special education services.
3. Ability to identify and refer students for diagnosis for special services.
4. Ability to address learning differences and disabilities that are prevalent in an inclusive classroom.

D. Learning Styles

1. Knowledge of research and theory related to learning styles and multiple intelligences.
2. Knowledge of a range of curricular materials and technologies to support the cognitive development of diverse learners.
3. Ability to help students assess their own learning styles and to build upon identified strengths.
4. Ability to design learning experiences that engage all learning styles.

E. General

1. Knowledge of how personal/cultural biases can affect teaching and learning.
2. Ability to involve families, community agencies and organizations, and colleagues in helping support academic achievement of diverse learners.
3. Ability to create a learning community in which individual differences are respected.
4. Ability to assess and diagnose individual student's contexts, strengths, and learning needs and to tailor curriculum and teaching to address these personal characteristics.

Standard 5 – Professionalism: To increase the achievement of all students, teachers engage in continuous learning and self improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based best practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and federal, state, and local laws and policies.

Rationale. Current research relates teacher collaboration, shared responsibility for student learning, and job-embedded learning in professional community to higher levels of student achievement. This research challenges the independence and isolation that has historically characterized the teaching profession and calls for deprivatization of practice. An underlying premise of professional learning communities is the power of ongoing, continuous learning that takes place in a culture where risk and experimentation are rewarded. In schools where there is a strong professional community, teachers actively participate in creating and sustaining such a learning environment and in maintaining its focus upon improved student learning. Beyond collaboration, teachers exhibit professionalism by demonstrating a personal commitment to continuous learning and improvement; by adhering to high ethical standards; and by maintaining currency with regard to federal, state, and local laws and policies. Teachers assume increased leadership for schoolwide improvement initiatives and for mentoring of colleagues as they move along their professional pathways.

A. Collaboration

1. Knowledge of the purposes, processes, structures, and potential benefits associated with collaboration and teaming.
2. Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of members of different types of teams including, but not limited to, Building Based Student Support Teams.
3. Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of para educators and other paraprofessionals.
4. Ability to involve parents and/or families as active partners in planning and supporting student learning.
5. Ability to share instructional responsibility for students with diverse needs, including students with disabilities, and to develop collaborative teaching relationships and instructional strategies.
6. Ability to share responsibility for all students' learning across the school and collaborate with colleagues to support every student's growth.
7. Ability to participate as reflective members of different types of teams including, but not limited to, Building Based Student Support Teams.
8. Ability to collaborate in the planning of instruction for an expanded curriculum in general education to include Individual Education Plans and other plans such as Section 504 goals for students with disabilities.
9. Ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with colleagues, students, parents, guardians, and significant agency personnel who are included and valued equally as partners.
10. Ability to exhibit the professional dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards while working with students, colleagues, families, and communities.

B. Continuous, Lifelong Professional Learning

1. Knowledge of a range of professional literature, particularly resources that relate to one's own teaching field(s).
2. Knowledge of a range of professional learning opportunities, including job-embedded learning, district- and state-sponsored workshops, university offerings, and online and distance learning.
3. Knowledge of the processes and skills associated with peer coaching and mentoring.
4. Ability to articulate and reflect on a personal philosophy and its relationship to teaching practice and professional learning choices and commitments.
5. Ability to use best practices, professional literature, and collegial assistance to improve as a teacher and a learner.
6. Ability and willingness to inquire into one's own practice by designing action research to determine the effectiveness of identified instructional strategies.
7. Ability to participate in the creation and nurturance of a learning environment that supports standards-based inquiry, reflective practice, and collaborative learning for teachers at all stages of their careers.

C. Alabama-Specific Improvement Initiatives

1. Knowledge of current and emerging state initiatives and programs including, but not limited to, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX); and Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators and Students Statewide (ACCESS) and their relationship to student achievement.
2. Knowledge of Alabama’s state assessment requirements and processes.
3. Ability to integrate statewide programs and initiatives into the curriculum and instructional processes.
4. Ability to communicate with students, parents, and the public about Alabama’s assessment system and major state educational improvement initiatives.

