

Montana Literacy Plan (MLP)



Elsie Arntzen
Montana Office of Public Instruction

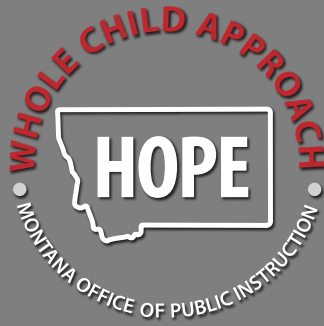
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Literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and view to communicate with others effectively. Literacy is also the ability to think and respond critically in a wide variety of complex settings. Montana students need to be able to use their literate abilities in multiple ways and for multiple purposes in an ever-changing world.





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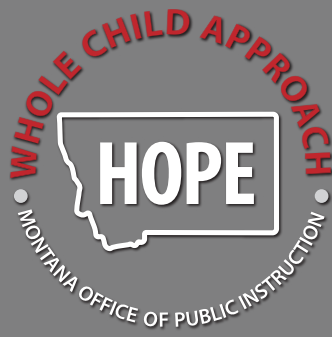
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It is a primary goal of a comprehensive literacy plan that all students effectively access, use, and produce ideas and information.





1

Introduction



**Montana Literacy
Plan**



**Montana Math
Plan**

are about



**supporting districts
in developing
a local plan**

driven by



a continuous
improvement
cycle

to improve



teaching and
learning

**based on evidence
based practices**



for
comprehensive
literacy
instruction

**utilizing resources
in the**



appendices
and
online

**to strengthen systematic
processes**



for
improving
instruction



Montana Literacy Plan

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Literacy in the twenty-first century is not just reading and writing. Literacy requires students to successfully engage with and interpret information from all forms of text and media.

Acknowledgements

The Montana State Literacy Team is comprised of individuals with expertise in literacy development and education for children from birth through Grade 12. The state literacy team includes individuals with expertise in the following areas.

- Implementing literacy development practices and instruction for children in the following age/grade levels: birth through age 5, kindergarten through Grade 5, Grades 6 through 8, and Grades 9 through 12.
- Managing and implementing literacy programs that are supported by strong evidence or moderate evidence.
- Evaluating comprehensive literacy instruction programs.
- Planning for implementing effective literacy interventions and practices, particularly for disadvantaged children, children living in poverty, struggling readers, English learners, and children with disabilities.
- Implementing assessment in the areas of phonological awareness, word recognition, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing.
- Implementing professional development on literacy development and instruction.

Montana State Literacy Team

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Process for Revising the Montana Literacy Plan (MLP)

The Instructional Innovations Unit (IIU) of the Education Opportunity and Equity Division within the Montana Office of Public Instruction began the process of revising the current MLP that originated in 2012. This document will continually be reviewed and revised with the assistance of a state literacy team based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

Steps for Revision

1. Comprehensive Needs Assessment was conducted following the State Education Agency's (SEA) use and implementation of the current MLP for five years and Local Education Agencies implementation within the Montana Striving Readers Project and Title 1 School Support. Each year, an external evaluation was conducted and informed the SEA on needs for improvement.
2. The MLP went through several reviewers for areas of strengths and needs for improvement with national experts, Dr. Timothy Shanahan and Dr. Anita Archer, IIU team members, and various units of the SEA.
3. Beginning in November 2016, the IIU team developed a plan and timeline for revision process.
4. The IIU team developed an application process to secure a team of Montana educators with expertise in the following areas.
 - Implementing literacy instruction at the following age/grade levels: Birth through age 5, kindergarten through Grade 5, Grades 6 through 8, and Grades 9 through 12.
 - Selecting and evaluating comprehensive literacy programs.
 - Planning for and implementing effective literacy interventions, particularly for at-risk students, children living in poverty, struggling readers, English learners, and children with disabilities.
 - Implementing literacy assessments.
 - Implementing professional development focused on literacy instruction and development.
5. The IIU team developed the application process to include the following criteria for the state literacy team that is critical to Montana's vast geographical challenges and unique characteristics.
 - Educators from across Montana to include all five regions.
 - Educators from the various district sizes.
 - Educators to represent the Montana American Indian population.
6. The Call for Participants was sent to every district within Montana in the search for applicants to serve on the state literacy team. Seventeen educators were selected from the pool of 35 applicants.
7. The state literacy team came together for two days to review and begin to propose revisions to the MLP followed by a month of virtual work.
8. The IIU team sought review and feedback from Dr. Archer and completed final edits.
9. The revised MLP will be available to all schools by August 2018.

A young boy with blonde hair, wearing a bright red hooded jacket and dark blue pants, stands on a series of smooth, grey river rocks. He is facing away from the camera, looking out over a calm river. The water reflects the surrounding greenery and the boy's red jacket. The far bank of the river is lined with dense, lush green trees and bushes. In the distance, blue mountains rise against a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, capturing a moment of nature exploration.

Montana is a vast, beautiful state with diverse landscapes and populations. It is vital that each of Montana's children, from birth through Grade 12, develop the literacy skills needed to be college- and career-ready.

Introduction

Montana is a vast, beautiful state with diverse landscapes and populations. It is vital that each of Montana's children, from birth through Grade 12, develop the literacy skills needed to be college- and career-ready. Literacy in the twenty-first century is not just reading and writing. Literacy requires students to successfully engage with and interpret information from all forms of text and media. Advances in digital tools and the accessibility of immense amounts of information require students to think critically about what they are reading and writing, whether it is online or in print, and apply creativity, collaboration, and communication skills to share what they learn. It is a primary goal of a comprehensive literacy plan that all students effectively access, use, and produce ideas and information.

The Montana Literacy Plan (MLP) includes Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Components that provide information to districts, schools, and early childhood centers on addressing the preliteracy and literacy needs of children from birth through Grade 12, with special emphasis on disadvantaged students. The MLP also includes Improving Instruction Components that provide guidance to districts, schools, and early childhood centers on developing and implementing their own local literacy plans.

The MLP is intended to be an evolving document. As literacy systems and practices evolve, so will the information in this document. Check the Office of Public Instruction website regularly for updates. www.opi.mt.gov



How Can I use the Montana Literacy Plan?

There are many ways to use the Montana Literacy Plan (MLP). The ideas listed below are for the varying educator roles but follow the same pattern. The ideas are meant to give the reader a way to access content quickly in the beginning and then continue to study and learn more about the MLP. This progression will help you determine next steps and supports for improving teaching and learning. There are four steps for each role (i.e., teacher, school leader) listed below and within each chart.

- First, begin with quick wins you can use right away.
- Then, dig deeper with each section.
- Next, pull it all together by reading about the Continuous Improvement Cycle.
- Finally, use the MLP to create your own Continuous Improvement Cycle and Local Literacy Plan.

How Can I Use the Montana Literacy Plan if I am a Teacher?

First, begin with quick wins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access the English Language Arts (ELA) Quick Claims.• Flip to the Standards and Curriculum section and read through the continuums.• Flip to the resources at the end of each section. Check out the Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide's recommendations.• Begin with the section Amount and Quality of Instruction to begin making changes in your classroom instruction through planning and delivery of instruction.
Then, dig deeper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip to the sections of the Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Components.• Read the questions and "At a Glance" introduction.• Refer to the questions and answers about which you are most interested.
Next, pull it all together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip to the Continuous Improvement Cycle section.• Read through the questions and the answers and reflect on how the cycle pulls together the other sections of the MLP.
Finally, create your own Continuous Improvement Cycle to improve teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the Continuous Improvement Cycle section and the template in the appendices.• Begin to develop a Teacher Continuous Improvement Cycle.

How Can I Use the Montana Literacy Plan if I am an Academic Leader?

First, begin with quick wins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access the ELA Quick Claims.• Flip to the Academic Leader section and read through the questions and answers.• Flip to the resources at the end of each section. Check out the IES Practice Guides recommendations.
Then, dig deeper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip to the sections of the Improving Instruction Components.• Read the questions and "At a Glance" introduction.• Refer to the questions and answers about which you are the most interested.

Next, pull it all together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip to the Continuous Improvement Cycle section. • Read through the questions and the answers and reflect on how the cycle pulls together the other sections of the MLP.
Finally, create a School Continuous Improvement Cycle to improve teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Continuous Improvement Cycle section and the template in the appendices. • Gather a leadership team and begin to develop a Schoolwide Continuous Improvement Cycle.

How Can I Use the Montana Literacy Plan if I am a District Leader?

First, begin with quick wins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access the ELA Quick Claims. • Flip to the Academic Leader and Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making sections and read through the questions and answers. • Flip to the resources at the end of each section. Check out the IES Practice Guides recommendations.
Then, dig deeper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip to the sections of the Improving Instruction Components. • Read the questions and “At a Glance” introduction. • Refer to the questions and answers about which you are the most interested.
Next, pull it all together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip to the Continuous Improvement Cycle section. • Read through the questions and the answers and reflect on how the cycle pulls together the other sections of the MLP.
Finally, create a District Continuous Improvement Cycle to improve teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Continuous Improvement Cycle section and the template in the appendices. • Gather a leadership team and begin to develop a District Continuous Improvement Cycle.

How Can I Use the Montana Literacy Plan if I am a Parent or Community Member?

First, begin with quick wins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access the ELA Quick Claims. • Flip to the resources at the end of each section. Check out the IES Practice Guides recommendations.
Then, dig deeper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip to the Community and Family Engagement. • Read the questions and “At a Glance” introduction.
Next, pull it all together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip to the sections of the Comprehensive Instruction Components for Literacy. • Read the questions and “At a Glance” introduction. • Refer to the questions and answers about which you are the most interested.
Finally, identify ideas for supporting your school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read through Community and Family Engagement section. • Identify areas you could offer expertise or assistance to the school team. • Identify and share any questions or concerns to share with school team.

How Can I Use the Montana Literacy Plan if I am an Instructional Coach?	
First, begin with quick wins.	<p>Access the ELA Quick Claims.</p> <p>Flip to the continuums.</p> <p>Flip to the Professional Development and Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making sections and read through the questions and answers.</p> <p>Flip to the resources at the end of each section. Check out the IES Practice Guides recommendations.</p>
Then, dig deeper.	<p>Flip to the sections of the Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Components and the Improving Instruction Components.</p> <p>Read the questions and “At a Glance” introduction.</p> <p>Refer to the questions and answers about which you are the most interested.</p>
Next, pull it all together.	<p>Flip to the Continuous Improvement Cycle section.</p> <p>Read through the questions and the answers and reflect on how the cycle pulls together the other sections of the MLP.</p>
Finally, create a Coaching Continuous Improvement Cycle to improve teaching and learning.	<p>Use the Continuous Improvement Cycle Section and the template in the appendices.</p> <p>Begin to develop a Coach Continuous Improvement Cycle.</p>

A powerful resource for all educators (academic leadership, coaches, teachers) are the International Dyslexia Association’s (IDA) Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading, Appendix XX. Below is a summation of the five standards.

Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (IDA, 2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard 1 addresses foundational concepts about reading development and reading difficulties that are derived from interdisciplinary research. • Standard 2 covers knowledge of diverse profiles of reading difficulty, including dyslexia, very slow reading, and language comprehension problems. • Standard 3 pertains to knowledge of assessment relevant to evidence-based practices with a response-to-intervention (RTI) framework. • Standard 4 addresses Structured Literacy teaching, offering detailed guidance with regard to the nature of effective instruction in each major skill domain (phonological sensitivity and phoneme awareness, phonics and word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension, and written expression). Standard 4 also offers guidance regarding expectations for teachers engaged in fieldwork or practicum (e.g., in interpretation of assessments, planning differentiated instruction, lesson design, corrective feedback, and so forth). • Standard 5 delineates ethical standards for the profession.

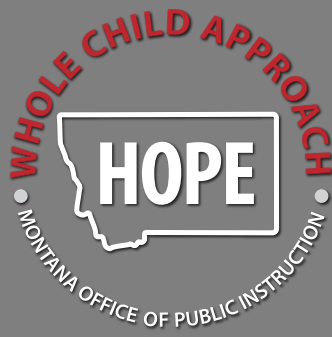
Districts and schools can use the CIC to implement and ultimately sustain a local literacy or mathematics plan that is aligned with the other sections of the Montana Literacy Plan (MLP) or the Montana Math Plan (MMP).





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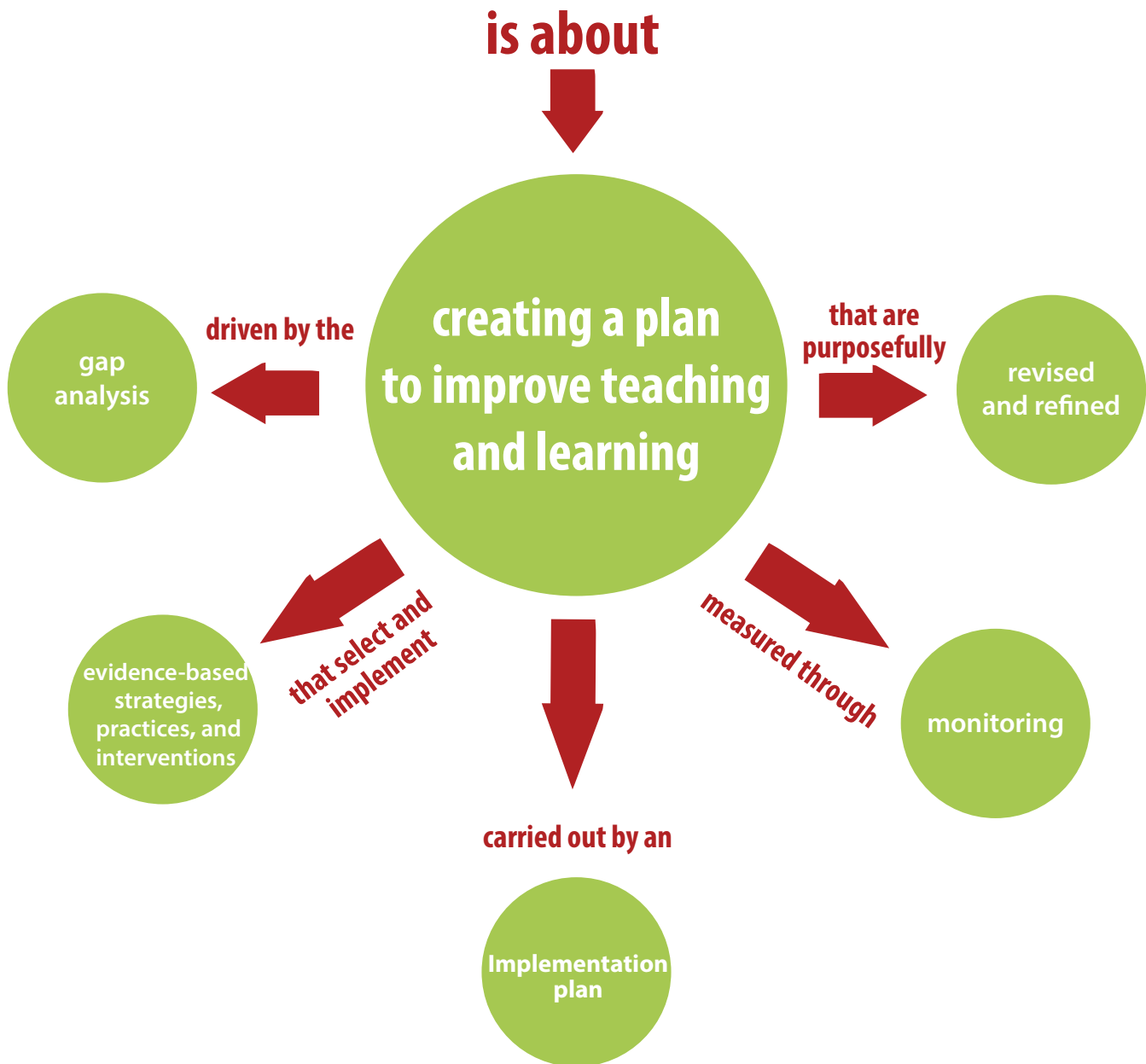
1,500 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$11,460.00, which includes \$11,460.00 for printing and \$.00 for distribution.



2

Continuous
Improvement
Cycle

THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



Continuous Improvement Cycle

Essential Questions

What are the parts of the continuous improvement cycle?

1. How do we assess local needs?
2. How do we select evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions?
3. How do we create a plan for implementation?
4. How do we implement and monitor the plan?
5. How do we reflect and revise the plan?
6. How does a school create a continuous improvement cycle?
7. What evidence-based practices and resources are available to support the understanding and implementation of the parts of the continuous improvement cycle?

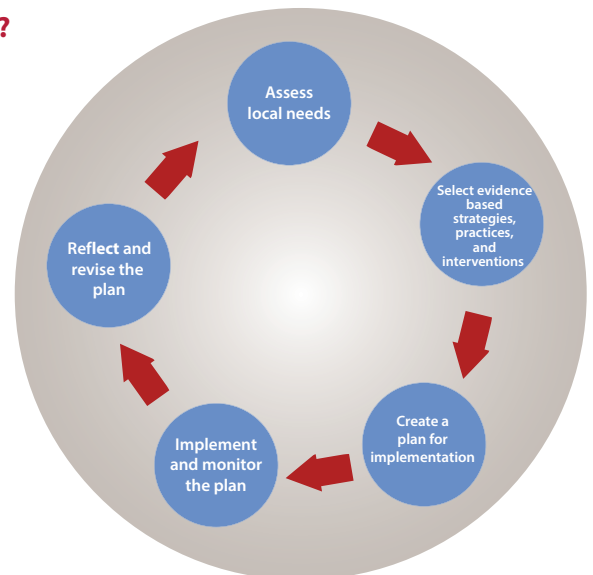


At a Glance:

A continuous improvement cycle (CIC) helps academic leaders and educators develop local plans. First, schools assess local needs; then select evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions; then create a plan for implementing those strategies, practices, and intervention; and finally reflect and revise the plan based on both student and educator data. Tracking student progress throughout the CIC is critical to ensure strong outcomes for students. Districts and schools can use the CIC to implement and ultimately sustain a local literacy or mathematics plan that is aligned with the other sections of the Montana Literacy Plan (MLP) or the Montana Math Plan (MMP). This section is designed to focus schools on acting around the goals they have set for improving teaching and learning.

1. What are the parts of the continuous improvement cycle?

- **Assess local needs** using the *Comprehensive Gap Analysis*.
- **Select evidence-based** strategies, practices, and interventions using the *Process for Selecting Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions*.
- **Create a plan for implementation** using an action plan process with clear measurable goals and action steps.
- **Implement and monitor the plan** using both student and educator data.
- **Reflect and revise the plan** at least twice a year doing a deeper analysis with student and educator data.



2. How do we assess local needs?

Completing a gap analysis helps districts and schools identify the needs of all students, especially at-risk students. Evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions can be chosen to help address and close the gaps. There are five steps to the gap analysis. The essence of each step is listed below. The full gap analysis is in the Appendices.

Step 1: Gather Child and Student Data

Gather both local and Montana State Assessment data including disaggregated by at-risk subgroups. Examples of possible local assessments and the Montana State Assessments are listed below. Use the chart provided in the gap analysis to list the data the district and schools uses.

Step 2: Analyze Child and Student Data

Assessments	Birth through age 5	Grades K through 5	MS and HS
Local assessments	Literacy examples: ISIP, DIAL, Expressive and Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (E/ROWPVT)	Literacy examples: ISIP, DIBELS, MAP, SBAC Interim Mathematics examples: ISIP, MAP, SBAC Interim, STAR Math	Literacy examples: ISIP, MAP, SBAC Interim Mathematics examples: ISIP, MAP, STAR Math, SBAC Interim, ACT Prep
Montana Assessments	DIAL ((Montana Preschool Development Grant)	SBAC-Student data reports is on the Student Achievement data domain in the Montana Statewide Longitudinal Data System (GEMS) at http://gems.opi.mt.gov/StudentAchievement/Pages/Overview.aspx English Language Arts Writing Mathematics	ACT SBAC-Student data reports is on the Student Achievement data domain in the Montana Statewide Longitudinal Data System (GEMS) at http://gems.opi.mt.gov/StudentAchievement/Pages/Overview.aspx English Language Arts Reading Mathematics Science

Analyze student data by reviewing data reports. Complete the chart below by identifying ideas for improving student outcomes (i.e., more instructional time, regular attendance, improved parent engagement for at-risk subgroups). An example has been provided for the English learner subgroup.