D. School Improvement

- 1 Knowledge of research relating collective responsibility for student learning to increased achievement for all students.
2. Knowledge of the principles of individual and organizational change and a commitment to assume personal responsibility for leading and supporting others in results-oriented changes.
3. Ability to participate in school improvement planning by working collaboratively with teams focused on specific improvement initiatives.
4. Ability to assume increased leadership responsibility in school, district, and state improvement initiatives over the course of one’s professional career.

E. Alabama Educator Code of Ethics

1. Knowledge of appropriate professional behavior and dispositions expected of professionals as outlined in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics.
2. Knowledge of safe, responsible, legal, and ethical uses of technologies including fair use and copyright guidelines and Internet user protection policies.
3. Ability to use and maintain confidential student information in an ethical and professional manner.
4. Ability to practice safe, responsible, legal, and ethical use of technology and comply with school and district acceptable-use policies including fair use and copyright guidelines and Internet user protection policies.

F. Local, State, Federal Laws and Policies

1. Knowledge of laws related to students’ and teachers’ rights and responsibilities and the importance of complying with those laws, including major principles of federal disabilities legislation (IDEA, Section 504 and ADA), as well as Alabama statutes on child abuse and neglect, and the importance of complying with those laws.
2. Ability to access school, community, state, and other resources and referral services.
3. Ability to access resources to gain information about federal, state, district, and school policies and procedures.
4. Ability to keep accurate records including IEPs, especially records related to federal, state and district policies, and other records with legal implications.

Appendix 3

ALABAMA STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following list of Standards for Effective Professional Development were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education on June 13, 2002. These state standards are embedded in the NCLB definition of professional development in Title IX, Section 9101 (34). They should be used as a guide in development of your LEA Professional Development Plan and implementing activities under that plan.

- Standard 1: Effective professional development organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school, the district, and the state.
- Standard 2: Effective professional development requires knowledgeable and skillful school and district leaders who actively participate in and guide continuous instructional improvement.
- Standard 3: Effective professional development requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.
- Standard 4: Effective professional development uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- Standard 5: Effective professional development uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
- Standard 6: Effective professional development prepares educators to apply research to decision making.
- Standard 7: Effective professional development uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
- Standard 8: Effective professional development applies knowledge about human learning and change.
- Standard 9: Effective professional development provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
- Standard 10: Effective professional development prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
- Standard 11: Effective professional development deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
- Standard 12: Effective professional development provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Appendix 4

ALABAMA STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

To realize the mission of enhancing school leadership among principals and administrators in Alabama resulting in improved academic achievement for all students, instructional leaders will be held to the following standards:

Standard 1:

Rationale

This standard addresses the need to prepare instructional leaders who value and are committed to educating all students to become successful adults. Each instructional leader is responsible for creating and articulating a vision of high expectations for learning within the school or district that can be shared by all employees and is supported by the broader school-community of parents and citizens. This requires that instructional leaders be willing to examine their own assumptions, beliefs, and practices; understand and apply research; and foster a culture of continuous improvement among all members of the educational staff. Such instructional leaders will commit themselves to high levels of personal and organizational performance in order to ensure implementation of this vision of learning.

Planning for Continuous Improvement

Engages the school community in developing and maintaining a shared vision; plans effectively; uses critical thinking and problem-solving techniques; collects, analyzes, and interprets data; allocates resources; and evaluates results for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Knowledge to lead the articulation, development, and implementation of a shared vision and strategic plan for the school that places student and faculty learning at the center
2. Ability to lead and motivate staff, students, and families to achieve the school's vision
3. Knowledge to align instructional objectives and curricular goals with the shared vision
4. Knowledge to allocate and guard instruction time for the achievement of goals
5. Ability to work with faculty to identify instructional and curricular needs that align with vision and resources
6. Ability to interact with the community concerning the school's vision, mission, and priorities
7. Ability to work with staff and others to establish and accomplish goals
8. Ability to relate the vision, mission, and goals to the instructional needs of students
9. Ability to use goals to manage activities
10. Ability to use a variety of problem-solving techniques and decision-making skills to resolve problems
11. Ability to delegate tasks clearly and appropriately to accomplish organizational goals
12. Ability to focus upon student learning as a driving force for curriculum, instruction, and institutional decision-making
13. Ability to use a process for gathering information to use when making decisions
14. Knowledge to create a school leadership team that is skillful in using data
15. Ability to use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process
16. Ability to assess student progress using a variety of techniques and information
17. Ability to monitor and assess instructional programs, activities, and materials
18. Knowledge to use approved methods and principles of program evaluation in the school improvement process
19. Ability to use diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement
20. Ability to use external resources as sources for ideas for improving student achievement