GAPS IN DATA FOR AT-RISK SUBGROUPS Disaggregated Data Compared to State and Local Data			
At-Risk Subgroups	Gaps in Data (compared to school or state average data)	Barriers to Success (specific deficits in data)	Next Steps for Improvement
English learners	Vocabulary in ISIP School average 75% AI average 23%	Vocabulary is not being explicitly taught so students are guessing at meanings.	Provide explicit instruction PD on vocabulary. Provide more opportunities for students to respond with words. Provide feedback for educators.

Step 3: Complete the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)

The CNA outlines nine components of school quality and a progression of subcomponents within each of the nine components. The subcomponents are proven to be effective indicators for supporting school improvement. Schools evaluate themselves on each subcomponent, which helps give a school an overall

score within each of the nine components. The components are:

- Content Standards and Curriculum
- Assessment and Data-Driven Decision Making to Inform Instruction
- Amount and Quality of Instruction
- Instruction and Support for At-Risk Students
- Motivation in Teaching and Learning
- Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions
- Academic Leadership to Improve Instruction
- Professional Development to Improve Instruction and Outcomes
- Community and Family Engagement to Support Instruction

Schools that are consistently underperforming may also want to take the Operational Components section of the CNA.

Each School Leadership Team (SLT) member should complete the CNA independently for each of the components and subcomponents in the MLP or MMP to determine strengths and weaknesses. Individual scoring is averaged to arrive at an overall school and/or district score.

To use the self-assessment, schools must carefully rate the level of implementation of the indicators of quality within the subcomponents using a rating scale of 1 to 4. A rating of 1 demonstrates the indicator of quality is not being implemented now, and a rating of 4 indicates sustained, consistent implementation. The complete CNA is in the Appendices.

Step 4: Analyze the Results from the Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Review the CNA results and identify the strengths and weaknesses. SLTs may want to fill in the chart that is within step 4 of the gap analysis in the Appendix. An example of the chart has been provided for the component of PD.

MLP Components	What are the weaknesses?	Next Steps for Improvement
PD to Improve Instruction	PD is provided monthly during half day early outs. PD does not align to students' needs.	Create a PD plan that aligns to student data and the CNA.

To achieve consistent, long-lasting school improvement, all components need to be implemented and ultimately sustained. However, for most schools, that would be overwhelming and defeating. Begin with the components that will have the strongest impact on improving the student outcomes identified through the gap analysis. Refer to the SMARTER table on page 7 for additional ideas to consider when choosing the components to strengthen. Once those goals are achieved and the components strengthened, a school needs to continue to work through the CIC until all components are at the sustained level.

Step 5: Compare and Connect the Student Data and CNA to Identify Needs for Strategies, Practices, and Interventions

Correlate the student data and CNA next steps together by reviewing the results and making correlations to determine how the next steps from the CNA can positively impact the gap in student data for all students

and with at-risk subgroup(s). A tool to help SLTs achieve this is the chart within step 5 of the gap analysis in the Appendix.

Filling in the chart will help SLTs determine which next steps from the CNA would help improve the gaps identified with the student data (i.e., students are scoring low in vocabulary overall and especially our American Indian (AI) students. From the CNA we identified that regular meetings and time for PD are not focused on vocabulary, especially for AI students. Maybe we should target our educator meetings and PD to focus on how to improve instruction and student outcomes in vocabulary). An example is listed in the chart below.

Student Data Results	Correlating CNA Results	Next Steps	Additional Questions to Determine PD
Vocabulary in ISIP School average 75 percent AI average 23 percent	Create a PD plan that aligns to student data and the CNA.	Create a PD plan focused on effective vocabulary strategies especially for AI students.	What PD is available that has moderate or strong evidence? Who will provide the PD? How much time is needed and when? What will be the expectation after the PD? Who will monitor the impact of the implementation?

Step 6: Use Gap Analysis Results for Selecting Relevant, Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions

SLTs will gather all the materials from conducting the gap analysis and move onto the process for selecting relevant, evidence-based interventions. The needs you identified from the gap analysis will be used to select strategies, practices, and interventions that have strong or moderate evidence, are differentiated and appropriate, and relevant to the district and school.

3.How do we select evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions?

Districts and schools should be deliberate in choosing evidence-based practices, especially for at-risk students. Follow the four-step process for selecting evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions to ensure the strongest possible outcomes for students. The steps will help schools and/or districts choose an intervention that aligns with local literacy or mathematics plans, that is supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence that is differentiated and appropriate for the district and school population, and that is relevant to identified needs. The essence of the four steps are listed below. The complete document is in the Appendices.

Remember to complete the gap analysis before moving on to selecting evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions.



Step 1: Research and identify interventions and strategies that are supported by strong or moderate evidence.

Refer to research necessary to identify relevant interventions that are supported by moderate or strong evidence. The OPI recommends What Works Clearinghouse or the Practice Guides from the Institute on Education Sciences. These two sources provide an easy way to identify moderate or strong evidence.

- What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
WWC reviews packaged intervention pro-

grams as well as research-based strategies (i.e., Dialogic Reading, Self-Regulated Strategy Development) that can be used within the instructional framework.

- Institute on Education Sciences resources, such as their Practice Guides <http://ies.ed.gov>

IES practice guides review best practices that should be included in all instruction but can also be used as a guide to select packaged intervention programs that have not yet been reviewed by WWC.

Programs that have not been reviewed by WWC, but are based on practices and strategies found to have strong or moderate evidence, can also be considered for selection.

Definitions of Evidence

- Requires at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study and a summary of the research included. (Strong evidence)*
- Requires moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study. (Moderate evidence) *
- or
- Requires promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias. (Promising evidence)

* required to meet ESSA standards

Additional lists of research-based programs not reviewed by WWC can be found at:

- K-3 - Colorado Dept. of Education: <http://cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/programming>
- K-12 - Louisiana Dept. of Education: <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/ONLINE-INSTRUCTIONAL-MATERIALS-REVIEWS/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>

Step 2: Determine if an intervention that is supported by moderate or strong evidence is differentiated, appropriate, and relevant to your proposed project and identified needs.

After determining that an intervention is supported by moderate or strong evidence, determine if the intervention is differentiated and appropriate for the grade-level and relevant to the proposed local literacy plan and identified needs. Use the questions below to help guide your selection.

Differentiated and Appropriate

- Was the Montana Continuum of Comprehensive Literacy Instruction reviewed to ensure the intervention is differentiated and appropriate for that grade level?
- Was it appropriate for the grade level on the Montana Continuum of Comprehensive Literacy Instruction?
- Is the intervention appropriate for children birth through age 5?
- Is the intervention appropriate for students in kindergarten through fifth grade?
- Is the intervention appropriate for middle school students?
- Is the intervention appropriate for high school students?

Relevancy

- Does the study address the additional gaps identified from the gap analysis such as:
- Did the study include similar at-risk subgroup(s) (e.g., children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities) as yours?
- Did the study include similar populations as yours with strong or moderate evidence that the intervention will be effective (i.e., high EL population)?

Step 3: Determine capacity to implement possible strategies, practices, and interventions

Once strategies, practices, and interventions have been identified that are supported by strong or moderate evidence, differentiated and appropriate for age or grade level, and relevant for your school population, determine the local capacity for implementing the intervention. The implementation plan for the school should align to the implementation used in the study to determine the level of fidelity. Fidelity is key to similar outcomes as the study.

- Is there enough funding to support the requirements to implement with fidelity?
- Is there enough staff to implement the intervention with fidelity?
- Do current staff have the skills necessary to implement the intervention with fidelity?
- Is there buy-in and support from stakeholders (i.e., educators, parents, school board, administration, and support staff) for implementing the intervention?

Step 4: Choose whether or not to select the strategy, practice, or intervention

In reviewing all the questions from steps 1-3, decide if the strategy, practice, or intervention will work for the needs identified from the gap analysis.

- Yes, begin to use it in Part 3 of the CIC: Create an Implementation Plan.
- No, begin again with the process to select relevant, evidence-based interventions.

4. How do we create a plan for implementation?

Once a district and/or school has completed the gap analysis and chosen evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions, it is time to create a plan for implementation to ensure improved outcomes for students. Schools and/or districts need to create a high-quality action plan that includes key goals, key activities, and rationale for how the activities support the goals, a realistic timeline, and parties responsible for each activity.

*PLCs four guiding questions:
(1) What do we expect our students to learn? (2) How will we know they are learning? (3) How will we respond when they don't learn? (4) How will we respond if they already know it?*

- Identify student outcome goals that are clear and measurable.
- Identify student progress goals that are clear and measurable.
Refer to the results of the gap analysis.
What goals need to be set to improve outcomes for at-risk students?

Setting S.M.A.R.T.E.R Goals	
Specific	Goals need to be specific. Identify the increase on student outcomes. Do we want to see a 3 percent increase over the course of years? 5 percent with an at-risk subgroup? 10 percent with a certain content area?
Meaningful	Goals need to be meaningful to the educators expected to implement and accomplish the goals. Why is this goal important to me? What should I care about achieving it?
Achievable	Goals need to be achievable. What is ambitious and realistic? How do we get some quick-wins to encourage momentum and motivation?
Relevant	Goals need to be relevant. Do the goals align with the school and district's vision and mission statements? Are the goals relevant to what educators are expected to implement? Will educators care about these goals?
Time-Bound	Goals need to be time-bound. Do we have clear deadlines for the goals? Have we allowed enough time to accomplish our goals? Have we allowed too much time? Have we broken our goals into smaller chunks?
Evaluate	Goals need to be evaluated on a regular basis. How are we evaluating whether we are on track for accomplishing our goals? Have we broken our goals into smaller chunks or benchmarks? If our goals are set for a year, do we have smaller goals set for three months? For five months? Do we have a SLT in place to evaluate the goals on a regular basis?
Readjust	Goals may need to be readjusted. While evaluating our goals, do we keep missing benchmarks we have set? Do we need to adjust our goals? Do we need to set new goals or update our benchmarks?

Identify clear key activities/action steps that ensure progress is being made to achieving the goals.

- What from the comprehensive needs assessment can be strengthened to improve student outcomes?
- What action steps or key activities can be listed on the action plan that show progress of implementing components from the needs assessment and progress toward the student outcomes?

Action plans serve as progress monitoring for schools and early childhood centers. Paul Schlechty (2001) states, "Two things sustain change: one is a leader or leadership group that acts as a change agent; the other is a system or group of systems that supports change" (p. 40). This explains why, when the school culture does not have the capacity to sustain a change effort, "the change rarely outlasts the tenure of the change agent" (p. 40).

- List three to five goals, list the specific action steps you identified above, the person responsible for each action step, and a timeframe for completion of the goal. Keep a running record of all action steps. In the final step of the CIC Reflect and Revise Plan, a recommendation will be made for archiving the action steps that have been completed. An example of one goal on an action plan is listed below.

Goal: Improve percentage of student's proficient on SBAC by 5 percent from the previous year.

Subgoal: Improve percentage of students at benchmark, from fall to spring, on the interim assessment by 5 percent overall and by 10 percent on the vocabulary subtest.

Subgoal: Improve percentage of AI students at benchmark, from fall to spring, on the interim assessment by 15 percent overall and 15 percent on the vocabulary subtest.

Key Activities (Should support strengthening components from CNA)	Timeline	Persons Responsible	Activity Check-Off
Provide explicit instruction PD on vocabulary strategies across all content areas.	PIR in Aug.	Academic leader Instructional coach	
Walkthroughs by academic leaders to provide feedback on implementation of vocabulary strategies.	Sept. 2 walkthroughs per educator	Academic leader	
SLT meeting to review walkthrough data and student progress monitoring data from vocabulary subtest and identify next key activities on action plan.	Oct. 1	SLT including academic leader and instructional coach	

5. How do we implement and monitor the plan?

- Schedule an SLT meeting at least monthly and educator team meetings at least monthly, preferably weekly.
- Every educator in the school should be represented by someone on the SLT (i.e., third grade educator represents third grade team, paraprofessional represents all paraprofessionals, music educator represents all specials educators).
- Have the SLT develop a structured agenda that ensures ongoing monitoring of the plan for both the SLT and the educator teams.
- Both structured agendas should contain some of the same topics and guiding questions to ensure a constant feedback loop between the SLT and all educator teams. Regular communication and feedback is critical for achieving improved student outcomes.
- Use the structured agenda at each SLT meeting and educator team meetings.
- SLT members are responsible for communicating about the action plan and SLT meeting minutes/ talking points at the team meetings they are a part of and represent.

School Leadership Team Meetings

Structured Agenda for Implementing and Monitoring

Time Second Monday of every month- Date: _____	Materials Needed Examples: Action plan Instructional framework MLP or MMP Student data Walkthrough data	Members Present Classroom educators Special education educator Academic leader Instructional coach Paraprofessional Parent
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Implement the Plan

- Review the action plan.
- Are we on track for meeting our goals and subgoals?
- Are we gathering and reviewing the correct student data?
- Does the student data show improvements on student outcomes?
- If so, how can we celebrate with staff?
- What instructional plans are not showing strong progress for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3?
- Are we gathering and reviewing the correct walkthrough data?
- Does the walkthrough data show improvements on what we are trying to implement?
- If so, how can we celebrate with staff?
- If not, what additional PD and supports do staff need?
- Determine talking points for educator team meetings.
- What needs to be communicated to educator teams about walkthrough data and our interim/progress monitoring data?
- What additional PD and supports do staff need and want?
- What feedback are the educator teams sharing?
- Do we need any follow up on the feedback?
- What additional key activities/action steps need to be added to the action plan?
- Do some key activities need to be adjusted based on the data?
- Do some timelines need to be adjusted?
- Do different personnel need to be assigned responsibility for some key activities?

Notes:

Next Steps: (Items that may not be on the action plan but are still important.)

Example: Mrs. Smith will follow up with Mr. Jones, who was absent.

Example: Academic leader will meet with superintendent to review goals and receive feedback to share with SLT.

Educator Team Meetings

Structured Agenda for Implementing and Monitoring

Time	Materials Needed	Members Present
Thursdays from 1 to 1:45	Examples: Minutes/talk points from SLT Instructional framework Lesson plans Student data	Educators Paraprofessionals
Date:_____		

Implement the Plan

- Review the minutes/talking points from the SLT.
- Do we have any questions or concerns?
- What do we have to share that is celebratory?
- Are we on track for meeting our goals and subgoals?
- Are we gathering and reviewing the correct student data?
- Does the student data show improvements on student outcomes?
- If so, how can we celebrate with staff?
- Do any instructional changes need to be changed based on the data?
- What needs to be communicated to the SLT about the grade level and walkthrough data?
- What instructional plans are not showing strong progress for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3?
- What can each team do to improve progress of instructional plans?
- How will the student data show growth toward plans?
- How will the walkthrough data show growth in plans?
- Does the walkthrough data show improvements on what we are trying to implement?
- What additional PD and supports do we want and need?
- Determine talking points for educator team meetings.
- What needs to be communicated to educator teams about walkthrough data and our interim/progress monitoring data?
- What additional PD and supports do staff need and want?
- What additional key activities/action steps need to be added to the action plan?
- Do some key activities need to be adjusted based on the data?
- Do some timelines need to be adjusted?
- Do different personnel need to be assigned responsibility for some key activities?

Notes:**Next Steps:**

- Example: Meet with instructional coach for additional PD for team on vocabulary strategies.
- Example: Meet as team to develop lesson plans on utilizing vocabulary strategies.
- Mrs. Smith will share celebrations team identified.

- Share agenda minutes with both teams.
 - Set aside time at both the SLT meeting and the educator team meetings to ensure a feedback loop is established.
- Include celebrations from all teams.
- Keep and organize critical documents for reflecting and reviewing the plan.
- Keep the structured agendas and minutes from the SLT and any critical educator team notes and feedback.
- Keep the student data reports the SLT reviewed to determine if student outcomes were improving.
 - Keep the action plan.

6. How do we reflect and revise the plan?

The SLT will complete this part of the CIC at least twice a year. It is recommended that this aligns with the winter and spring benchmarks for students to allow for the most current and accurate reflection of student and educator data. These benchmarks also coincide with the mid- and end-of-a-school-year assessment periods. This allows for reflecting and revising a plan that may not be on track for achieving the goal or taking time to celebrate a plan that is on track for achieving the goals.

- Schedule the SLT meeting for a half day or minimum of two hours.
 - Every educator in the school should be represented by someone on the SLT (i.e., third grade educator represents third grade team, paraprofessional represents all paraprofessionals, music educator represents all specials educators)
- Gather the critical documents you kept from the implement and monitor step of the CIC.
 - Use a modified structured agenda that ensures critical documents are reviewed to determine if the school is on track for meeting the goals and what next steps need to be taken.

School Leadership Team Structured Agenda for Revising and Reflecting		
Time Second Monday of every month Date: _____	Materials Needed Examples: Action plan Student data reports Walkthrough data reports PD evaluations SLT agendas and minutes Educator team meetings (notes, minutes, etc., that the SLT kept)	Members Present Classroom educators Special education educator Academic leader Instructional coach Paraprofessional Parent
Review the action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we on track for meeting our goals and subgoals? • What student data provides the evidence? • Does the student data show improvements on student outcomes? • What walkthrough data provides the evidence? • Does the walkthrough data show improvements on what we are trying to implement? • Are the improvements enough to achieve our end-of-the-year goals? 		
If you answered yes, no, or maybe, see the appropriate section below		
Yes Make plans to celebrate with educators and students and move onto accomplishing goal and/or setting new measurable, ambitious, and realistic goals.		

No

- Lay out all the student data reports in chronological order, beginning with the earliest report and ending with the latest report.
- Do you see any trends?
- Are there certain grade levels or classes that have consistently not made progress?
- Are the students at benchmark (Tier 1) making progress? Are the students in need of strategic support (Tier 2) making progress? Are the students in need of intensive support (Tier 3) making progress?
- Are there grade levels or classes consistently making strong progress? What next steps should you take with the positive trends you see?
- What next steps should you take with the negative trends you see?
- Based on the analysis, what goals and subgoals need to be adjusted to ensure they are measurable, ambitious, and realistic?
- Lay out all the structured agenda minutes in chronological order, beginning with the earliest agenda and ending with the latest agenda.
- Do you see any trends? What are the positive trends? What are the negative trends?
- Are the structured agendas and minutes focused on activities and conversations to improve the student outcomes listed within the goals? Do the activities within the action plan support achieving the goals? Do any activities need to be adjusted? Does the makeup of the SLT need to be adjusted? Is someone not buying in to the process and maybe wants to be replaced? Are you missing a bright spot on your staff that would be a champion of this work?
- Is there anything that needs to be adjusted for the SLT to be more successful in accomplishing the action steps and goals? Do norms need to be revisited? Side conversations? Attendance? Time for SLT meeting?
- Lay out additional critical documents the SLT has been keeping.
- Look for positive and negative trends.
- Identify relationship to achievement of action steps/key activities and goals.
- Revisit all the steps of the CIC
- Does the SLT need to complete the gap analysis again?
- Does the SLT need to review the chosen evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions, or is it more of a lack of fidelity of implementation?
- Does the SLT need to adjust the plan for implementation and identify next steps for adjusting goals, subgoals, and key activities/action steps.

Maybe

If the SLT is not sure about achieving the goals, complete one or two of the activities listed in the NO section, and revisit the steps of the CIC.

- Share process and next steps with educator teams.
 - Set aside time at the educator team meetings to ensure a feedback loop is established. Share celebrations and struggles and elicit feedback and ideas for improvement. The final step establishes a complete CIC.

7. How does a school create a Continuous Improvement Cycle?

Identify the systemic processes you have been implementing that are moving to the sustaining phase. List these on the continuous improvement template found in the appendices. A school's CIC is the foundation of a local literacy plan and includes a cycle for student improvement, educator improvement, and school-wide improvement. An example of a school's systemic processes within a CIC is below.

Continuous Improvement Cycle

Student	Educator	School-wide
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Assess Local Needs		
Student Data <ul style="list-style-type: none">Benchmark Data/SBACISIPMAP	Student Data <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sharing school wide but need to focus on class or individual data	Gap Analysis Process for Choosing Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions twice a year (fall/spring)
	Video Reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none">Three a year	Student Data -Shared improvements on ISIP from fall to winter to spring
Progress Monitoring Data <ul style="list-style-type: none">ISIPSRI	Observation Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none">Monthly coaching cyclesQuarterly educator showcases	Walkthrough Data <ul style="list-style-type: none">Collecting data monthlySLT analyzes and shares data
Create a Plan for Implementation		
Lesson Plans	Personal PD Goals Moving toward having educators set own goals to provide feedback and be more reflective Educator Team Meetings Structured Agenda	Action Plan and detailed action steps Reviewed and updated monthly Structured agenda Onsite work with consultants and ongoing work with SLT
Using unit organizers		
Student Data Goals Whole class Intervention groups Individual students during advisory		
Implement and Monitor the Plan		
Provide Instruction Tier 1: Core Instructional framework focused on increasing student engagement, explicit vocab instruction, reading, writing, speaking, and listening in all content areas Tier 2: Strategic Support Advisory period focused on academic goal setting Tier 3: Intensive Support Forty-five minutes of intensive intervention with strong evidence-based program Student Progress Monitoring Monthly Daily Observations and Anecdotal Data Records anecdotal notes	Steps to Achieve Personal Goals Working on “breaking down” the fear of visitors in classrooms Video reflections lend to setting own goals Educator Team Meetings Structure agenda	Action Steps/Key Activities Action plan Structured agenda Walkthroughs SLT, academic leader and consultant—all collecting data consistently

Consultant/Instructional Coach Support Analyze student data monthly and review with educators during educator team meetings	Consultant and Coach Support Monthly observations and feedback Classroom Observation By instructional coach, peer, or academic leader Video reflection debrief	Consultant Support Monthly visits and feedback
Reflect and Revise the Plan		
	Winter and Spring Benchmark Meeting Review critical documents Revise action plan Celebrate Spring benchmark meeting Action Plan–Assessment is a part of the action plan to analyze and inform progress.	

8. What evidence-based practices and resources are available to support the understanding and implementation of the parts of the continuous improvement cycle?

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Access the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools (Institute of Education Science, 2008)

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

School turnaround aims to make quick, dramatic improvements within three years. This IES guide identifies practices that can quickly improve the performance of chronically low-performing schools. The target audience includes academic leaders and SLTs.

Recommendations

- Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership.
- Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.
- Provide visible improvements early in the turnaround process (quick wins).
- Build a committed staff.
- Checklist.

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades (Institute of Education Science, 2009) <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>

The aim of this IES guide is to help elementary schools implement an RtI framework to ensure all students, regardless of skill level, learn to read. The target audience includes academic leaders, instructional coaches, SLTs, and educators.

- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.

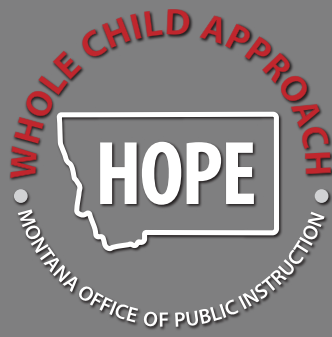
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).
- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes. (Tier 2).
- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist.

Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (Institute of Education Science, 2017)

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/24>

This practice guide provides school educators and administrators with four evidence-based recommendations for reducing dropout rates in middle and high schools and improving high school graduation rates. Each recommendation provides specific, actionable strategies; examples of how to implement the recommended practices in schools, advice on how to overcome potential obstacles, and a description of the supporting evidence. The four recommendations are listed below. Download the guide for additional information.

- Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.
- Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.
- Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school.
- For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.



3

Comprehensive
Literacy Instruction
Components

Comprehensive Instruction

is about



**addressing
essential
components
of instruction**

grounded in



standards and
curriculum

to promote



motivation
for teaching
and learning

**that select and
use purposeful**



assessment
and data
driven decision
making

**through identification
and support of**



at-risk
students

driven by



amount and
quality of
instruction



Standards and Curriculum

is about



**the goals and
plans for impacting
teaching
and learning**

through



a clear
definition and
understanding
of standards and
curriculum

to identify



evidence-
based
practices and
resources

by combining



standards,
claims and
practices to
impact
curriculum

by promoting



access and
learning for
all students

through



an
understanding
of birth through
Grade 12
continuum

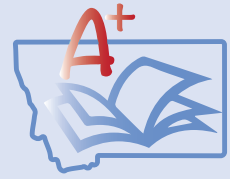




Content standards are developed at the state level in partnership with Montana educators and serve as expectations and learning outcomes for all students, defining what students should know and be able to do.

Essential Questions for Standards and Curriculum

1. How does the Montana Literacy Plan (MLP) define standards and curriculum?
2. What are the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS), and how are they organized?
3. What are the Montana Content Standards, and how are they organized?
4. Why is it important that the Birth through Grade 12 Continuum be understood by all educators?
5. How does a birth to age 5 and kindergarten through Grade 5 continuum support educators in improving school readiness?
6. How do Grades 6 through Grade 8 and Grades 9 through Grade 12 support educators with programs and systems to improve college and career readiness?
7. What are possible activities to improve transitions across the Birth through Grade 12 continuum?
8. What are the SBAC claims, and how can educators use them to improve teaching and learning?
9. What evidence-based practices and resources are available to support the understanding and implementation of standards and curriculum?



At a Glance:

Learn how the MLP defines the terms standards and curriculum by reading this section. Then, explore the Montana Early Learning Standards, the Montana Content Standards, and the Birth through Grade 12 Continuum to gain a comprehensive understanding of what students should know and can do upon entering college or career.

Content Standards

- Developed at the state level.
- Define what is to be taught and learned by the end of the school year.
- Expectations and learning outcomes for all students.

Curriculum

- Developed at the district and school levels.
- Include many resources (pacing guides/curriculum maps, units and lessons, assessments, and possibly programs designed for publishers).
- Detailed plan for daily teaching.

Content standards are developed at the state level in partnership with Montana educators and serve as expectations and learning outcomes for all students, defining what students should know and be able to do. “The Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts reflect the constitutional mandate that all educators must provide instruction, including the distinct and unique heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner” (Montana Content Standards, p. 3). School districts use standards to articulate curriculum in the form of pacing guides, units, and lessons.

Guskey and Bailey (2010) define standards in education as the goals of teaching and learning. They describe precisely what we want students to know and can do because of their experiences in school through interactions with educators and fellow students in learning environments.

Educational standards help educators ensure their students have the knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

The continuum of literacy development from birth to Grade 12 incorporates the strands of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Effective literacy instruction recognizes the developmental differences by age group and matches instruction to learner. Effective literacy instruction is balanced and does not focus solely on reading. Writing, speaking and listening, and vocabulary and language complement and reinforce reading.

Curriculum is the detailed plan for teaching and learning. This plan is developed by the district or school. The curriculum is taught using a myriad of resources including textbooks, instructional programs, intervention programs, and locally developed units and lessons. Curriculum includes the instructional decisions developed by educators as instruction is tailored to student needs.

The Montana Content Standards, in conjunction with a school's curriculum, define for educators what will be taught by all educators and expected to be learned by all students. How instruction is delivered is another facet of the teaching and learning process. For detailed information on how to deliver the curriculum to meet the Montana Content Standards, see the Amount and Quality of Instruction section.

2. What are the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS), and how are they organized?

The MELS reflect what children need to know, understand, and can do by the time they reach kindergarten. "The standards guide the work of early childhood professionals to ensure that children from birth to age 5 have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve success in learning and reach their full potential in life" (Montana Early Learning Standards, 2014).

The MELS are a tool for every early childhood and related service professional working with young children and their families, including early care and education practitioners, elementary educators, early interventionists, preservice educators, parent/family educators, family support specialists, home visitors, mental health providers, and child/family health practitioners. The MELS are also a tool for those who plan and provide early childhood professional and career development, including college instructors, high school educators, professional development specialists, and Early Head Start/Head Start training and technical assistance personnel.

The MELS provide a structure that frames the amazing developmental process from birth to age 5 as the foundation for children's success in life and learning. They are meant to:

- Provide a common language and improve communication among the professionals who impact and provide services to young children and their families.
- Build upon early childhood professionals' understanding of the continuum of children's growth and development.
- Serve as a resource for ways to enhance children's early learning experiences.
- Describe the expectations for what young children should know and be able to do across different domains of learning.
- Support the transfer of child development knowledge to improve teaching and caregiving practices and encourage individualization.
- Provide information and context for the range of skills children develop from birth to age 5. They do not provide a comprehensive or exhaustive list of every skill children might achieve in the first years of life.

Alignment across early childhood settings

The MELS were aligned to ensure flow between the foundations for learning and the Montana Content Standards set by the Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) for kindergarten through twelfth grade and the Head Start Framework. In the Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education titled "Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success," it is made clear that early childhood is a unique period of life. The position statement asserts that this period serves as the foundation for later learning and has value outside of preparation for elementary school.

Although the MELS are organized within core domains, it is important to note that each core domain is related to and influences the others. Children's growth and development occur, not as a series of isolated events throughout the first years of life, but ebb and flow in a unique way for each child. Sometimes growth in one domain will result in a pause, or even regression, in another domain.

Organization of benchmarks, indicators, and learning opportunities for each standard

The standards can be further used to shape a continuum of behaviors expected in children from birth to 5 years old, or benchmarks. For each standard, there are 10-17 benchmarks with related indicators and learning opportunities. The benchmarks explain key skills and behaviors representative of what we want the child to be able to do to achieve each standard.

For each benchmark, there is an associated indicator. Indicators describe behaviors we might see that demonstrate children have reached the benchmark.

For each indicator, there is an example of the type of learning opportunities or experiences we might provide to support development. (In other words, activities we might use to support children's development of the behavior described in the benchmark and result in ultimate achievement of the benchmark.)

The chart below illustrates one example from the MELS of how the layers or levels of development fit together into a useful framework for guiding early childhood practice.

Core Domain Three:Communication		
Subdomain: Literacy		
Standard 3.6: Print Development/Writing		
Children develop an understanding that print carries a message through symbols and words and that there is a connection between sounds and letters (the alphabetic principle).		
Benchmarks <i>What we want the child to be able to do.</i>	Indicators <i>Behaviors we might see.</i>	Learning Opportunities <i>Experiences we might use to support development.</i>
Respond to print in the environment.	The child may notice and comment on the print she sees around her, such as the name on the box of cereal she eats. The child may further ask, "What does that say?"	Provide a "print rich" environment by labeling toys, supplies, and equipment. Read aloud signs/labels as you come across them throughout the day.

For more information on the Montana Early Learning Standards

<http://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Early%20Childhood/Docs/14EarlyLearningStandards.pdf>

3. What are the Montana Content Standards, and how are they organized?

Montana has adopted the Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. These standards embrace literacy as everyone's work.

The Montana Content Standards include standards that set requirements for English Language Arts as well as literacy in the content areas. "Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, so too must the Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines" (Montana Content Standards, p.3).

The Montana Content Standards provide guidance and a clear structure as to which concepts and skills students are to acquire at each grade level. The shifts of the Montana Content Standards for ELA and literacy have been prioritized as:

- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from both literary and informational text.
- Regular practice with complex text and its academic language.

The Montana Content Standards are (1) research and evidence-based, (2) align with college and work expectations, and (3) rigorous, and internationally benchmarked. The information and research base that is the foundation for this section of the MLP relate directly to the MELS, the Montana Content Standards, and the stages of Montana Content Standards implementation.

The Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy reflect the constitutional mandate that all educators must provide instruction, including the distinct and unique heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner. The essential understandings are incorporated in the Montana Content Standards.

The Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy are the underpinning of the Montana

Literacy Plan and address discreet skills, strategies, and tasks within each of the distinct strands. Each strand is headed by a strand-specific set of college and career readiness anchor standards. Grade-specific standards correspond to the anchor standards.

Montana Content Standards Strands

- Reading: Foundational Skills (K-5)
- Reading: Literature
- Reading: Informational Text
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening Language

The Montana Content Standards are comprised of three main sections: a comprehensive K-5 section and two content area-specific sections for Grades 6-12, one for ELA and one for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

For additional information, go to the Montana Content Standards document. <http://montanateach.org/resources/montana-content-standards-for-english-language-arts-and-literacy-k-12/>

The following provides an overview of the strands and topics of the Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

Strands & Topics	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9-10	11-12
College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language											
Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-2)											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print Concepts • Phonological Awareness 											
Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics and Word Recognition • Fluency 											
Reading Standards: Literature Reading Standards: Informational Text											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Ideas and Details • Craft and Structure • Integration of Knowledge and Ideas • Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 											
Writing Standards											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Types and Purposes • Production and Distribution of Writing • Research to Build and Present Knowledge • Range of Writing 											
Speaking and Listening Standards											
Comprehension and Collaboration Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas											
Language Standards											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventions of Standard English • Knowledge of Language • Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 											

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for Reading and Writing

Reading Standards: Literature Reading Standards: Informational Text

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Writing Standards

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

The Montana Content Standards emphasize balancing literature and informational text. The emphasis becomes heavier on informational text as students work through the expectations of the standards in the eleventh through twelfth grade-bands. The Montana Content Standards expect that students are exposed and engaged in 30 percent literature and 70 percent informational text by Grade 12. The Montana Content Standards also has a strong emphasis on text complexity. Standard 10 defines a staircase of increasing complexity across the grade levels as students are exposed to complex text utilizing skills that refer to evidence and analyze details of the text. Finally, the standards focus on K-12 writing within three text types: persuasive, informational/explanatory, and narrative. The Montana Content Standards writing standards place a special emphasis on argumentative writing. Finally, vocabulary acquisition by using the three-tier system of words is emphasized in the language strand of the standards.

4. Why is it important that the Birth through Grade 12 Continuum be understood by all educators?

The Birth through Grade 12 Continuum reflects the progression for literacy development from the earliest developmental skills of communication and language in the Montana Early Learning Standards to the Montana Content Standards: foundational skills for reading and the four strands of the Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. This at-a-glance illustration represents the stages and skills of the content standards and when the skills are expected to develop. The continuum can be helpful in assessing the stage of literacy development for an individual learner to plan and/or support effective literacy instruction. All stakeholders are encouraged to read this section to see how the big picture for literacy develops.

5. How does a birth to age 5 and kindergarten through Grade 5 continuum support educators in improving school readiness?

Birth through Age 5 Continuum

The Birth through Age 5 Continuum chart illustrates a continuum of behaviors expected in children from birth to age 5 in the areas of communication, language development, and literacy. While these developmental continuum benchmarks are generally associated with chronological development, literacy development is an individual accomplishment. Exposure and experience with language within the earliest years of life (birth to age 3) has been shown to be a major factor that contributes to school readiness. It is important to note that children progress through the stages at individual rates. At the most advanced levels of the continuum, children are considered ready for the skills they will encounter in kindergarten and beyond. Starting school “ready” and building early literacy skills helps children to reach their potential.

Kindergarten through Grade 5 Continuum

The Kindergarten through Grade 5 Continuum is made up of the Montana College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language topics and skills. As the topics

span the grade levels, the skills within the topics advance in difficulty. Each CCR Anchor Standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader CCR statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations. In kindergarten-Grade 5, the focus of the literacy continuum is based in the reading standards: foundational skills. These standards are directed toward fostering students' understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions of the English writing system. These foundational skills are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines. Children are learning to read in order to read to learn in the later grades (Common Core State Standards Initiative).

6. How does a Grade 6 through Grades 8 and a Grade 9 through Grade 12 support educators with programs and systems to improving college and career readiness?

Grade 6 through Grade 8 Continuum

The Grade 6 through Grade 8 Continuum is made up of the CCR Anchor Standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language as well as CCR Anchor Standards Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects topics and skills. As the topics span the grade levels, the skills within the topics advance in difficulty.

Each CCR Anchor Standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader CCR statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations. The standards establish guidelines for English language arts (ELA) as well as for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Because students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, the standards promote the literacy skills and concepts required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines. The CCR Anchor



Standards form the backbone of the ELA/literacy standards by articulating core knowledge and skills, while grade-specific standards provide additional specificity. Beginning in Grade 6, the literacy standards allow educators of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to use their content area expertise to help students meet the challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. It is important to note that the Grade 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are meant to supplement content standards in those areas, not replace them. (Common Core State Standards Initiative).

Grade 9 through Grade 12 Continuum

The Grade 9 through Grade 12 Continuum is made up of the CCR Anchor Standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language as well as CCR Anchor Standards Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects topics and skills. As the topics span the grade levels, the skills within the topics advance in difficulty. Each CCR Anchor Standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader CCR statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations. It is important to note that the Grades 6-12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are meant to supplement content standards in those areas--not replace them--through opportunities to use cogent reasoning and evidence collection skills that are essential for success in college, career, and life. (Common Core State Standards Initiative)

7. What are possible activities to improve transitions across the Birth through Grade 12 Continuum?

The OPI recognizes that there are four critical transitional times within the span of a student's education that must be supported through a variety of programs, models, and evidence-based practices that include the purposeful engagement of parents and families in a framework that is both trauma-informed and culturally responsive.

The OPI supports the vertical alignment of Curriculum Standards through the Continuums found in the appendices. When curriculum and instruction is aligned, pre-k through Grade 12, students are able to better transition from one grade level to the next with the assurance that the skills and knowledge acquired at each grade level provides a scaffold for the next one. The following activities can also assist educators in supporting children from birth through grade Grade 12 as they transition among educational systems.

Birth through Grade 12 transition activities
Relationships and connections between families, schools, communities, and children are developed to help with the transition process.
Resources and plans are differentiated for families and additional plans are made for at-risk populations (ELL, special needs, etc).
Parents know how and why to advocate for their child during the transition process.
Community teams (School Readiness, Community Coalitions, Graduation Matters Montana, etc.) collaborate to develop a shared understanding of the skills/indicators most critical to kindergarten success. What elementary schools need to best support very young children transition practices presently being used in the community with success areas around transitions that need improvement.
Current, relevant, and high-quality data from multiple sources is used to identify the successful transition practices that are presently being used within the community to identify successful practices and determine any areas that might need improvement.
A comprehensive plan is developed to expand and strengthen partnerships across early learning programs/feeder schools.
Common transition forms and processes are established and shared with community stakeholders.
Classroom observations are conducted between levels (by teachers and students).

Transition activities for transition from local licensed provider to preschool and preschool to kindergarten

The first critical transition occurs when children move from preschool settings and into a regular education program in an elementary school. Many LEAs in Montana are implementing the Kindergarten Transition Tool developed by the Montana Preschool Development Grant and Parent Teacher Home Visiting model in kindergarten programs to create positive first relationships between schools and families.

Local licensed provider to preschool transition activities
Provide consistent and regular contact with families of preschoolers (via telephone or face face-to to-face) to begin sharing information about the child, their routines, and their schools setting.
Hold family meetings prior to the beginning of preschool to discuss teacher expectations.
Help parents understand their child's progress.
Prepare and disseminate home-learning activities, including providing summer book lists and other literacy activities for the summer months prior to kindergarten entry.
Help parents understand practices they can use to effectively provide early language, emotional, and so- cial support for their children during their transition to preschool.
Assist parents in the ongoing communication with teachers and other preschool personnel so that parents can participate in decisions related to their children's preschool experience.

Preschool to kindergarten transition activities
Develop a well-coordinated kindergarten transition plan to reflect the community's shared values of school readiness.
Provide consistent and regular contact with families of preschoolers (via telephone or face face-to to-face) to begin sharing information about the child, their routines, and their schools setting.
Hold family meetings prior to the beginning of kindergarten to discuss teacher expectations.
Provide contact opportunities with the children themselves to begin to developing a relationship prior to school entry.
Invite children and/or families to visit the kindergarten in the spring of the child's preschool year.
Prepare and disseminate home-learning activities, including providing summer book lists and other literacy activities for the summer months prior to kindergarten entry.
Partner with local parent-teacher associations to inform parents how they can be involved in their child's kindergarten setting and connect new families with families currently enrolled in the school.
Disseminate information to parents on the transition to kindergarten, including registration guidelines.
Conduct home visits before and after children transition to kindergarten.
Facilitate early registration for kindergarten so that families have time to prepare children for their new setting.

Transition activities for transition from elementary to middle school

The second critical transition period for students and families is the move from the elementary school to the middle school. Students may be overwhelmed by an educational model where students move through many different classrooms during the school day and, requiring them to form relationships with many adults, adjust to a variety of teaching styles and methods, and navigate a wide array of peer relationships. This is

a stark contrast from the more insular elementary model where students spend their day with the same teacher and group of peers.

Both the sending elementary school and the receiving middle school must engage in meaningful two-way communication with parents and families. Such communication must include information regarding the school's curriculum, assessments, and student achievement.