Standard 2:

Rationale

This standard addresses the need for instructional leaders to establish teaching and learning as the focal point of schools. It accepts the proposition that all students can learn given enough high-quality instruction, and that student learning is the fundamental purpose of schools. To this end, instructional leaders are responsible for ensuring that decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies (including instructional technology), assessment, and professional development are based on sound research, best practices, school and district data, and other contextual information and that observation and collaboration are used to design meaningful and effective experiences that improve student achievement. Successful instructional leaders must be able to identify, clarify, and address barriers to student learning and communicate the importance of developing learning strategies for diverse populations. In addition, this standard requires that instructional leaders be learners who model and encourage life-long learning. They should establish a culture of high expectations for themselves, their students, and their staff.

Teaching and Learning

Promotes and monitors the success of all students in the learning environment by collaboratively aligning the curriculum; by aligning the instruction and the assessment processes to ensure effective student achievement; and by using a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Knowledge to plan for the achievement of annual learning gains, school improvement goals, and other targets related to the shared vision
2. Ability to use multiple sources of data to plan and assess instructional improvement
3. Ability to engage staff in ongoing study and implementation of research-based practices
4. Ability to use the latest research, applied theory, and best practices to make curricular and instructional decisions
5. Ability to communicate high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of students
6. Ability to ensure that content and instruction are aligned with high standards resulting in improved student achievement
7. Ability to coach staff and teachers on the evaluation of student performance
8. Ability to identify differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of a variety of student populations
9. Ability to develop curriculum aligned to state standards
10. Knowledge to collaborate with community, staff, district, state, and university personnel to develop the instructional program
11. Knowledge to align curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments to district, state, and national standards
12. Ability to focus upon student learning as a driving force for curriculum, instruction, and instructional decision-making
13. Ability to use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process
14. Ability to assess student progress using a variety of formal and informal assessments
15. Ability to monitor and assess instructional programs, activities, and materials
16. Ability to use the methods and principles of program evaluation in the school improvement process

Standard 3:

Rationale

This standard addresses the need for instructional leaders to recognize quality professional development as the key strategy for supporting significant improvements. Instructional leaders are able to articulate the critical link between improved student learning and the professional learning of teachers. Skillful instructional leaders establish policies and

organizational structures that support ongoing professional learning and continuous improvement. They ensure an equitable distribution of resources to accomplish school goals and continuously improve the school's work through the ongoing evaluation of staff development's effectiveness in achieving student learning goals. They make certain that employee annual calendars and daily schedules provide adequate time for learning and collaboration as part of the workday. Instructional leaders also distribute leadership responsibilities among teachers and other employees. Distributed leadership enables teachers to develop and use their talents as members or chairs of school improvement committees, trainers, coaches, mentors, and members of peer review panels. These leaders make certain that their colleagues have the necessary knowledge, skills, and other forms of support that ensure success in these new roles.

Human Resources Development

Recruits, selects, organizes, evaluates, and mentors faculty and staff to accomplish school and system goals. Works collaboratively with the school faculty and staff to plan and implement effective professional development that is based upon student needs and that promotes both individual and organizational growth and leads to improved teaching and learning. Initiates and nurtures interpersonal relationships to facilitate teamwork and enhance student achievement.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Knowledge to set high expectations and standards for the performance of all teachers and staff
2. Ability to coach staff and teachers on the evaluation of student performances
3. Ability to work collaboratively with teachers to plan for individual professional development
4. Ability to use a variety of supervisory models to improve teaching and learning
5. Ability to apply adult learning strategies to professional development
6. Knowledge to use the accepted methods and principles of personnel evaluation
7. Knowledge to operate within the provisions of each contract as well as established enforcement and grievance procedures
8. Ability to establish mentor programs to orient new teachers and provide ongoing coaching and other forms of support for veteran staff
9. Ability to manage, monitor, and evaluate a program of continuous professional development tied to student learning and other school goals
10. Knowledge to hire and retain high-quality teachers and staff
11. Ability to provide high-quality professional development activities to ensure that teachers have skills to engage all students in active learning
12. Ability to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect, plan, and work collaboratively
13. Ability to create a community of learners among faculty and staff
14. Ability to create a personal professional development plan for his/her own continuous improvement
15. Ability to foster development of aspiring leaders, including teacher leaders

Standard 4:

Rationale

This standard addresses the need for instructional leaders to understand and be able to operate within the larger context of community and beyond, which affects opportunities for all students. Instructional leaders must respond to and influence this larger political, social, economic, and cultural context. Of vital importance is the ability to develop a continuing dialogue with economic and political decision-makers concerning the role of schools and to build collaborative relationships that support improved social and educational opportunities for all children. Instructional leaders must be able to participate actively in the political and policy-making context in the service of education, including proactive use of the legal system to protect students' rights and improve opportunities for all students.

Diversity

Responds to and influences the larger personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context in the classroom, school, and the local community while addressing diverse student needs to ensure the success of all students.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Knowledge to involve school community in appropriate diversity policy implementations, program planning, and assessment efforts
2. Ability to conform to legal and ethical standards related to diversity
3. Ability to perceive the needs and concerns of others and is able to deal tactfully with them
4. Knowledge to handle crisis communications in both oral and written form
5. Ability to arrange for students and families whose home language is not English to engage in school activities and communication through oral and written translations
6. Knowledge to recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse staff
7. Knowledge to represent the school and the educational establishment in relations with various cultural, ethnic, racial, and special interest groups in the community
8. Knowledge to recognize and respond effectively to multicultural and ethnic needs in the organization and the community
9. Ability to interact effectively with diverse individuals and groups using a variety of interpersonal skills in any given situation
10. Ability to promote and monitor the delivery of instructional content that provides for diverse perspectives appropriate to the situation

Standard 5:**Rationale**

This standard addresses the fact that cooperation among schools, the district, parents, and the larger community is essential to the success of instructional leaders and students. Instructional leaders must see schools as an integral part of the larger community. Collaboration and communication with families, businesses, governmental agencies, social service organizations, the media, and higher education institutions are critical to effective schooling. Effective and appropriate communications, coupled with the involvement of families and other stakeholders in decisions, help to ensure continued community support for schools. Instructional leaders must see families as partners in the education of their youngsters and believe that families have the best interest of their children in mind. Instructional leaders must involve families in decisions at the school and district levels. Family and student issues that negatively affect student learning must be addressed through collaboration with community agencies that can integrate health, social, and other services. Such collaboration relies on good relationships with community leaders and outreach to a wide array of business, religious, political, and service agencies. Providing leadership to programs serving all students, including those with special and exceptional needs, further communicates to internal and external audiences the importance of diversity. To work with all elements of the community, instructional leaders must recognize, value, and communicate effectively with various cultural, ethnic, racial, and special interest groups. Modeling community collaboration for staff and then offering opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills maximizes positive interactions between schools and the community.