Elementary to middle school transition activities
Develop family communications in the form of, but not limited to including flyers, newspapers, announcements, phone calls, emails, social media message, and other web resources.
Develop a middle school transition team to guide and develop activities that help students, families, and communities support a successful transition process. A transition team also looks at policies and procedures as well as funding and resources for transition activities.
Create an annual transition plan and calendar that engages each of the partners.
Recruit volunteers to assist with middle school transition events and activities.
Conduct a career survey. School staff will conduct a survey of students in their school or grade level, depending on the size of the school, to determine career interests and create a graph to display their findings.
Provide career exposure. Schools develop opportunities to showcase various career options and share real life job applications through career day assemblies or classroom lessons.
Provide understanding of the relationship of academics and personal qualities to the world of work. Students participate in a lesson related to academic goal setting, college and career readiness, and self-awareness.
Train and implement ambassadors to visit elementary schools.
Provide time for students to discuss the transition that involves all students sitting in a circle to explore current issues or concerns regarding middle school transition or similar topics.

Transition activities for transition from middle school to high school

The third critical transition period for students and families is the move from middle school to high school. Many LEAs only provide educational services for students in Grades K-8. The transition to the high school often means that students will attend classes in another town at a regional or county high school serving a large geographic area. Students from small schools, many of whom have attended a one-room school house for their K-8 careers, may find themselves overwhelmed and lost in a large building with several hundred peers. School counselors play a critical role in smoothing this transition through events that focus on introducing students and families to the expectations of high school, new academic skills that may be required, and state and local requirements for graduation and college enrollment or career training.

Middle school to high school transition activities
Invite middle level students to attend designated high school sporting events, plays, or concerts, and reserve seats for them.
Schedule a speaker/program that would be of interest to both middle level students as well as current high school students, and invite the upcoming students to attend.
Assign long-term projects for pairs or small groups from both schools. Assign a project that pairs small groups of eighth graders with high school student groups.
Organize joint extra-curricular opportunities for middle level and high school students such as club projects or service learning opportunities.
Organize a transition team. The transition process starts during the eighth-grade year and continues throughout the entire ninth-grade year. A multi-level transition team composed of representatives from the middle and high school levels should consider this entire time while planning supports and interventions.

Transition activities for high school to college, career, and community

The final transition, and the one that communities tend to focus on is the transition from the public-school system into the world of higher education, career opportunities, and citizenship in the local, state, and national community. Montana views itself as “a small town with very long streets.” Each of our students is a member of our the greater community, and the OPI feels a strong sense of duty to support LEAs in providing each child and family with the resources to reach their individual goals. As with each transition, families are key partners and must be provided with the resources necessary to assist their students in making informed choices about post-secondary options.

High school to college and career transition activities

Develop a counseling team. In most high schools, the number of students assigned to a counselor often limits the time a counselor can work with an individual student. The purpose of developing a counseling team, referred to as transition counselors, is to increase the amount of individual time each student receives. Transition counselors could include student peers, teachers, and other district and school staff, as well as parents and community volunteers.

Design and deliver courses that provide:

- Rigor: While in high school, students take and complete a rigorous curriculum of college-preparatory courses.
- Relevance: High school course content and delivery are made relevant to students’ lives, with clear applications for how high school work is connected to postsecondary education and career opportunities.
- Realistic expectations: Accurate and timely information is communicated to students and families regarding expected knowledge, performance standards, attitudes, and behaviors that students will need in order to be successful in college.
- Support for transitions: Secondary and postsecondary partners create bridge programs and activities that provide both academic and non-academic support during the transition period.
- Articulated pathways: Secondary and postsecondary partners collaborate to provide integrated and articulated programs to facilitate student transitions.

Additional Resources on Transitions

- Effective Practices for Promoting the Transition of High School Students to College; A Review of Literature with Implication for California Community College Practitioners (January 2009)
- Montana Transition Tool
- The Transition to Kindergarten: A Review of Current Research and Promoting Practices to Involve Families (Bohen-Baker, 2002)
- Middle School Matters: A Guide for Georgia Schools on Middle School Transitions
- Nevada State Literacy Plan
- An evidence-based briefing paper: Texas Comprehensive Center (2010)
- Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation (2015) NAP. edu/10766

8.What are the SBAC claims, and how can educators use them to improve teaching and learning?

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is the computer adaptive standardized test that Montana has selected to test all students third through eighth grade. The teacher-created test and processes focus on claims, targets, and standards. The consortium has been transparent and made these available on the Smarter Balanced website. The development and design claim section of the SBAC can be as lengthy as 90 pages and go into detail about how, what, and why these questions were compiled.

Quick claims were created to summarize these lengthy pieces for academic leaders and educators to have at their fingertips. There are four claims per grade level. They each address the targets, depth of knowledge, question types, and standards for each grade band and are followed by sample questions students may encounter on the assessment. These quick claims can be used to align materials and programs to grade-level content standards, create pacing guides to address content and standards, and for vertical alignment of content across grade levels.

Access and download SBAC Quick Claims for Grades



Sample SBAC Quick Claim ELA Grade 5 Claim 1

Concepts and Procedures: Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Question Type: Multiple Choice, single correct response (MC); Multiple Choice, multiple correct response (MS); Evidence-based Select Response, two-part multiple choice response (EBSR); Hot Text, select text (ST); Short Text, constructed response (WR)

Content Domains

Key Details: (DOK 1/2) Target 1: Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided. Target 8: Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Standards: RL-1, RI-1, RI-7

Central Ideas: (DOK 2/3) Target 2: Identify or determine a theme or central idea from details in the text, or summarize the text. Target 9: Identify or determine a main idea and the key details that support it, or summarize key details using evidence from the text.

Standards: RL-1, RL-2, RI-1, RI-2

Reasoning and Evidence: (DOK 3) Target 4: Make an inference or draw a conclusion about a text or make inferences or draw conclusions to compare texts (e.g., characters, setting, events, point of view, themes, and topics) and use supporting evidence as justification/explanation. Target 11: Make an inference or draw a conclusion about a text or make inferences or draw conclusions to compare texts (e.g., relationships or interactions between individuals, events, ideas, or concepts; points of view; use of information from multiple print; reasoning and evidence to support points), and use supporting evidence as justification/explanation.

Standards: RL-1, RL-3, RL-6, RL-9, RI-1, RI-3, RI-6, RI-7, RI-8, RI-9

Analysis Within or Across Text: (DOK 3/4) Target 5: Compare and explain relationships among literary elements (e.g., characters, setting, and events) within or across texts, or describe the narrator or speakers' point of view within or across texts. Target 12: Interpret how information is presented within or across texts (e.g., individuals, events, ideas, concepts), or determine how the information reveals the author's point of view.

Standards: RL-1, RL-3, RL-6, RI-1, RI-3, RI-6

9. What evidence-based practices and resources are available to support the understanding and implementation of standards and curriculum?

"The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide's panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices."

- *Strong* evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.
- *Moderate* evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.
- *Minimal* evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Access the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

Recommendations

- Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership.
- Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.
- Provide visible improvements early in the turnaround process (quick wins).
- Build a committed staff.
- Checklist.

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>

Recommendations

- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).

- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes. (Tier 2).
- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist.

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Recommendations

- Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
- Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.
- Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.
- Checklist

Additional Resources

Achieve the Core www.achievethecore.org

The Montana Content Standards <http://montanateach.org/resources/montana-content-standards-for-english-language-arts-and-literacy-k-12/>

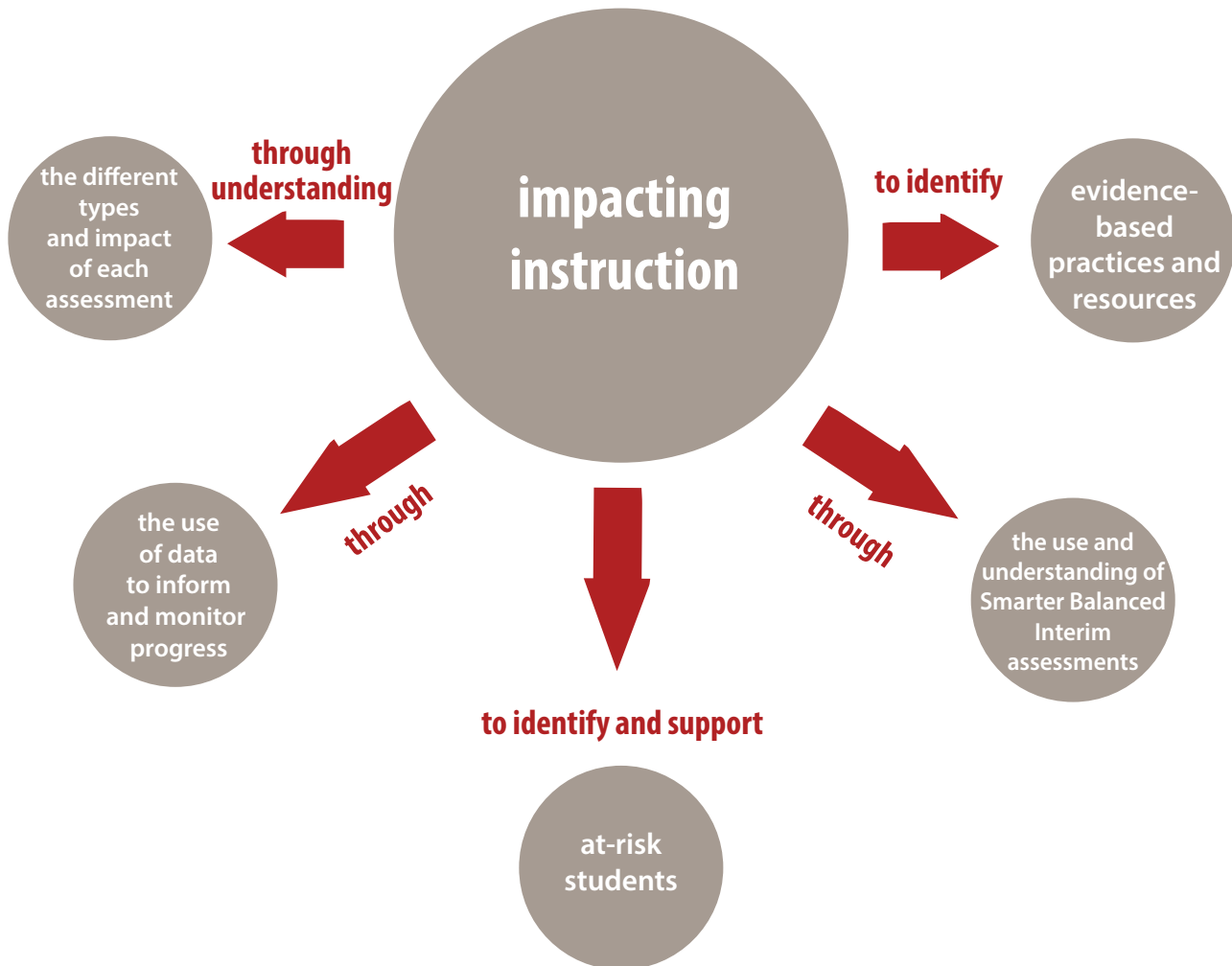
The Montana Early Learning Standards, 2014

<http://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Early%20Childhood/Docs/14EarlyLearningStandards.pdf>

Guskey, T. R., & Bailey, J. M. (2010). Developing Standards-Based Report Cards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

ASSESSMENT AND DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING


is about



Comprehensive Literacy Instruction—Assessment and Data-Driven Decision Making

Essential Questions

1. What does the term assessment mean, and how do the different types impact comprehensive literacy instruction?
2. How is data used to inform instruction and monitor progress of all students, particularly at-risk students?
3. How can the Smarter Balanced Assessments and resources inform and support districts, schools, and educators?
4. What are the evidence-based practices and resources for assessment in literacy?



At a Glance:
Assessment is identified as a key component for teaching and learning. This section will identify the various types of assessments, the value they bring to stakeholders, and the importance of purposeful assessments. Resources will be identified that accompany various assessments to assist schools and educators connect assessment results to make decisions about the content area focus and to ultimately improve teaching and learning for all students.

1.What does the term *assessment* mean, and how do the different types impact comprehensive literacy instruction?

Assessment is often categorized as either formative or summative depending on the intended use of the information collected. A comprehensive assessment system is a balance of formative (informal) and summative (formal) assessment procedures that indicate teacher effectiveness and identifies a student’s level of mastery of critical instructional standards. Assessment tools and procedures need to be aligned to the Montana State Standards. These standards provide a consistent and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. Using the results of varied assessments, academic leaders, educators, and families are prepared to meet the learning needs of each student. There are four types of assessment to consider: screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome. These four types of assessments fall under the two major areas of assessment: formative and summative (Shanahan, 2017). The following table identifies and lists the characteristics of each assessment type.

Screening	Outcome Summative	Formative	Diagnostic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Assessments of learning•Quick assessments for all students•Determines level of mastery of age or grade level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Assessments of learning•Measures achievement of the curriculum and Montana Content Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Assessments of learning•Formal and informal assessments•Guide current and ongoing instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Assessments of learning•Assessments administered to students at-risk for failure•Provide in-depth information for instructional needs

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments, which are periodic check-ins throughout a lesson or unit, are used to assess where students are in their learning so that educators and students can determine the next instructional steps (Boaler, 2016). The results of formative assessments are used to adjust instruction to meet individual and group needs on a continuous basis. Informal assessments provide data from classroom activities, observations, conferencing, student projects, and work samples where formative assessment provides educators with answers to many questions about instruction and individual student mastery. Formative assessment answers questions for the educator, such as:

- What are the students understanding?
- How does the information need to be clarified?
- How did the instruction focus on the material intended?
- How should instruction be modified?
- How should the students be grouped?
- What do I need to teach/reteach in the next lesson?

Formative assessments can be done in many ways in a classroom. These are just a few examples. For more ideas, visit Jo Boaler's Youcubed webpage: <https://www.youcubed.org/resources/assessment-for-learning/> or *Checking for Understanding by Fisher and Frey*.

Examples of Quick Checks for Understanding (Youcubed, 2017)

- Thumbs up, middle, or down.
- Whiteboards for students to show answers.
- Remote clickers, pickers, google forms, or polleverywhere.com.
- Exit tickets with sentence starters or a reflection of the lesson.
- Traffic light or red card/green card.
- Doodle (students draw a visual/diagram of the lesson).

Formative assessment can also include these three items

Screening involves all students and is usually done at set benchmark points, such as the beginning and middle of the school year or the end of a unit of study. Screenings determine level of mastery of grade-level standards.

Progress Monitoring assessments should be administered as part of a regular instructional routine: weekly, biweekly, or monthly, depending on content and student need. Many textbooks come with a progress monitoring tool. If assessing regularly, using the same tool provides more reliability than if the assessment tool is switched throughout the year. Various systems are available online or through numerous programs a school can purchase.

Diagnostic Assessments help educators plan instruction by providing in-depth information about students' skills and instructional needs. Diagnostic assessments are individually administered to students at-risk for

failure and provide specific information needed to guide appropriate instruction.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments are outcome or accountability assessments. They are used to measure students' overall learning on course outcomes based on standards and curriculum. Summative assessments can be administered at the end of units, midterms, and/or at the end of a course. These assessments are designed to judge the extent of students' learning of the material in a course for grading, certification, evaluation of progress, or researching the effectiveness of a curriculum (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971, p. 117). Formal assessments provide data using standardized tests or procedures under controlled conditions.

Summative Assessments are NOT:

- Checks for understanding.
- A diagnostic for struggling students.
- Used to guide instruction.

Summative Assessments can be used to determine:

- Mastery of a unit or course's content.
- Effectiveness of curriculum.
- Effectiveness of teaching strategies.
- Strengths and weaknesses within the unit or course.

Screening Assessments

Screening assessments are typically done at the beginning of a school year or before a unit of study. This assessment is focused on specific measures that determine the preparedness of a student and their readiness to study a topic. Screening can also provide data that identifies a possible learning gap with students. These types of assessments can be used to determine if a student needs a diagnostic assessment for placement in a specific class, learning group, or intervention program. Screening assessments that are commonly used in Montana are Istation, DIBELS, AIMSweb, NWEA MAPs, STAR Reading, and locally prepared assessments. Montana now has access to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Blocks for English Language Arts/Literacy that can be used as a screener as the assessment blocks align to the Montana Content Standards.

Diagnostic Assessments

Diagnostic assessments are used to determine students' strengths and weaknesses in specific areas of learning. While screening identifies a learning gap, the diagnostic testing identifies for educators exactly what additional instruction needs to take place for a student or group of students. Student referral to specialized programs is done through diagnostic testing. Research has shown that diagnostic testing has had a positive impact on student achievement in literacy (Shanahan, 2017). This allows for educators to teach to the strengths of each student while improving the weaknesses, to give all students access to the content.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring involves frequent measurement to determine whether students are making adequate progress toward mastery of targeted deficiencies that were identified in the screening assessment. Progress monitoring is a Response to Intervention (RtI) tool. The frequency to which progress monitoring takes place should be determined by the skill that is being taught and time it will take for mastery. This type of monitoring allows for the educator to take personal inventory of instructional strategies and adjust during instruction to ensure the needs of the student are being met along the way.

Outcome Assessments (Accountability)

Outcome or accountability assessments are the summative tests that are used to measure student's overall achievement of the curriculum and standards. They are designed to judge the extent of students' learning of the material in a course for grading, certification, evaluation of progress, or for researching the effectiveness of a curriculum. Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in third through eighth grade and American College Testing (ACT) in the eleventh grade are the two most commonly used in Montana. The idea behind accountability testing is to show where improvements in curriculum, instruction, and strategies could improve achievement at the state, district, and school levels. SBAC is a system that provides resources for using the test results to improve instruction and student learning outcomes. This can be a powerful resource when used in conjunction with the data the assessment provides, classroom instruction, and identified student needs. Below are the resources provided by SBAC to impact instruction and learning.

The Digital Library

The digital library is an online collection of formative assessment tools and resources for high quality instruction and learning. These resources are aligned with the Montana Content Standards and will assist educators with the purposeful implementation and dissemination of formative assessments.

Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)

The SBAC, which can be used as a formative assessment, are optional assessments that educators can use to check on student's progress throughout the year. This assessment gives the educator content and skill-level data that can be used to inform their instruction. The interim assessments can be used by educators as much or as little as needed and at different points during the school year to check mastery of a specific content. Interim assessments allow educators to talk to their students about their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for becoming independent owners of their learning outcomes. A benefit is the exposure and practice for students on the platform and questions associated with this computerized assessment. Educators can also use the interim assessments as pretests and post-tests for a specific content area. The immediate results of the assessment will help guide instruction to address content. Districts can use interim assessment, and the student data that comes from them, to help plan and develop professional development for their educators. The table below lists available assessments for each grade band for the IABs.

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks Available by Grade for English Language Arts/Literacy		
Grades 3-7	Grades 8	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading Literary Texts• Read Informational Texts• Brief Writes• Revision*• Language and Vocabulary Use• Editing*• Listen/Interpret• Research**• Performance Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Literary Texts• Read Informational Texts• Brief Writes• Edit/Revise***• Listen/Interpret• Research**• Performance Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Literary Texts• Read Informational Texts• Brief Writes• Revision*• Language and Vocabulary Use• Editing• Listen/Interpret• Research**• Performance Task

2. How is data used to inform instruction and monitor progress of all students, particularly at-risk students?

Data-Driven Decision Making

Data-driven decision making refers to the process by which districts, schools, and educators use student data to determine the direction that curriculum, instruction, strategies, and professional development should take

and to change the practices that are not promoting positive student achievement.

Data-driven decision making is about:

- Collecting appropriate data.
- Analyzing that data in a meaningful fashion.
- Getting the data into the hands of the people who need it.
- Using the data to increase school efficiencies and improve student achievement.
- Communicating data-driven decisions to key stakeholders (Messelt, 2004).

The effective use of data in decision making begins with the academic leaders. Academic leaders should provide opportunity and means for all stakeholders to collect and store data. Educators also need to be an active part of data discussions and decisions. Academic leaders and educators can help by:

1. Using Student Data to Inform Instruction

Research states that having processes and procedures in place that involve student's ownership of their data can be a motivating factor. This can be done through student goal setting. Students need to be taught how to set measurable goals based on their data aligned to specific outcomes, and then to re-evaluate those goals as they work toward the desired level of attainment. In order for goal setting to be fully beneficial to all parties, the criteria of each assessment needs to be clearly explained to the students as well as the expectations set forth by the district, school, educator, and the student. Once completed, feedback should be provided to the student in a timely and constructive manner. Educators can take this opportunity to use the data to inform instruction on a class and individual level. Additional instruction may be necessary for the whole class or more narrowed instruction to address just a few students. By evaluating class and student goals, the educator can help to refocus instruction where necessary. At the student level, formative as well as summative assessments can be tracked and recorded for progress toward a goal. Keep in mind that formative data is informal and may not be compared across school or districts, but can help in creating a student goal and monitoring progress toward that goal. Formative assessment will also help educators to modify instructional practices while the current unit or section is still underway (NAESP, 2017).