Community and Stakeholder Relationships

Identifies the unique characteristics of the community to create and sustain mutually supportive family-school-community relations.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Ability to address student and family conditions affecting learning
2. Ability to identify community leaders and their relationships to school goals and programs
3. Ability to communicate the school's vision, mission, and priorities to the community
4. Knowledge to serve as primary school spokesperson in the community
5. Ability to share leadership and decision-making with others by gathering input
6. Ability to seek resources of families, business, and community members in
7. support of the school's goals
8. Ability to develop partnerships, coalitions, and networks to impact student achievement
9. Ability to actively engage the community to share responsibility for student and school success
10. Ability to involve family and community in appropriate policy implementation, program planning, and assessment efforts
11. Knowledge to make parents partners in their student's education

Standard 6:

Rationale

This standard addresses the need for effective leadership for technology in schools. An underlying assumption of this standard is that instructional leaders should be competent users of information and technology tools common to information-age professionals. The effective educational leader should be a hands-on user of technology. While technology empowers instructional leaders by the information it can readily produce and communicates, it exponentially empowers the instructional leader who masters the tools and processes that allow creative and dynamic management of available information. Instructional leaders who recognize the potential of technology understand that leadership has a responsibility to ensure technological equity. They must also know that technology can unlock tremendous potential in learners and staff with special and diverse needs.

Technology

Plans, implements, and evaluates the effective integration of current technologies and electronic tools in teaching, management, research, and communication.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Ability to implement a plan for the use of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Ability to develop a plan for technology integration for the school community
3. Knowledge to discover practical approaches for developing and implementing successful technology planning
4. Ability to model the use of technology for personal and professional productivity
5. Ability to develop an effective teacher professional development plan to increase technology usage to support curriculum-based integration practices
6. Ability to promote the effective integration of technology throughout the teaching and learning environment
7. Knowledge to increase access to educational technologies for the school
8. Ability to provide support for teachers to increase the use of technology already in the school/classrooms
9. Ability to use technology to support the analysis and use of student assessment data

Standard 7:

Rationale

This standard addresses the need to enhance student learning through effective, efficient, and equitable utilization of resources. Instructional leaders must use their knowledge of organizations to create a learning environment conducive to the success of all students. Proper allocation of resources such as personnel, facilities, and technology is essential to creating an effective learning environment. Resource management decisions should give priority to teaching, student achievement, and student development. Also, operational procedures and policies must be established to maintain school safety and security and to strengthen the academic environment. All management decisions, including those regarding human resources, fiscal operations, facilities, legal issues, time management, scheduling, technology, and equipment, should be based on sound organizational practice. Instructional leaders must monitor and evaluate operational systems to ensure that they enhance student learning and reflect the school's and district's accountability to the community. They also actively seek additional sources of financial, human, and physical support. They involve stakeholders to ensure the management and operational decisions take into consideration the needs of multiple constituencies while at the same time focusing the entire community on student achievement as the ultimate goal. To include stakeholders in management decisions, instructional leaders must be competent in conflict resolution, consensus-building, group processes, and effective communication.

Management of the Learning Organization

Manages the organization, facilities, and financial resources; implements operational plans; and promotes collaboration to create a safe and effective learning environment.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Knowledge to develop and administer policies that provide a safe school environment
2. Ability to apply operational plans and processes to accomplish strategic goals
3. Ability to attend to student learning goals in the daily operation of the school
4. Knowledge to identify and analyze the major sources of fiscal and nonfiscal resources for the school including business and community resources
5. Knowledge to build and ability to support a culture of learning at the school
6. Knowledge to manage financial and material assets and capital goods and services in order to allocate resources according to school priorities
7. Knowledge to use an efficient budget planning process that involves staff and community
8. Ability to identify and organize resources to achieve curricular and instructional goals
9. Ability to develop techniques and organizational skills necessary to lead/manage a complex and diverse organization
10. Ability to plan and schedule one's own and others' work so that resources are used appropriately in meeting priorities and goals
11. Ability to use goals to manage activities
12. Knowledge to create and ability to empower a school leadership team that shares responsibility for the management of the learning organization

Standard 8:

Rationale

This standard addresses the educational leader’s role as the “first citizen” of the school/district community. Instructional leaders should set the tone for how employees and students interact with one another and with members of the school, district, and larger community. The leader’s contacts with students, parents, and employees must reflect concern for others as well as for the organization and the position. Instructional leaders must develop the ability to examine personal and professional values that reflect a code of ethics. They must be able to serve as role models, accepting responsibility for using their position ethically and constructively on behalf of the school/district community.