2. Using Assessment Data Effectively (School-wide)

"An excellent Literacy program ensures that assessment is an integral part of instruction, provides evidence of proficiency with important Literacy content and practices, includes a variety of strategies and data sources, and informs feedback to students, instructional decisions and program improvements" (NCTM, 2014).

Data can be used for helping to plan professional development, identifying students' needs, identifying and correcting gaps in the curriculum, improving involvement of parents in student learning, assigning students to classes or groups, designing lessons to ensure student improvement, and helping educators identify when they may need to strengthen their own content knowledge and teaching skills (Improving Schools with Data, The importance of Data Based Decision Making, Sagepub.com). https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/25562_1204_Goldring___Ch_1_excerpt.pdf

To effectively use assessment data, academic leaders need to have regularly scheduled data analysis discussions that inform ongoing learning/instruction. These discussions may take place among school leadership teams, grade-level teams, and department or content teams. Through collaboration, educators share effective practices, develop common expectations, and work toward meeting the most pressing instructional needs.

3. Making Data Part of the Ongoing Cycle of Instructional Improvement

To maximize the benefits of student achievement, educators engage in an ongoing problem-solving cycle in which multiple data sources inform instructional decisions. Both educators and students benefit when routine and systemic data is collected and interpreted collaboratively in grade-level or department-specific teams. Through collaboration, educators share effective practices, develop common expectations, and work toward meeting the most pressing instructional needs. The following steps are an example of how to make data a part of your ongoing cycle.

Step 1: Define the problem or goal by determining the difference between what is expected and what is occurring. Ask, “What specifically do we want students to know and be able to do when compared to what they do know and can do?” When engaged in problem solving at the individual student level, the team should strive for accuracy by asking, “What exactly is the problem?”

Step 2: Analyze the problem using data to determine why the issue is occurring. Generate hypotheses (reasons why students are not meeting performance goals) founded in evidence-based content area knowledge, alterable variables, and instructionally relevant domains.

Collect and prepare a variety of data about student learning. Everything educators do in the classroom is part of the data that paints the picture of who the students are, what they understand, and with what they struggle. The data collected in the classroom comes from a variety of sources including standardized tests (PSAT, ACT, STAR Reading), computer adaptive tests (MAP, Accuplacer), district testing, and state testing (SBAC, ACT).

Link validated hypotheses to instruction/intervention so that hypotheses will lead to evidence-based instructional decisions. Ask, “Why is/are the desired goal(s) not occurring? What are the barriers to the student(s) doing and knowing what is expected?” Design or select instruction to directly address those barriers.

Step 3: Develop and implement a plan driven by the results of the team’s problem analysis by establishing a performance goal for the group of students or the individual student and developing an intervention plan to achieve the goal. Then, delineate how the student’s or group of students’ progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be supported. Ask, “What are we going to do?”

Step 4: Measure response to instruction/interventions by using data gathered from progress monitoring at agreed-upon intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan based on the student’s or group of students’ response to the intervention. Progress-monitoring data should directly reflect the targeted skill(s). Ask, “Is it working? If not, how will the instruction/intervention plan be adjusted to better support the student’s or group of students’ progress?” Team discussion centers on how to maintain or better enable learning for the student(s) (Florida Center for Interactive Media, 2015)

(<http://www.florida-rti.org/floridaMTSS/psp.htm>).

A comprehensive assessment system requires a school-level management plan that assesses the effectiveness and quality of instructional programs to guide improvement. The plan should include a description of the program being evaluated, evaluation questions or objectives, data sources, data gathering methods, and data analysis methods. Program strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for the future should result from the assessments.

Moving away from assessment as a final grading tool and toward an effective strategy in the classroom is the key to success for students. Using formative assessment as a strategy to improve instruction and learning is more cost effective than many other school improvement processes of the past (NCTM, 2014).

3.How can the Smarter Balanced Assessments and resources inform and support districts, schools, and educators?

To help achieve the goal that all students leave high school prepared for college and careers, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) joined the SBAC, a 31-state organization charged with developing an assessment system for the Montana Content Standards in English Language Arts, Literacy ,and Mathematics.

The SBAC system

- Aligns with the Montana Content Standards.
- Focuses on supporting educators’ instructional practice and implementation of new standards.
- Provides a comprehensive reporting system on classroom practices and student progress for educators, academic leaders, students, and parents.
- Ensures every student can show what they know and can do to meet new standards.
- Offers classroom formative assessment processes and tools, as well as computer adaptive interim and summative assessments.

The Smarter Balanced assessment is an online, computer adaptive assessment in English Language Arts, Literacy, and Mathematics that is aligned to the Montana Content Standards. The summative SBAC assessments are required for all students in Grades 3-10 and occur near the end of the school year. The results are collected by the OPI to provide a comprehensive set of data on the student achievement at the school, district, and state level. Interim assessments are available but not required.

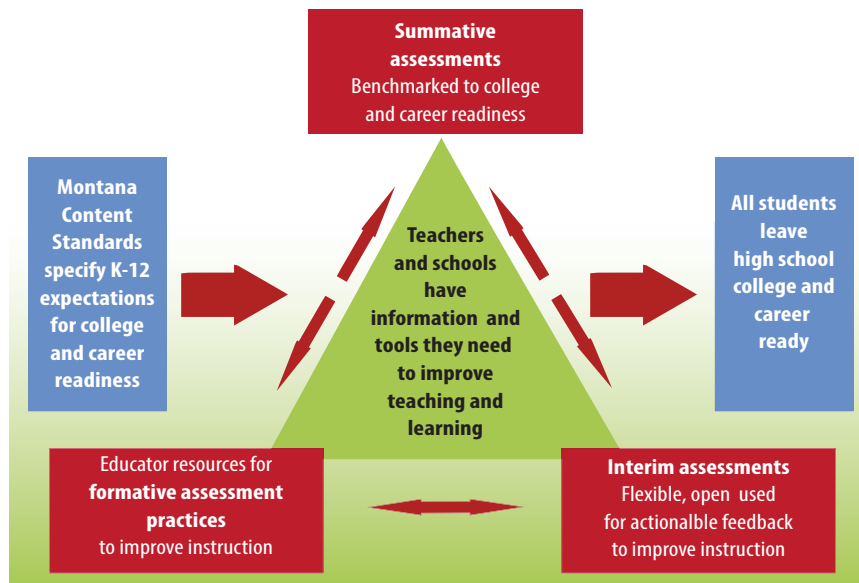
Additional, detailed information about the Smarter Balanced assessments can be found on the OPI website.

<http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Assessment-Accountability/Statewide-Testing/Smarter-Balanced/Smarter-Balanced-Interim-Assessments>

Below is a graphic explaining the Smarter Balanced Assessment System that includes the summative assessments, the formative assessments, and the interim assessments.

Montana Content Standards specify K-12 expectations for college and career readiness

SMARTER BALANCED A Balanced Assessment System



The two types of interim assessments that are available but not required are:

1. Interim Assessment Blocks

1. Small sets of related concepts.
2. Provide detailed information for instructional purposes.
3. Electronically scored, except for the performance tasks.

2. Interim Comprehensive Assessments

1. Use the same content as the required summative assessments.
2. Scoring and scaling are the same as the required summative assessments.
3. Electronically scored, except for the performance tasks.

4. What are the evidence-based practices and resources for assessment in literacy?

“The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide’s panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices.”

Strong evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.

Moderate evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.

Minimal evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

Recommendations:

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.
- Establish a clear vision for school-wide data use.
- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.
- Develop and maintain a district-wide data system.
- Checklist

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades (Institute of Education Science, 2009)

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf

The aim of the IES guide is to help elementary schools implement an RtI framework to ensure all students, regardless of skill level, learn to read. The target audience includes school academic leaders, instructional coaches, leadership teams, and instructional educators.

Recommendations

- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).
- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes (Tier 2).

- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist

Additional Resources

"Assessment for Learning." *Youcubed at Stanford University*. Stanford University, 20 Apr. 2016. Web. 26 June 2017. <https://www.youcubed.org/resources/assessment-for-learning/>

"Concordia University-Portland Online Education Programs." *Concordia University Portland Online*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 July 2017. <http://education.cu-portland.edu/>.

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"Screening Tools Chart." *Screening Tools Chart | Center on Response to Intervention*. Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes on Research, n.d. Web. 20 July 2017. <http://www.rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts/screening-tools-chart>.

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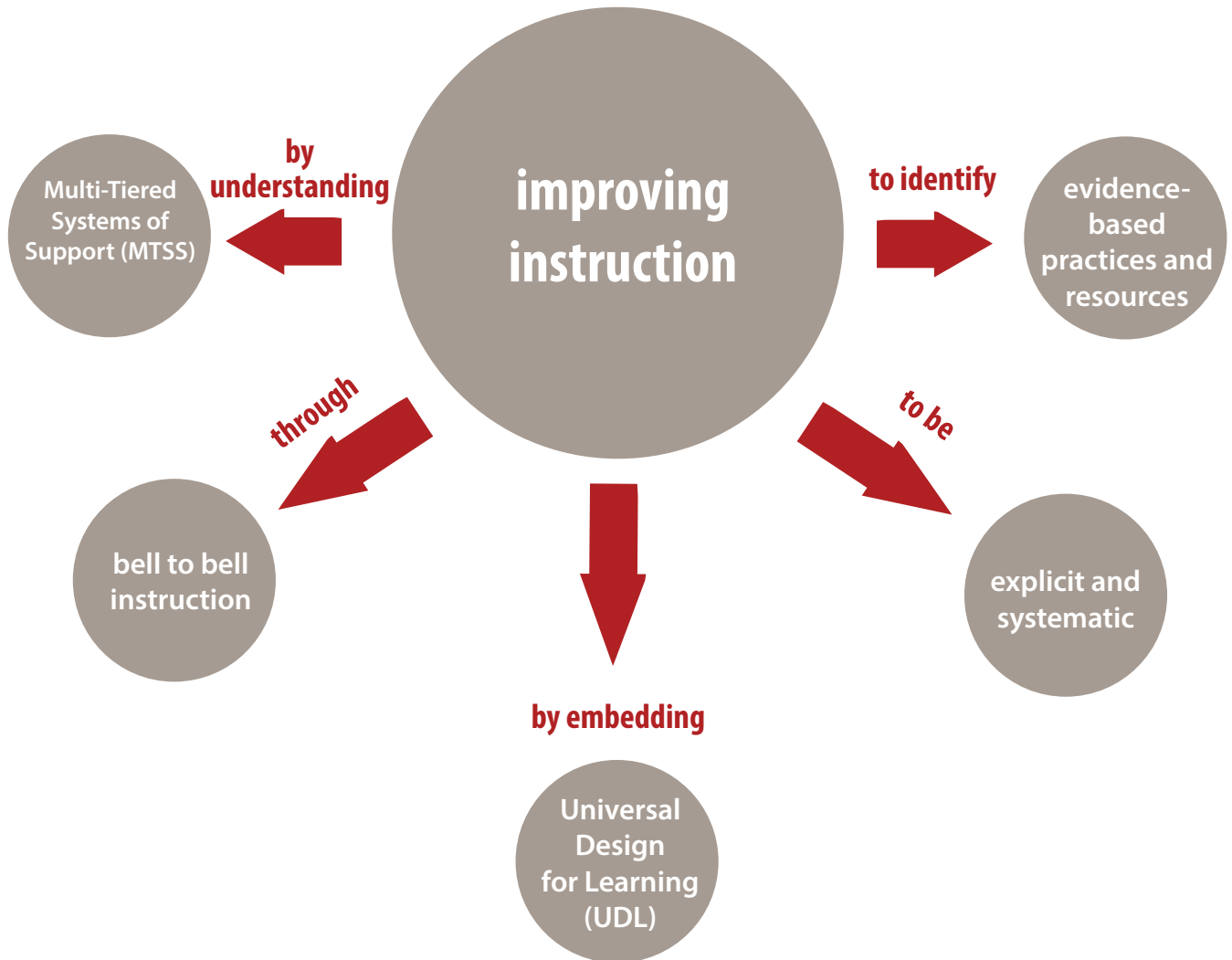
"The Importance of Data Based Decision Making." *Improving Schools with Data*. N.p.: Sage, n.d. 5-15. Web. 21 July 2017. https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/25562_1204_Goldring___Ch_1_excerpt.pdf.

"Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making." National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2011. Web. 14 July 2017.

"What Is Smarter Balanced?" *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 July 2017. <https://www.smarterbalanced.org/about>.

AMOUNT AND QUALITY

is about



Comprehensive Literacy Instruction—Amount and Quality of Instruction

Essential Questions

1. How does the understanding of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program impact literacy instruction?
2. How does the amount and quality of literacy instruction impact the effectiveness of MTSS?
3. How does Bell to Bell Instruction for all students impact the MTSS programs?
4. What is Universal Design for Learning (UD4L), and how is it implemented within MTSS program?
5. How does explicit and systematic literacy instruction impact MTSS programs?
6. What evidenced-based practices and resources are available to address MTSS?



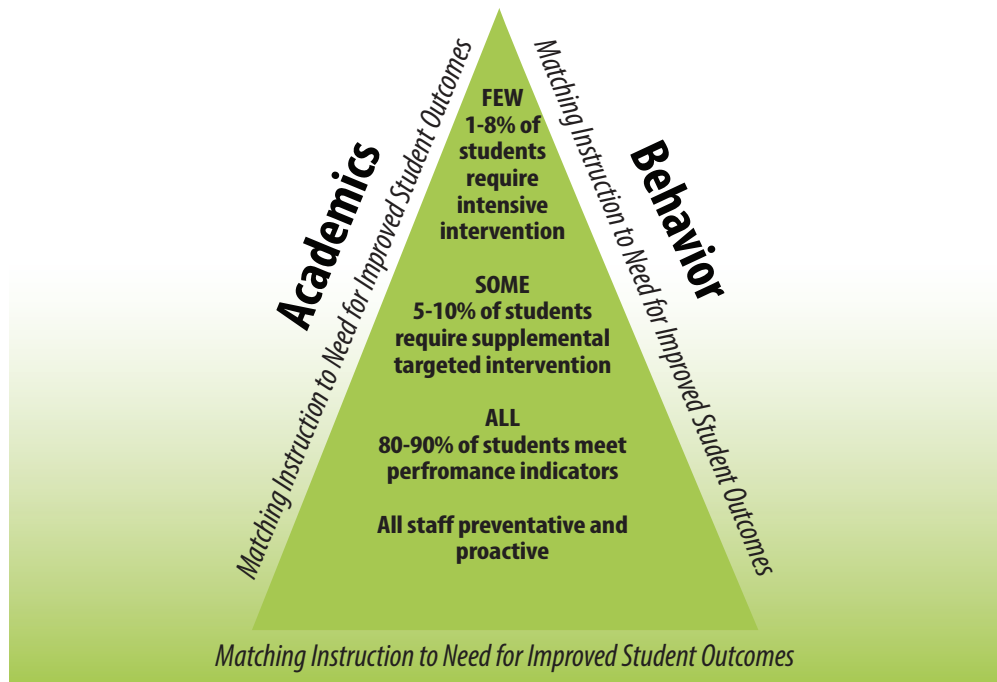
At a Glance:

Educators need to take full advantage of the time allotted for instruction to regularly and consistently deliver high-quality, effective instruction for all students. To do so takes purposeful planning that incorporates the appropriate Montana Content Standards and the district's or school's curriculum, as well as planning how to deliver that instruction. See the Standards and Curriculum section for information about what content instruction should occur across the grade levels and content area. Read this section to learn more about how that planned instruction is delivered.

1. How does the understanding of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) program impact literacy instruction?

Effective core classroom instruction should meet the needs of most students, but a system for providing high-quality intensive intervention is required to meet the needs of all students. Multi-Tiered System Support (MTSS) in Montana is intended to meet the needs of all learners. This system of support provides guidance for delivering comprehensive, quality instruction for all students. MTSS is a general education process that provides students with high-quality, research-based instruction and interventions that are matched to the specific needs of Tiers 1, 2, and 3 students.

Data is used to drive decisions about individual student's progress and to determine the appropriate instructional plan necessary for a student to achieve grade-level mastery. Intervention instruction focuses on one or more key areas of development, is clearly defined, implemented with fidelity, and is delivered daily to maximize instruction and intervention benefits. The goal of intervention is to respond quickly to the needs of students who may be at risk of not meeting standards and to get them back on track. Montana's MTSS framework is designed to provide evidence-based instruction and targeted interventions that lead to the success of all students. Below is a graphic representation of the Montana MTSS Framework.



Tiered Support

Tier 1 Core Classroom Instruction

All students should receive core classroom instruction utilizing evidence-based curriculum and methods to teach critical elements of subjects such as reading, mathematics, and written expression. Identified students will have a sufficient response to instruction by demonstrating content proficiency with effective Tier 1 instruction. Students who score at the higher level of Tier 1 should be receiving instruction that will continue to keep them challenged.

Tier 2 Strategic Targeted Instruction

Some students will require strategically targeted instruction in addition to core instruction. Strategic instruction addresses the specific needs of students who do not make sufficient progress in Tier 1. Tier 2 interventions are targeted to teach specific strategies and skills that are evidence-based and align with core classroom instruction. The duration of this instruction will vary based on student assessment results and progress monitoring data that measures student response to intervention.

Tier 3 Intensive Targeted Intervention

Intensive targeted instruction is provided to the most at-risk students who have not responded sufficiently to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. This percentage usually has severe skill difficulties and requires instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet individual needs. Intensive instruction should take place in addition to Tier 1 instruction; however, it may, in a few instances, replace core instruction. Students needing targeted Tier 3 interventions will have additional instruction daily (e.g., 90 minutes of Tier 1 instruction plus 60-90 minutes of intervention instruction). Tier 3 interventions may replace Tier 2 instruction and should be provided by the most qualified educator within a smaller group of students. The duration of this intervention is extended over a longer period of time and varies based on student assessment and progress monitoring data.

Student Movement through the Tiers

Student movement through the tiers is a fluid process based on student assessment data and collaborative team decisions about students' response to instruction. A goal of the process is to accelerate learning so that students exit intervention. At any time during this process, a student may be referred for consideration for a 504 Plan and/or special education evaluation.

2. How does the amount and quality of literacy instruction impact the effectiveness of MTSS?

Amount and quality are critical facets of literacy instruction. Amount of instruction refers to actual instructional time that occurs, not the specific time allotted for instruction. Quality of instruction is implemented through use of evidence-based practices that are effectively planned and delivered during lessons. This instruction is responsive to all, making it a critical piece of the MTSS. "High-quality instruction requires that educators understand ... how to identify their students' instructional needs, select appropriate materials, organize instruction to maximize learning, and differentiate instruction to meet individual needs" (Lane, 2014).

According to multiple research studies, effective instruction is "developmentally appropriate, explicit, evidence-based, and systematic" (NRP, 2000). Evidence-based instruction is consistent with the principles of scientific research as defined in Section 200(18) of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Developing the literacy skills of all learners through quality and time sensitive instruction is a shared responsibility among all educators including effective academic leaders, highly trained and supported educators, and home and community stakeholders. All play a role in protecting the value and quality of the time spent educating all students through the MTSS.

3. How does Bell to Bell Instruction for all students impact the MTSS programs?

"Every Day in Every Classroom" (Riddile, 2016) is about creating an instructional framework for purposeful reading, writing, and discussion across all content areas. Bell to bell instruction allows for the complete and intentional use of the allotted instructional time. Impressing upon the school climate, that learning begins when you enter a classroom, not when an educator begins teaching. This purposeful planning and student engagement, based on the appropriate Montana Content Standards, creates the climate and routines needed to support the implementation of MTSS programs.