Ethics

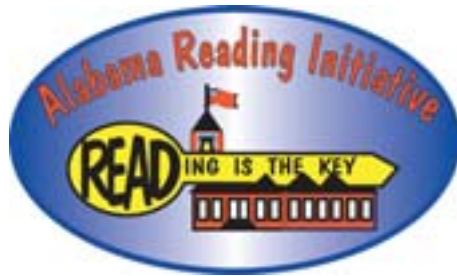
Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and fairness to guide school policies and practices consistent with current legal and ethical standards for professional educators.

KEY INDICATORS

1. Knowledge and ability to adhere to a professional code of ethics and values
2. Knowledge and ability to make decisions based on the legal, moral, and ethical implications of policy options and political strategies
3. Knowledge and ability to develop well-reasoned educational beliefs based upon an understanding of teaching and learning
4. Knowledge to understand ethical and legal concerns educators face when using technology throughout the teaching and learning environment
5. Knowledge and ability to develop a personal code of ethics embracing diversity, integrity, and the dignity of all people
6. Knowledge and ability to act in accordance with federal and state constitutional provisions, statutory standards, and regulatory applications
7. Ability to make decisions within an ethical context

Appendix 5

ALABAMA READING INITIATIVE (ARI) COACH 2010–2011 JOB DESCRIPTION



PURPOSE: To improve teacher practice so that all students learn and achieve at the highest levels.

CREDENTIALS: The ARI coach must have completed ARI foundational training. The ARI coach should have a minimum of three years' successful teaching experience and must have/develop specialized knowledge to support student and adult learning. Applicants should exhibit strong interpersonal skills and commit to continued professional growth.

SELECTION: The ARI coaches will be selected by the local education agency (LEA) and will commit to performing the duties outlined below.

SUPERVISOR: Principal

CONTRACT: Nine months

GENERAL DUTIES: The duties of the ARI coach will be to actively participate in ARI professional development (including coaching assignments) and plan regularly with school, LEA, and ARI leadership for:

- Implementing schoolwide literacy and intervention efforts
 - Demonstrates a high level of skill in coaching and teaching
 - Uses age-appropriate instructional strategies to improve students' literacy skills
 - Works collaboratively to monitor, analyze, and use data daily to make decisions for improved teaching and learning for all students
- Facilitating professional development to improve teaching and learning
 - Provides schoolwide professional development
 - Leads grade-level/departmental meetings related to literacy
 - Implements individual coaching
 - Models peer coaching
- Creating and adhering consistently to an approved schedule
 - Provides effective schoolwide literacy coaching
 - Has daily responsibility for teaching at least one group of struggling readers
- Influencing a schoolwide commitment to 100% literacy
 - Collaborates with school, LEA, and ARI personnel to plan for and make improvements in coaching, teaching, and student learning
 - Supports school, LEA, and ARI literacy efforts to reach the goal of students reading at or above grade level

Appendix 6

WHY IS COACHING IMPORTANT?

“Improving teachers’ learning – and, in turn, their own practice and their students’ learning – requires professional development that is closely and explicitly tied to teachers’ ongoing work. Coaching addresses that requirement.”
(Neufeld and Roper 2003)

Professional Development Outcomes			
Professional Development Elements	Knowledge Level (Estimated percentage of participants understanding content)	Skill Level (Estimated percentage of participants demonstrating proficiency in the instructional practices)	Transfer to Practice (Estimated percentage of participants regularly implementing instructional practices in the classroom)
Theory (e.g., presenter explains content, what it is, why it is important, and how to teach it)	10%	5%	0%
Demonstration (e.g., presenter models instructional practices)	30%	20%	0%
Practice (e.g., participants implement instructional practices during the session)	60%	60%	5%
Coaching (e.g., participants receive ongoing support and guidance when they return to the classroom)	95%	95%	95%

Adapted from Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