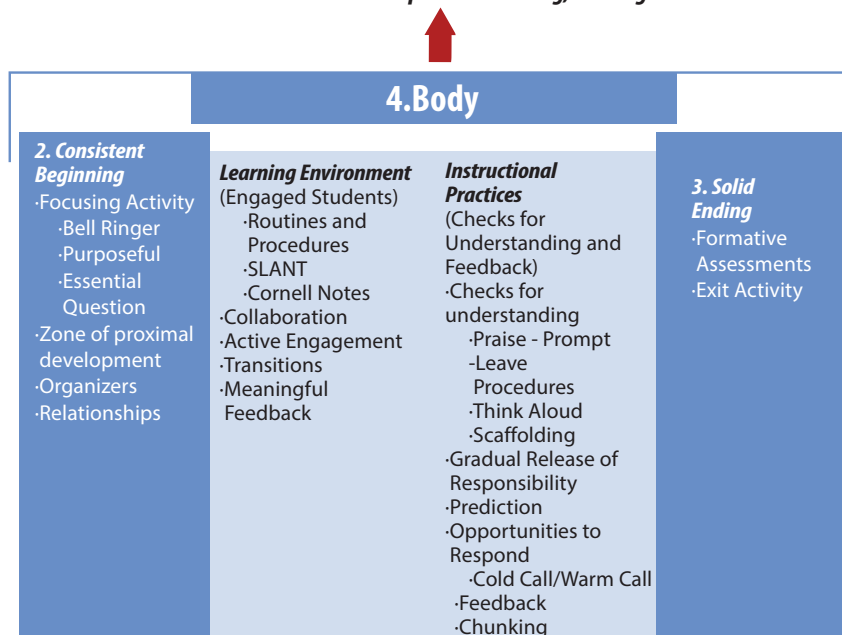
Four Essential Components of Bell to Bell Instruction

1. **Consistent Beginning** is a focusing activity that ensures learning begins when students enter the classroom. This activity can be differentiated to meet the needs of all students as identified in MTSS (start-up, bell ringer).
2. **Solid Ending** is an assessment or activity that closes the day's learning, assesses student understanding of daily objective or essential question, and drives planning for instruction of the next lesson. Educators will know the content mastery level of each student allowing for tiered work through MTSS in the following lessons (exit activity).
3. **Learning Environment** has students engaged in learning around the objectives or essential questions. This will involve routines, procedures, collaboration, transitions, and meaningful feedback. These components will allow for a safe environment that allows for MTSS programs to meet the needs of all learners.
4. **Instructional Practice** focuses on checks for understanding and feedback through praise-prompt-leave, think-alouds, gradual release of responsibility, predictions, cold call/warm call, feedback, and chunking.

Districts and/or individual schools must develop their own bell to bell framework that meets their identified non-negotiables and needs. All stakeholders must clearly understand the expectations of the bell to bell framework and instruction because academic leaders will be regularly monitoring these expectations through walkthroughs. Academic leaders find that implementing one component of the bell to bell framework at a time until full implementation of all components occurs provides time for educators to learn how to successfully and consistently implement the framework while being provided feedback and support. Walkthroughs, then, occur on each specific component. Once all components are implemented, walkthroughs occur across the framework, and trends of implementation are analyzed by the school leadership team to determine which components are being regularly implemented and those components that need more support for full implementation and sustainability.

Sample of non-negotiables that could be in the bell to bell framework.

1. Instructional Framework for Purposeful Reading, Writing and Discussion



4.What is Universal Design for Learning and how is it implemented within MTSS programs?

Universal Design for Learners (UD4L) is an approach that focuses on breaking down educational barriers for diverse students. It facilitates quality instruction through flexible delivery, clearly defined learning goals, and identification of educational barriers. UD4L consists of three principles to ensure student progression and offers an opportunity for learning by all. The three principles are Representation, Action and Expressions, and Engagement. All lend themselves to implementing MTSS by allowing flexible methods of delivery and varied forms of expressing understanding that can be centered on an individual student. This flexibility also allows for greater student choice and leads to increased engagement. UD4L offers services to assist all subgroups of disadvantaged students by breaking down the educational barriers (CAST, 2011).

Three Principles of Universal Design for Learning

Representation

Teaching complex concepts through multiple methods. Through use of graphics, vocabulary enhancement, and drawing on background knowledge.

- Provide options for perception
- Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols
- Provide options for comprehension

Actions and Expressions

Through the diversification of lessons, multiple brain networks will be sparked: recognitions, skills and strategies, caring, and prioritizing.

- Provide options for physical action
- Provide options for expression and communications
- Provide options for executive functions

Engagement

Enhanced motivation is achieved through multiple means including student choice. Students learn to persist through challenges; multiple means of demonstrating learning are used.

- Provide options for recruiting interest
- Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence
- Provide options for self-regulation

Quality of Instruction for Disadvantaged Students

Research shows that academic failure is especially likely among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students who are members of racial minority groups and among those whose native language is not English (NRC, 1999). Many of the students in Montana who are at risk for reading failure are members of an American Indian (AI) tribe. While English is often their first language, many AI children are raised in homes speaking both a native language and a version of English, influenced by a strong cultural dialect that varies tremendously from standard American English. Often these children arrive in school with little or no exposure or contact with the standard American English, the language of formal education.

Every student deserves to be placed in the most inclusive learning situation and every student deserves to receive instruction at his or her highest possible capacity. However, some students, including those with

identified disabilities, will demonstrate persistent learning challenges. Such students will benefit from Tier 2 or 3 small-group instruction to Tier 1 skills-based instruction. This Tier 1 skills-based instruction is aligned and coordinated with MTSS with classroom instruction based on the Montana Content Standards. "There is little evidence that children experiencing difficulties learning, even those with identifiable learning disabilities, need radically different sorts of supports than children at low risk, although they may need much more intensive support" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, pg. 3).

It is important to include students with disabilities in Tier 1 whole class instruction as determined by the individual education plan (IEP) with adaptations, such as reading aloud, partner work, digital text display, or problems read aloud, for the visually impaired. "Special education students do not necessarily need instruction that is substantially different from what everyone else is receiving. Rather, the instruction should be fine-tuned to fit their individual learning needs. What constitutes good special education lies in the intensity and focus of instruction" (Moats, 2002).

Schools that have a need for special educators and instructional specialists are encouraged to place high-quality professionals in these positions. Academic leaders need to allot time for communication and collaboration between special educators and content area educators to share content area expectations, learning targets, data, and individual student goals. This will strengthen the targeted instruction for each student and the MTSS program within the school and classroom.

The Montana Content Standards and MTSS programs specifically address serving disadvantaged students, including English learners, in culturally responsive classrooms that meet their cognitive and affective needs. "Although it is beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English Learners and for students with special needs, at the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and the skills necessary in their post-high school lives. The standards should also be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset and as permitting appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students" (Montana Content Standards).

5. How does explicit and systematic literacy instruction impact MTSS programs?

All instructional materials and content should include explicit and systematic instruction in reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language in all content areas as identified in the Montana Content Standards. In *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient teaching*, authors Anita Archer and Charles A. Hughes (2011) define explicit and systematic instruction.

"In the quest to maximize students' academic growth, one of the best tools available to educators is explicit instruction, a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Rosenshine (1987) described this form of instruction as "a systematic method for teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students" (p. 34).

Elements of Explicit Instruction (Archer and Hughes, 2011, p. 2)

- Focus instruction on critical content
- Sequence skills logically
- Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units
- Design organized and focused lessons
- Begin lessons with a clear statement of the lesson's goals and your expectations
- Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction
- Provide step-by-step demonstrations
- Use clear and concise language
- Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples
- Provide guided supported practice
- Require frequent responses
- Monitor student performance closely
- Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback
- Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace
- Help students organize knowledge
- Provide distributed and cumulative practice

Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) offers many instructional resources. A powerful set of resources for educators is "Empowering Teachers." This section on the FCRR website shares ideas centering around essentials for reading, differentiations, instructional routines, and planning for instruction, to name a few. Navigate to "Empowering Teachers." <http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/ET/index.html>

The following charts describe details about Tier 2 and Tier 3 instructional support, adequate time for literacy instruction, and additional support for learners with Tier 2 and Tier 3 needs. Specific information is provided for age 3 to entrance into kindergarten, primary level K-3, intermediate level 4-5, and secondary level 6-12.

Age 3 to Entrance Into Kindergarten			
	Tier 1—Classroom	Tier 2—Strategic	Tier 3—Intensive
LEARNERS	All students.	Children identified through dual discrepancy models. These children score in the bottom quartile on baseline measures as well as display slower growth rates than their peers.	Children who do not make sufficient progress in Tier 2 will be considered for Tier 3 instruction.

Age 3 to Entrance into Kindergarten			
ACADEMIC LEADER	Classroom educator, literacy coach.	Classroom reading educator, specialized reading educator, or a special education educator specifically trained in reading intervention.	Speech pathologist, occupational therapist, special education educator. Educators will reinforce strategies and activities used by specialists for children receiving Tier 3 services.
TIME ALLOCATION	Evidence-based literacy activities identified within the National Early Literacy Panel report are interspersed throughout all parts of the day for developmentally appropriate lengths of time. Evidence-based literacy activities from the variables of the National Early Literacy Panel.	Evidence-based literacy activities are interspersed throughout all parts of the day for developmentally appropriate lengths of time. Tier 2-3 activities are delivered to individual children or groups of children in their general classroom environment in addition to Tier 1 activities. In most cases, children will never know that they are receiving anything extra or different from their peers. Interventions are provided during center time for developmentally appropriate lengths of time.	Evidence-based literacy activities are interspersed throughout all parts of the day for developmentally appropriate lengths of time. Individualized support provided within the context of the general education classroom to the greatest extent possible.
GROUPING	Flexible (whole group, small group, partners).	Small, homogeneous groups of three to six students per educator (optimal).	Small, homogeneous groups of two to five students per educator (optimal).
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM	Early literacy programs grounded in best practice, including the variables identified within the National Early Literacy Panel Report. Instructional materials and spatial arrangements that support the development of children's language and literacy skills.	Differentiated instruction based on extensions from the Tier 1 program. Small-group instruction grounded in best practice, including the variables identified within the National Early Literacy Panel Report. Lessons based on individual instructional need, classroom ecologies, developmentally appropriate practices, and child interests.	Lessons based on individual instructional need, classroom ecologies, developmentally appropriate practices, and child interests.

Elementary Level K-5				
	Tier 1—Classroom		Tier 2—Strategic	Tier 3—Intensive
	ELA	Content Area		
LEARNERS	All students.	All students.	Generally, 5-10% of students who need additional structured support.	Generally, 1-8% of students who have marked difficulties learning to read and have not sufficiently responded to instruction provided at Tiers 1 and 2.
ACADEMIC LEADER	ELA educators.	Content-area educators.	Classroom reading educator, specialized reading educator, or a special education educator specifically trained in reading intervention.	Educator specifically trained in teaching reading, reading specialist, or special education educators.
TIME ALLOCATION	Daily 60-minute minimum or one instructional period of explicit instruction using diverse texts 45-90 minutes daily for writing, spelling, word study, etc.	Provided within scheduled content-area classes.	Thirty minutes of strategic reading instruction daily to reinforce skills taught in Tier 1 instruction.	Supplant core instruction with 90-120 minutes of intensive, explicit instruction designed to meet individual needs, guided by data. Optimal to include students in Tier 1 literature.
INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS	Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts.	Focus on vocabulary and comprehension standards within Montana Content Standards ELA that are appropriate for reading and understanding informational text.	Phonemic awareness, phonics/structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, language (any or all components as indicated by assessment data) standards within the Montana Content Standards ELA.	Phonemic awareness, phonics/structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, language (any or all components as indicated by assessment data) standards within the Montana Content Standards ELA.
GROUPING	Flexible (whole group, small group, partners).	Flexible (whole group, small group, partners).	Homogeneous groups of three to six students (optimal).	As recommended by special education or reading educator, groups of three to five students.

Elementary Level K-5				
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM	Evidence-based, grade-level instruction using programs with proven effectiveness and aligned to the Montana Content Standards ELA. All instructional decisions based on assessment.	Evidence-based, grade-level instruction using programs with proven effectiveness and aligned to the Montana Content Standards ELA. All instructional decisions based on assessment.	Evidence-based, explicit instruction to strengthen specific skills identified through Tier 1 assessments. Instruction uses research-validated strategies that have proven effective for identified need.	Explicit instruction at student's performance level, using intervention or replacement program. Decisions based on assessment data.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT	Evaluate and align current materials and instruction with the Montana Content Standards for ELA.	Evaluate and align current materials and instruction with the Montana Common Core Standards for ELA.	Evaluate intervention materials for explicit, systematic instruction with the Montana Content Standards for ELA.	Evaluate intervention materials for explicit, systematic instruction with the Montana Content Standards for ELA.
PROVIDE PD	Professional development for effective use of assessments, instructional materials, and strategies for explicit and differentiated instruction, the Seven Essential Understandings for Indian Education for All, and strategies for explicit and differentiated instruction.	Professional development to help educators provide effective content area instruction, and the Seven Essential Understandings for Indian Education for All.	Professional development before and during the implementation of the program to help educators provide effective strategic instruction.	Professional development before and during implementation of the program to help educators provide effective intervention instruction.
ASSESSMENTS	Screening. Diagnostic. Progress monitoring (minimum three times a year). Outcome.	Monitor progress (in-program assessments unit tests, daily performance).	Screening. Diagnostic. Progress monitoring (every four to six weeks). Outcome.	Screening. Diagnostic. Progress monitoring (every week or two). Outcome.
IMPLEMENT PLAN	Provide ongoing support to staff with planning and collaboration time. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.	Provide emphasis on developing vocabulary and background knowledge.	Provide ongoing staff support, including time for planning and collaboration. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.	Provide ongoing staff support, including time for planning and collaboration. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.

ADJUST IN-STRUCTION	Adjust instruction and student placement based on progress monitoring assessment data and all formative and summative data.	Adjust instructional program based on formative and summative data.	Adjust instruction and student placement based on progress monitoring, assessment data, and all formative and summative data.	Adjust instruction and student placement based on progress monitoring assessment data and all formative and summative data.

Secondary Level 6-12

	Tier 1—Classroom		Tier 2—Strategic	Tier 3—Intensive
	ELA	Content Area		
LEARNERS	All students.	All students.	Generally, 5-10% of students who need additional structured support.	Generally, 1-8% of students who have marked difficulties learning to read and have not sufficiently responded to the instruction provided in Tiers 1 and 2.
ACADEMIC LEADER	English Language arts educator.	Content-area educator.	Classroom reading educator, specialized reading educator, or a special education educator specifically trained in reading intervention.	Educator specifically trained in teaching reading, reading specialist, or special education educator.
TIME ALLOCATION	One instructional period of explicit English/Language Arts.	Instruction provided within scheduled content-area classes.	Strategic reading and writing instruction in core and content classes, study hall, and tutoring (before, during, and after school).	Supplant core instruction with one or more instructional periods of intensive, explicit instruction specifically designed to meet individual needs and guided by data (acceleration program).
INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS	Core content, grade-level instruction using programs with proven effectiveness and aligned with the Montana Content Standards for ELA. All instructional decisions based on assessment.	Evidence-based, grade level instruction using programs with proven effectiveness and aligned with the Montana Content Standards for Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. All instructional decisions based on assessment.	Evidence-based, explicit instruction to strengthen specific skills identified through Tier 1 assessments in both ELA and content-area classes.	Phonemic awareness, phonics/structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing (all components as indicated by assessment data) standards within the Montana Content Standards for ELA and literacy core content grade-level instruction using programs with proven effectiveness and aligned with the Montana Content Standards for ELA and literacy. All instructional decisions based on assessments.

Secondary Level 6-12				
GROUPING	Flexible (whole class, small group, partners).	Flexible (whole class, small group, partners).	Flexible (whole class, small group, partners).	As recommended by intervention program or less than 16 students per educator.
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM	Evidence-based, grade-level, explicit instruction incorporating the key elements of effective adolescent literacy using research-based practices.	Evidence based, grade-level, explicit instruction incorporating the key elements of effective adolescent literacy (Montana Content Standards Literacy) using research-based practices.	Explicit instruction at student's performance level using intervention or replacement programs.	Evidence based, grade-level, explicit instruction incorporating the key elements of effective adolescent literacy (Montana Content Standards Literacy) using research-based practices.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT	Evaluate and align current materials and instruction with the Montana Content Standards in ELA.	Evaluate and align current materials and instruction with the Montana Content Standards Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.	Evaluate intervention materials for explicit, systematic instruction of the Montana Content Standards ELA and Literacy.	Evaluate intervention materials for explicit, systematic instruction of the Montana Content Standards ELA and Literacy.
PROVIDE PD	Professional development for effective use of assessments, instructional materials, and strategies for explicit and differentiated instruction	Professional development to help educators provide effective content area instruction that is explicit systematic and differentiated.	Professional development before and during the implementation of the program to help educators provide effective strategic instruction.	Professional development before and during implementation of the program to help educators provide effective intervention instruction.
ASSESSMENTS	Screening Outcome	Monitor progress (in program assessments, unit tests, and daily performance)	Screening Diagnostic Progress monitoring Outcome	Screening. Diagnostic. Progress monitoring (weekly/bimonthly optimal) Outcome

Secondary Level 6-12				
IMPLEMENT PLAN	Provide ongoing support to staff with planning and collaboration time. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.	Provide ongoing support to staff with planning and collaboration time. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.	Provide ongoing support to staff with planning and collaboration time. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.	Provide ongoing support to staff with planning and collaboration time. Provide effective coaching and/or mentoring to educators.
ADJUST INSTRUCTION	Adjust instruction and student placement based on progress monitoring assessment data and all formative and summative data.	Adjust instructional program based on formative and summative data.	Adjust instruction and student placement based on progress monitoring assessment data and all formative and summative data.	Adjust instruction and student placement based on progress monitoring assessment data and all formative and summative data.

6. What evidenced-based practices and resources are available to address MTSS?

"The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide's panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices."

- *Strong* evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.
- *Moderate* evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.
- *Minimal* evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades (Institute of Education Science, 2009) <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>

- The aim of this IES guide is to help elementary schools implement an RtI framework to ensure all

students, regardless of skill level, learn to read. The target audience includes academic leadership, instructional coaches, leadership teams, and educators.

- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).
- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes (Tier 2).
- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist.

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (Institute of Education Science, 2008) https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Many students in Grades 4 and up experience literacy difficulties in content areas. The five recommendations should be part of every content area classroom to allow access to content. The target audience includes leadership teams, instructional coaches, and instructional educators.

- Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
- Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.
- Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.
- Checklist.

Additional Resources

Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) offers many instructional resources. A powerful set of resources for educators is "Empowering Teachers." This section on the FCRR website shares ideas centering around essentials for reading, differentiations, instructional routines, and planning for instruction, to name a few. Navigate to "Empowering Teachers." <http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/ET/index.html>

AT-RISK STUDENTS

is about



Identifying,
understanding and
educationally
impacting
every student

by
understanding



students
who could
be at-risk

to identify



evidence-
based
practices and
resources

to identify and
support



with the use
of MT Early
Warning
Systems
(EWS)

with clearly
identified



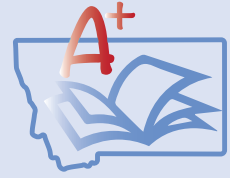
roles of
academic
leaders
and staff



Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Component – Literacy Instruction and Support for At-Risk Students

Essential Questions

1. Which students could be considered at-risk, and how are they categorized?
2. What are the roles of the academic leadership and educators in working with students who are at-risk?
3. How can we support kindergarten through Grade 12 students at risk of not graduating on time, and how can Montana's Early Warning System (EWS) impact the identification of these students?
4. What are the evidence-based practices and resources for supporting leaders and educators with at-risk students in literacy instruction?



At a Glance:

The focus of this section is on the identification, understanding, and educational impact of our classrooms and systems on Montana students and what role the academic leaders and educators play in providing instructional supports for these students.

1. Which students could be considered at-risk, and how are they categorized?

An at-risk student is defined as “a child from birth to Grade 12 who is at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including a child living in poverty, a child with a disability, or a child who is an English learner. This term also includes infants and toddlers with developmental delays or a child who is far below grade level, who has left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who is at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who is homeless, who is in foster care, or who has been incarcerated” (ESSA).

When teaching literacy (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), special considerations must be taken for a group of students referred to as at-risk students.

What are the categories of at-risk students?

Birth to Grade 12 children at-risk of educational failure or otherwise in need

of special assistance and support. This may include:

- Students living in poverty.
- Students living in foster care or homeless.
- Students diagnosed with a disability.
- English learners.
- Students recognized as gifted and talented.
- Infants, toddlers with developmental delays.
- Students at-risk for not graduating on time.
- Students that have been incarcerated.
- Students with a communicated personal crisis.

Categories of At-Risk Students	
Category	Meeting the Needs of the At-Risk Student
Economically Disadvantaged, Foster Care, or Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow the significant vocabulary gap through explicit vocabulary instruction. • Expose students to an array of educational and social experiences. • Maintain high expectations and provide positive praise and feedback. • Communicate with stakeholders about the health and welfare of the student. • Provide intentional instruction for skill deficits.
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/5-ways-help-students-affected-generational-poverty • <i>Meaningful Differences</i> by Hart and Risley 	
English Learners (ELs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide explicit instruction demonstrating the distinctions between the student's first language and the ELs. • Provide opportunity for language production and peer interactions. • Explicitly teach English language vocabulary and structures. • Build on EL's background knowledge to increase comprehension. • Provide meaningful communication with EL's parents or guardian. • Provide intentional instruction for skill deficits.
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/five-things-teachers-can-do-improve-learning-ells-new-year • https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/05/11/teaching-english-language-learners-what-does-the-research.html 	
Children with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct instruction. • Use a sequential, simultaneous structured multisensory approach. • Break learning into small steps. • Model instructional outcomes and desirable behaviors.
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://ldaamerica.org/successful-strategies-for-teaching-students-with-learning-disabilities/ • http://www.specialeducationguide.com/disability-profiles/specific-learning-disabilities/ • http://www.asha.org/NJC/Literacy-in-Individuals-With-Severe-Disabilities/ 	

Migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement evidence-based methods on effective instruction for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations into classroom practice. • Expose students to the more academically rigorous coursework and content to which mainstream students have access. • Hold students to high expectations. • Use cooperative learning strategies.
<i>Resources</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/migrant-students-what-we-need-know-help-them-succeed 	
Youth in Contact with Juvenile Justice (Incarcerated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support student and family with transitions. • Ensure access and support of classroom materials and school work. • Provide meaningful feedback to allow for independent acquisition.
<i>Resources</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/02/at-risk-students.aspx 	
Gifted and Talented Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give appropriate opportunities for growth beyond general expectations that do not simply mean more volume of work for this diverse student population. • Implement flexible multilevel and multidimensional lessons. • Make the learning student centered. • Ensure learning outcomes are aligned to the Montana Content Standards.
<i>Resources</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/definitions-giftedness 	

2. What are the roles of the academic leadership and educators in working with students who are at-risk?

Academic Leader's Roles May Include:

- Develop and maintain high expectations for all students.
- Maintain a consistent focus on improving literacy instruction and actively engaging the leadership team, grade level teams, content area teams in the continuous improvement cycle.
- Ensure assessment systems are in place to gather and analyze data to guarantee appropriate academic supports for at-risk students.
- Be the academic leader for student achievement in literacy by tracking student progress and supporting intervention.
- Take responsibility for the quality of the delivery of literacy in every classroom and across all content areas.

Educator's Roles May Include:

- Collaborate with school personnel to ensure the students' needs are conveyed to all stakeholders.
- Create a reciprocal communication plan with parent and guardians to address both successes and failures that impact the students' learning.
- Provide differentiated instruction to accelerate learning and maximize student achievement for all students as part of Tier 1 instruction.
- Provide flexible instructional grouping of students based on their ongoing identified needs.

3. How can we support kindergarten through Grade 12 students at risk of not graduating on time, and how can Montana's Early Warning System (EWS) impact the identification of these students?

Kindergarten to Grade 5

Reading proficiency is recognized as a critical factor in a child's academic success, but numerous barriers can impact the ability to read on time and at grade level. For some students, dropping out can be traced to experiences at the start of elementary school. Existing research indicates three areas that communities should check.

- Early chronic absenteeism—students missing a month or more of school in K–3.
- Acquiring basic reading skills—students entering third grade without strong reading skills.
- Positive school experiences—students having serious behavioral problems in K–3

Middle and High School Years

It is during the middle grades and the first two years of high school when we can identify the majority of students who, without sustained intervention, will likely not graduate. During these years it is particularly important to pay attention to the A, B, C's of dropout prevention.

- Attendance—sixth to eleventh graders who miss 10 to 40 or more days of school are sending increasingly loud distress signals.
- Behavior—middle grade and high school students who get suspended need support to stay on-track to graduate, but so do students who consistently demonstrate mild misbehaviors or lack of effort, e.g., not completing assignments, not paying attention, acting out of place in the classroom.
- Course Performance—Students who receive an F, especially in math or English, or two or more F's in any class are off the graduation path. D's and very low GPA's are also causes for concern. Overall, course performance is more predictive than test scores of a student's graduation odds.

Institute Early Warning Systems and On-Track Indicators

Educators have developed indicators that help identify when a student is at risk of dropping out long before the student makes that choice. These indicators can be as simple as tracking grades and attendance. High schools, middle schools, and elementary schools need to develop these early warning systems to identify students in need of extra academic or other support. With that information, districts, schools, and parents can intervene to get students back on-track and increase the likelihood of graduating.

The Montana OPI's Early Warning Systems offers resources that are evidence-based frameworks and continuums for intervention, insights on multiple pathways to graduation, and useful tools for putting an early warning system in place in every school. For more information,

<http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Data-Reporting/AIM-Achievement-in-Montana/AIM-Additional-Resources>

4. What are the evidence-based practices and resources for supporting leaders and educators with at-risk students in literacy instruction?

"The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide's panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices."

- *Strong* evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.
- *Moderate* evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.
- *Minimal* evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

How educators use the collected data to better inform instructional practice is the focus for this guide. It provides a framework for using student achievement data to support instructional decision making. The target audience includes leadership teams, instructional coaches, and instructional educators.

Recommendations

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.
- Establish a clear vision for school wide data use.
- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.
- Develop and maintain a districtwide data system.
- Checklist.

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades (Institute of Education Science, 2009)

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>

- The aim of this IES guide is to help elementary schools implement an RtI framework to ensure all students, regardless of skill level, learn to read. The target audience includes academic leaders, instructional coaches, school leadership teams, and educators.
- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).
- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes (Tier 2).
- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist.

Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (Institute of Education Science, 2017)

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/24>

More than half a million high school students drop out of school each year. This guide includes both targeted and school-wide approaches so that educators can offer support to all students as well as more intensive support for those at high risk.

- Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.
- Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.
- Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school.
- For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do (Institute of Education Science, 2009)

The focus of this IES guide is to help schools and districts develop practices and processes to increase access to higher education. The target audience includes leadership teams and all educators who have contact with students.

- Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by ninth grade.
- Utilize assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for college, and assist them in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified.
- Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations.
- Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry.
- Increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid.
- Checklist.

Resources

- The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- The National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) Literacy Practice Partnership, All Children Can Read
- Erickson, K., Hanser, G., Hatch, P., & Sanders, E. (2009). *Research-based practices for creating access to the general curriculum in reading and literacy for students with significant intellectual disabilities*. Retrieved from the Council for Chief State School Officers, Assessing Special Education Students website: http://literacyforallcarc.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/2/1/16218848/ccsso_ases_literacymonograph.pdf
- <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/effective-reading-interventions-kids-learning-disabilities>
- <https://intensiveintervention.org/about-charts-resources>
- CORE Sourcebook
- Annie E. Casey Foundation. Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading. Baltimore: s.n, 2013.
- United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra. Kindergarten Readiness and Early Literacy. 2015 <http://www.zerotothree.org>
- <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/migrant-students-what-we-need-know-help-them-succeed>

MOTIVATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

is about



energizing,
directing, and
sustaining teaching
and learning

through



a clear
definition and
understanding
of individual
components

to identify



evidence-
based
practices and
resources

by identifying



these
elements as
important
pieces
for success

through clearly



identified
roles for
all school
personnel



Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Component – Motivation for Teaching and Learning

Essential Questions

- What is motivation?
- Why is motivation an important element of a school?
- How can motivation be addressed within schools for teaching and learning?
- What are the evidence-based practices and resources to support motivation for teaching and learning?



At a Glance:

This section of the MLP begins by defining motivation for teaching and learning. Educators fall into both the teaching and the learning categories. Purposeful consideration and planning to increase motivation for teaching and learning provide many benefits for students and educators alike. Learn more about the role of motivation in schools as well as acquire some evidence-based practices and resources aimed at increasing motivation for teaching and learning.

1. What is motivation?

Motivation is the specific desire or willingness of someone to do something and can be the determining factor in both failure and success. Narrowing that broad definition to specifically address motivation in teaching and learning is the intention of this section of the MLP. Academic leaders and educators can create a culture and mindset of motivation to impact the value and success of a school. Research references from Hattie, Shanahan, Knight, Boaler, and Dweck show how to create a culture of motivation through mindset and choice that increases willingness to learn, attainment of goals, and an ability to impact change. “A lot of scientific evidence suggests the difference between those who succeed and those who do not is not the brains they were born with, but their approach to life, the messages they receive about their potential, and the opportunities they have to learn” (Boaler, 2016).

2. Why is motivation an important element of a school?

Motivation allows teachers to teach and for learning goals to be reached (Shanahan, 2017). Motivation can be a challenge because there are many factors that contribute to motivation that span from academic leaders, to educators, to students. Frequently, what motivates one person does not necessarily do the same for others.

“With the right mindset, we can motivate our kids and help them to improve in school, as well as reach our own goals, personal and professional” (Dweck, 2006).

3. How can motivation be addressed within schools for teaching and learning?

“In each of these dramatic, remarkable, good-to-great transformations, we found the same thing: There was no miracle moment. Instead, a down-to-earth, pragmatic, committed-to-excellence process—a framework—kept each school, its leaders, and its people on track for the long haul” (Collins, 2001).

Academic Leaders

As academic leaders, the motivation toward higher student achievement comes from having school educators and students with a clear vision of both the mission and goals of the school and the motivation to follow and achieve those goals. The work toward collective educator efficacy addresses these pieces as well as the importance of the roles educators to play in these processes.

Collective Teacher Efficacy

Professor John Hattie ranked collective teacher efficacy as the number one factor influencing student

achievement (Hattie, 2016). “Collective teacher efficacy refers to the collective self-perception that teachers in each school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004 p. 190). Academic leaders must work to create a climate for the developing, sharing, and reflecting of these collective beliefs, not only to impact students, but the school. Below is a summary of three conditions that can positively impact collective educator efficacy.

Three Enabling Conditions for Collective Teacher Efficacy (Donohoo, 2016)

- *Advanced Teacher Influence* focuses on the power of teacher leader roles and decisions on school-wide issues. Offering autonomy and voice to the educators on important issues will help in building collective efficacy.
- *Goal Consensus* has clear and measurable goals and is vital to the success of any change. It can be very challenging to collaboratively develop, communicate, and agree on goals to impact learning, teaching, and leading.
- *Conditions of effective goal setting.*
- The team has the capacity to meet the goals.
The goals are clear and specific.
The staff is committed to the goals.
- Responsiveness of Academic Leadership addresses effective academic leaders that act consistently to ensure their team can complete their duties effectively. They are responsive and show their staff respect and concern. They prevent anything that detracts from the mission and goals of teaching.

“By strengthening collective teacher efficacy, teachers will develop the resolve to persist against challenges and realize increased student results. Given its effect on student learning and achievement, the importance of strengthening collective efficacy must not be understated or overlooked” (Donohoo, 2016).

Time is one of the most valuable commodities that academic leaders can provide and protect while ensuring the purposefulness of its use. Time can create a clear path or be a hurdle for the motivation of educators.

Here are some suggestions for protecting and planning educator’s time.

Ensure that meetings, professional development, and assemblies are purposeful and meet the mission and goals of the school.

- Limit the time and number of meetings, classroom interruptions, and distractions that take away from educational time.
- Allow the needed time for coaching, professional trainings, implementation, and collaboration.
- Offer ample time for discussion, training, and reflection for new materials and programs.
- Make time for data collection, discussion, and decision making for grade-levels, departments, and leadership teams.

Instructional Coach (IC)

“Principals provide leadership, guide the development of the Target, and observe and encourage teachers as they grow and move toward the Target. [Professional Development] introduce teachers to the practices that are in the Target. Intensive learning teams provide opportunities for teachers to rethink curriculum in light of the Target. Coaches help teachers take all the ideas and practices they are learning and bring them to life.

Without coaching, too often, no significant change occurs” (Cornett & Knight, 2009).

The partnership educators have with an instructional coach can impact positive change if both partners are aware of, and motivated toward, a common goal. Jim Knight gives the example of a person choosing to go on a diet to improve their health versus a person who has had a diet selected for them by a concerned family member. Research shows that the person who selected their own goal will be more motivated to succeed than the person who had their goal selected for them. Allowing autonomy when it comes to goal setting and giving teachers that voice will likely increase the motivation to work with the instructional coach to attain their goal.

When an IC partners with an educator toward a common goal, it should be a culture of respect, compassion, optimism, and celebration of milestones.

According to Jim Knight (Knight, 2011), the IC should embody the following principles and motivates change.

- Equality—the core belief that they are partners.
- Choice—the teacher can choose whether they want to work with the coach.
- Voice—allows educators to be heard.
- Reflection—allows educators to think and reflect on their learning and practice rather than being told what they are learning.
- Dialogue—discussion through which the best ideas shine.
- Praxis—dialogue that is embedded in action with the continual thought of how the experience will benefit the teacher and the students.
- Reciprocity—the IC is a learner as well.

Educators

A common discussion about students’ lack of interest or motivation in learning is happening at every grade level and across all content areas in most schools around the state. Students have different needs when it comes to motivation. Those who are intrinsically motivated may show interest in the subject, will be able to easily relate the content to the real world, and feel a sense of accomplishment upon mastery. Extrinsically-motivated students usually have and share parental or role model expectations with a big focus on what the course will offer them and overall grade. Unfortunately, educators do not get to choose which type of motivation their students favor but have the opportunity to create a classroom culture and climate that maximizes both types.

Carol Dweck (2006) addresses the mindset in which we carry for ourselves, and often impose upon others, and how that mindset can positively or negatively impact motivation. The extent of the impact is different for each content area but still effects the students we work to educate. Those with a fixed mindset see their situation as carved in stone. This includes what they are capable of learning and accomplishing. Those with a growth mindset view where they are as a starting point and will gain and move forward. A student with their own fixed mindset can be tough to overcome but, even more challenging, is having an educator with a fixed mindset about their students. If students and educators can work toward a growth mindset, they will be more motivated to give effort, explore, and learn the content of your discipline.

Dweck (2006) identified characteristics of a growth mindset that need to be nurtured and reinforced in all students.

- Intelligence can be developed.
- Leads to desire to learn.
- Embraces challenges.
- Persists in the face of setbacks.
- Sees effort as the path to mastery.
- Learns from criticism.
- Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others.
- Reaches higher levels of achievement.

Linda Gambrell (2011) offers Seven Rules of Engagement that specifically links to motivation to read. Gambrell supports the finding that instruction in decoding and comprehension skills is not enough to ensure readers are comprehending and motivated to read. She believes that if students are not motivated to read, they will not reach their “full literacy potential.”

Seven Rules of Engagement, students are more motivated to read when:

- Reading tasks and activities are relevant to their lives.
- They have access to a wide range of reading materials.
- They have ample opportunities to engage in sustained reading.
- They have opportunities to make choices about what they read and how they engage in and complete literacy tasks.
- They have opportunities to socially interact with others about the text they are reading.
- They have opportunities to be successful with challenging texts.
- Classroom incentives reflect the value and importance of reading.

“Regardless of the objective value of an activity or topic, if students do not recognize its value, they may not be motivated to expend effort. However, if students clearly see how coursework connects to their goals, interests, and concerns, they will be more likely to value it, and thus more motivated to invest time and effort” (Eberly Center Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation, 2015).

Strategies to increase motivation and value students have in the course and its content.	
Become a champion of your discipline.	Educator's passion for the content increases student motivation.
Share realistic learning goals or objectives.	Goals play a key role in motivation as it shows what value the student gets from the lesson, unit, or course.
Variety.	Engage students in various ways to achieve mastery.
Relevance to students' lives.	Sharing with students how the strategies and learning occurring in the content area can be generalized to other areas of studies or real life and will increase their motivation for mastery and retention.
Connect to personal interests.	Know students' concerns and backgrounds as personal interest in them will impact their initiative in the classroom.
Choice.	Allow students' options and opportunities to combine their interests with content and instruction.

Motivation is a piece of the overall big picture of comprehensive literacy instruction that holds value and can positively impact change. Creating a climate and culture of motivation that honors the role of those impacted holds a great deal of value in impacting motivation. There are many resources for the motivation of teaching and learning. Below is a list of resources that can support the learning of Motivation for Teaching and Learning.

4. What are evidence-based practices and resources?

"The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide's panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices."

- *Strong* evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.
- *Moderate* evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.
- *Minimal* evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

Recommendations

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.
- Establish a clear vision for school-wide data use.
- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.
- Develop and maintain a district-wide data system.
- Checklist.

Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

Recommendations

- Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership.
- Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.
- Provide visible improvements early in the turnaround process (quick wins).
- Build a committed staff.
- Checklist.

Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/20072004.pdf>

Recommendations

- Space learning over time.
- Interweave worked example solutions with problem-solving exercises.
- Combine graphics with verbal descriptions.
- Connect and integrate abstract and concrete representations of concepts.
- Use quizzes to re-expose students to key content.
- Help students allocate study time efficiently.
- Help students build explanations by asking and answering deep questions.
- Checklist.

Additional Resources

Collins, J. (2001, October). *Good To Great*. Retrieved from Jim Collins:

http://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles/good-to-great.html

Donohoo, J. (2016, July 13). *Fostering Collective Teacher Efficacy: Three Enabling Conditions*. Retrieved from Corwin Connect:

<http://corwin-connect.com/2016/07/fostering-collective-teacher-efficacy-three-enabling-conditions/>

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset*. New York: Ballantine Books.

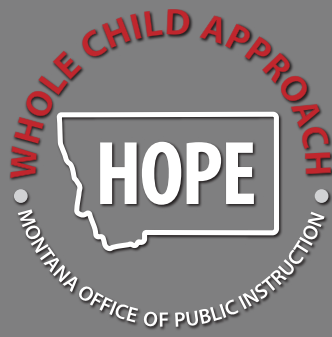
Eberly Center Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation. (2015). *Eberly Center*. Retrieved from Carnegie Mellon University: <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/solveproblem/strat-lackmotivation/lackmotivation-01.html>

Knight, J. (2011). *Unmistakable Impact*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.



Continuous improvement of instruction and student learning is vital in meeting the challenges of the Montana Content Standards and preparing students to be college- and career-ready.





4

Improving Instruction Components

IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

is about



strengthening
systems
to improve teaching
and learning by

developing strong



academic
leadership

implementing
Purposeful



professional
development



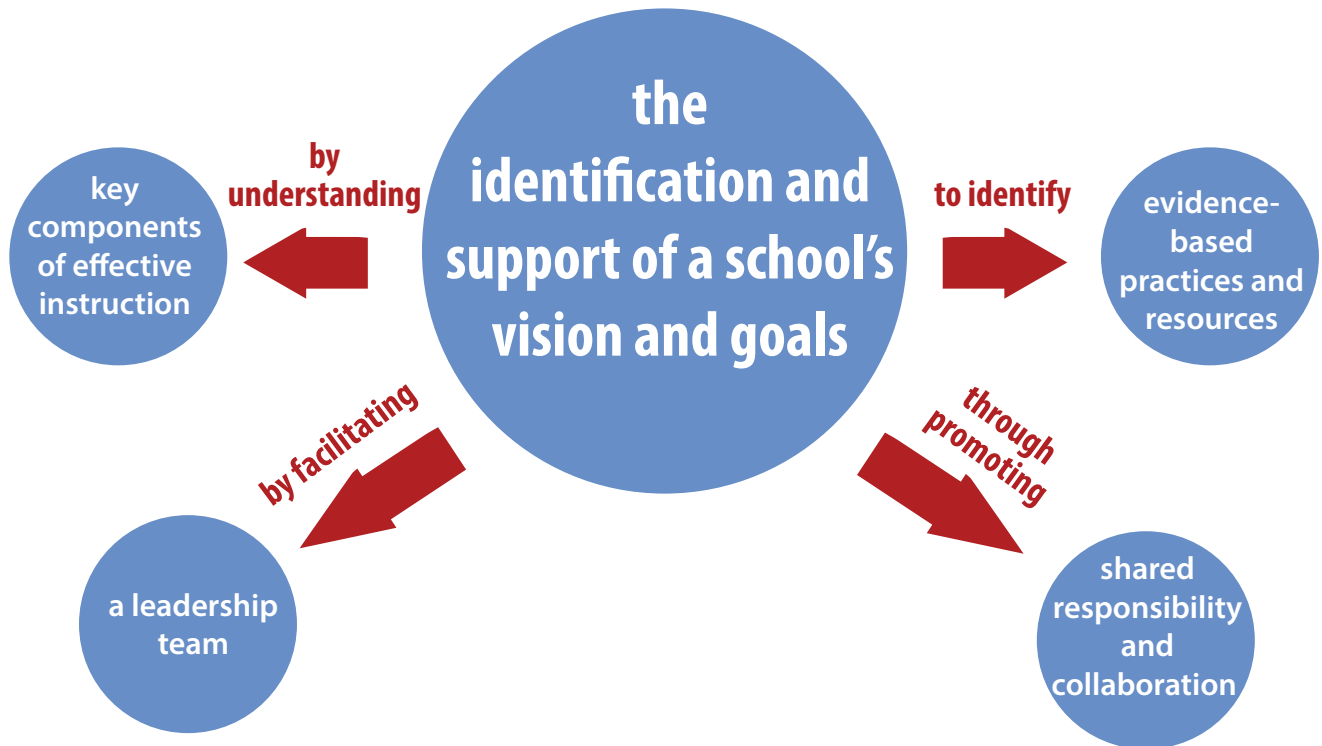
identifying and supporting

community
and family
engagement



ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

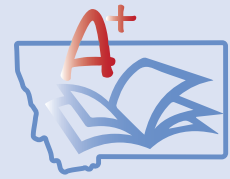
is about



Improving Instruction Component–Academic Leadership

Essential Questions for Academic Leadership

- How can academic leadership promote literacy efforts in a district, school, and community?
- How is a leadership team established, and what roles does it play in school improvement?
- What are the roles of principals to promote shared responsibility and collaboration?
- What are evidence-based practices and resources?



At a Glance:

Research identifies that even though academic leadership does not have a direct effect on improving student outcomes, it has an indirect effect that makes it a critical component of school improvement. Academic leadership should include the principal and educators that are representative of the staff within a school (i.e., grade level educators, special education, paraprofessional, instruction coach). Read this section to learn how academic leadership can promote literacy efforts, what a leadership team is, and how this team can guide school improvement while adhering to the specific differences between the principal and the leadership team.

1. How can academic leadership promote literacy efforts in a district, school, and community?

Leadership is a key component of any school improvement initiative. “Leadership is the exercise of influence on organization members and diverse stakeholders toward the identification and achievement of the organization’s visions and goals” (Leithwood, 2012, p. 1 .) Continuous improvement of instruction and student learning is vital in meeting the challenges of the Montana Content Standards and preparing students to be college- and career-ready.

Leadership needs to understand the key components of school improvement to build district and school capacity to implement and sustain systems and processes for effective literacy instruction, and to provide resources and ideas to enhance collaboration and ownership in improved student academic success in literacy.

The success of any improvement initiative depends on securing buy-in from educators and requires selecting staff members to serve on a leadership team (LT). This builds leadership capacity through distribution of responsibilities for planning, communicating, and implementing change within the school.

The LT leads a school to improve teaching and learning by using a comprehensive needs assessment, a continuous improvement cycle, and a measurable action plan. These systems help the LT to ultimately plan, implement, and sustain a literacy culture that improves teaching and learning. Some LTs use Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as the foundation for their continuous improvement cycle and action plan.

The principal, however, cannot delegate his or her role or responsibility. School improvement efforts “can be considered the joint work of the leadership team, with the principal functioning as a key member of that team” (Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.A., 2005, p. 106).

2. How is a leadership team established, and what roles does it play in school improvement?

Select staff members to serve on a LT who:

- Have knowledge of literacy best practices, including evidence-based curriculum and instruction.
- Are highly competent and recognized by peers for their knowledge and skill in the classroom.
- Are willing to share resources and guide other staff members.
- Possess good communication skills.
- Are flexible and respect the opinions of others.
- Maintain a positive attitude and can inspire others to do the same.

When the entire team (e.g., principal, educators, instructional coach, speech-language pathologists, counselors, parent representative) is engaged in exploring and implementing the fundamental purpose—increasing literacy achievement—the result is a sustained culture of commitment to that goal (adapted from Louisiana’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan, May 2011).

Building Leader (Principal or lead teacher)	Collaborative Team (Principal is part of the leadership team)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designate resources and time for educators.• Be involved in planning and implementation of the action plan and continuous improvement cycle.• Offer immediate and ongoing feedback.• Communicate goals and shared vision.• Monitor and review teacher performance and individual growth plans to help achieve the goals set by the leadership team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm action plan steps and prioritize.• Analyze data to drive professional learning and instruction.• Set goals for academic achievement.• Work together to provide feedback for teaching and learning.

2. What are the roles of principals to promote shared responsibility and collaboration?

Dr. Melvin Phillips (2005), a former principal, says, “Strong leadership from both administrators and educators is an essential building block in constructing a successful literacy program, but the role played by the principal is key to determining success or failure of the program.” A proactive school leader is critical in ensuring a literacy culture survives and thrives.

School leaders need to communicate a clear and shared focus—a vision of every child meeting the Montana Early Learning Standards and being prepared to enter kindergarten, and every K-12 student to demonstrate mastery of the Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy at grade level. Principals must hold fast to the vision; it should become a guiding force for all educational decisions at every grade level and for every subgroup, including minority students, those living in poverty, English learners, and special education students.

Principals

To further support the efforts of the educators, leadership needs a deep understanding of the planning and

implementation of lessons that come from direct classroom experience as co-planners and co-teachers (Confer, C. & Ramirez, M., 2012, pp. 47-48).

Principal's Role as Evaluator

Montana has an opportunity to regularly monitor and provide meaningful feedback in a growth model format using the Educator Performance Appraisal System (EPAS), designed for both principals and educators.

As of July 1, 2013, Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Chapter 55 Standards of Accreditation Revised are in effect. Included in Chapter 55 are the revised standards relating to the evaluation process used in Montana schools, which outline the minimum guidelines and requirements of "the evaluation system used by a school district" (The Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2015 .)

Designed as a professional growth model, EPAS is a natural springboard into monitoring and reviewing principals' roles in developing and implementing vision and goals, a culture of learning, the management of learning, and professional responsibilities. Further, it opens learning conversations regarding teachers planning and preparation, classroom environment, instructional effectiveness for student learning, and professional responsibilities for educators. Here is a link for more information:

<http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Professional-Learning/Montana-EPAS>

Principal's role for instructional observations

Highly effective schools who outperform other schools have academic leaders that visit classrooms regularly, remind educators of the value of specific instructional practices, promote literacy throughout the school, support family literacy programs, create a business-like atmosphere in the school, and expect improvement at all levels. Research has shown that regular classroom observations by principals and leadership teams, combined with meaningful dialogue, data analysis, and high-quality professional development, can have a positive impact on instructional quality and student achievement in literacy.

Supporting Literacy Efforts through Walkthroughs

- The University of Oregon has identified three types of walkthroughs that will provide an effective feedback loop to sustain best practices in the classroom.
- Implementation Walkthrough: Purpose is to determine if the instructional program is being implemented as planned.
- Instructional Walkthrough: Purpose is to determine if the instruction being delivered within the classroom reflects what we know about instructional effectiveness.
- Informational Walkthrough: Purpose is to determine if the students are learning from the instruction being provided and what evidence exists to back up this statement.

An essential thread of all walkthroughs is feedback based on the "look-fors" identified through the literacy improvement process. For more information on implementing an effective walkthrough process as well as identifying the look-fors that will improve instructional practice, visit <http://oregonliteracydpd.uoregon.edu/topic/conduct-classroom-walkthroughs-regularly-and-provide-effective-feedback>

Key Elements of Walkthroughs—Using Classroom Walkthroughs to Improve Instruction,
https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2009/M-A_p30.pdf

- Make walkthroughs routine.
- Identify the focus of the walkthrough.
- Observe instructional practices in the classroom.
- Notice whether students appear to be oriented to the work.
- Review curricular objectives being taught.
- Reflect with educator after the walkthrough (provide feedback via email or face to face) and provide follow-up support as needed.

Time Commitment

Time is a precious commodity for anyone in education, and the most time should be allotted to the most important things being focused on, especially in terms of activities for school improvement.

The key is not to prioritize what is on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities (Confer, C. & Ramirez, M., 2012, pg. 59).

A cost benefit analysis can often assist academic leadership to understand that what we focus on requires a commitment in time and resources.

The cost is what educators give up to do something. The benefit is the long-term or short-term payoff in relation to the school's primary goal; in this instance, improvement of student understanding and achievement in literacy. (Confer, C. & Ramirez, M., 2012, p. 60)

- Schools can prioritize time in two key ways to improve teaching and learning in literacy.
- Structuring schools' schedule to provide uninterrupted blocks of time for literacy instruction.
- Promoting creative use of in-school release time for grade-level and cross-grade planning and focused discussions among educators about student work and about the steps required to address areas of need.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

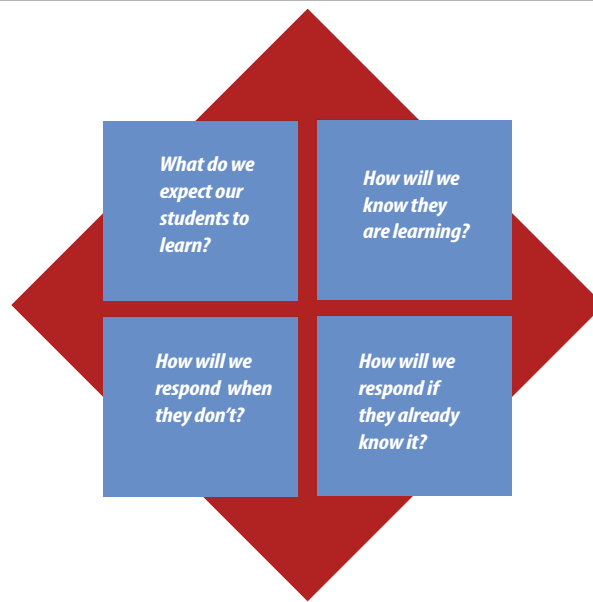
A collaborative culture is created by providing time for staff members to learn, discuss, and reflect on literacy achievement and instruction within the regular school day. Staff members can collaborate in a variety of PLCs including grade level, department/content specific, special education, and/or general education. The LT work collaboratively with the PLCs to continually make data-driven decisions for improving literacy achievement.

Dufour, Dufour, and Eaker (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010, p. 111) state, "A PLC is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve."

In their work, Dufour et al, define three big ideas to drive the work of the PLCs.

- **Focus on Student Learning:** PLCs are committed to improving learning outcomes and ensuring student mastery of the Montana Content Standards.
- **Collaborative Culture:** The PLC process promotes the collective responsibility of the team and school to ensure student success. In a school with high levels of collaboration, educators are interdependent. Collaborative cultures with a shared purpose have the potential to create high levels of learning.
- **Results Orientation:** PLCs continually evaluate student mastery of literacy standards, effectiveness of instructional strategies, reliability of assessments, and progress toward school and PLC goals. They evaluate student data, share student work, and work as a team to improve student outcomes.

**Four questions
that guide the work
of PLCs**



4. What are evidence-based practices and resources for academic leadership?

"The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide's panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices."

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The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools (Institute of Education Science, 2008)

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

School turnaround aims to make quick, dramatic improvement within three years. This IES guide identifies practices that can quickly improve the performance of chronically low-performing schools. The target audience includes principals and leadership teams.

Recommendations

- Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership.
- Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.
- Provide visible improvements early in the turnaround process (quick wins).
- Build a committed staff.
- Checklist.

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades (Institute of Education Science, 2009) <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>

The aim of the IES guide is to help elementary schools implement an RtI framework to ensure all students, regardless of skill level, learn to read. The target audience includes principals, instructional coaches, leadership teams, and educators.

- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).
- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes (Tier 2).
- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide daily intensive instruction that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist.

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (Institute of Education Science, 2008) https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Many students in Grades 4 and up experience literacy difficulties in content areas. The five recommendations should be part of every content area classroom to allow access to content. The target audience includes leadership teams, instructional coaches, and educators.

- Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
- Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.
- Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.
- Checklist.

Additional Resources:

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making (Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J., 2009)

All Things PLC, http://www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/three_rules_help_manage_assessment_data.pdf

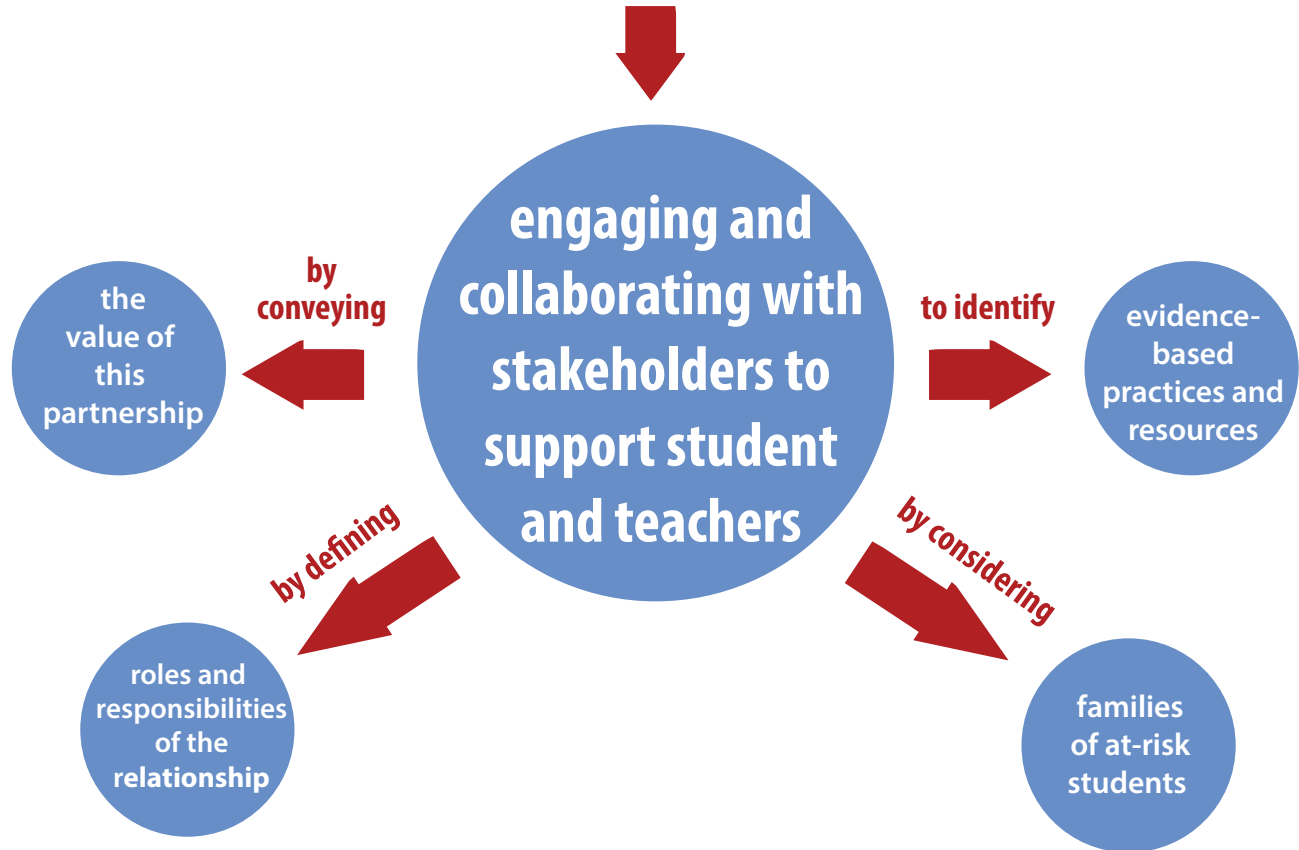
Conduct Classroom Walkthroughs Regularly and Provide Feedback <http://oregonliteracypd.uoregon.edu/topic/conduct-classroom-walkthroughs-regularly-and-provide-effective-feedback>

Dufour and Eaker—Professional Learning Communities at Work DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998).



COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

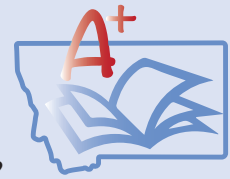
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Improving Instruction Component – Community and Family Engagement

Essential Questions

- What is community and family engagement, and why is it necessary?
- How do collaborative partnerships ensure supportive transitions from one literacy setting to the next?
- What are some considerations for engaging families of disadvantaged students?
- What evidenced-based practices and resources are available to support community and family engagement?



At a Glance:

When families, communities, and schools work in partnership, students can achieve more success, and the community benefits. Read this section to learn how schools and educators can foster family and community engagement and engage families of disadvantaged students.

1. What is community and family engagement, and why is it necessary?

Community and family engagement serves to promote and support the social, emotional, physical, academic, and occupational growth of children. Successful community and family engagement requires meaningful collaboration among youth, families, schools, employers, and agencies.

For a school community partnership to work, it is essential to build strong communication among all the participants and those who will be affected by the partnership. Stakeholders might include educators, families, community organizations, businesses, early childhood programs, local education agencies, higher education, and/or unions. The levels of communication may vary among these stakeholders, depending on the circumstances and purpose of the message. The highest level of communication is achieved through collaboration toward solving school/community issues and the sharing of expertise and resources.

“There are many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships...the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life” (Epstein, 2010).

Family engagement could be considered an intervention because it transcends a variety of casual factors that are generally associated with lower student outcomes.

Students of all ages, genders, socioeconomic status, and abilities do better in school when their families are actively involved, including:

- Earning higher grades and test scores.
 - Enrolling in higher-level programs.
 - Being promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits.
 - Attending school regularly.
 - Having better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.
 - Graduating and going on to postsecondary education.
- (Southwest Educational Development Lab, 2002)

Due to a wide range of barriers and individual differences, schools and communities should allow for participation in various ways, at different levels of commitment, and at different frequencies (Louisiana Department of Education, 2011). It is important that school and district administration and staff members communicate literacy goals and expectations to stakeholders and collaborate to meet desired outcomes.

Collaboration

- Provides the link between a student's home and school life and establishes consistent support for the development of the whole child.
- Aids with family engagement, which increases academic achievement and honors diversity within the community.

Meaningful Two-Way Communication

- Raises awareness of the role that literacy plays in the future.
- Provides strategies and materials that support literacy learning at home.
- Provides all with the understanding and tools to advocate for literacy education.
- Increases conceptual understanding of literacy content.
- Promotes a positive, social mindset of literacy.

2. How do collaborative partnerships ensure supportive transitions from one literacy setting to the next?

It is the responsibility of all community-based, collaborative partnerships to ensure supportive transitions for students from one literacy setting to the next (e.g., local library supports school literacy events, school encourages participation in library summer reading programs). Community-based partnerships and local resources should be recognized and encouraged to be actively involved in all local and school literacy activities. Schools should strive to create a coordinated system of support that links families with local community resources and provides greater support for students in achieving literacy skills for college and career readiness.

Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University has developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement (Epstein, 2010). This framework assists educators in developing school and family partnership programs.

The information below defines the six types of involvement framework. The following information is excerpted from Epstein's work.

Parenting: Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

Parent education training
Family support programs
Home visits

Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
Conferences Consistent communication tools (notices, newsletters, phone calls) Language translators as necessary
Volunteering: Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families and community members as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs (Henderson & Berla, 2001).
School and classroom volunteer programs Special events volunteer programs
Learning at home: Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.
Information on homework policies Information on how to access assistance with homework
School decision-making: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.
Parent organizations such as PTA/PTO Advocacy groups for school improvement
Collaborating with the community: Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.
Information accessible for services related to health, cultural, recreational, etc.

Sharing information about literacy expectations is a district and school responsibility

Parents and families should be informed of the literacy expectations as outlined in the Montana Content Standards and the MELS and updated regularly on their student's progress toward meeting those expectations. Parents and families of students receiving Tier II and III interventions should receive updates on their child's progress toward meeting those expectations at least six times a year. Developmental milestones, foundational concepts, and sequential progressions in literacy should be shared with parents as necessary.

3. What are some considerations for engaging families of disadvantaged students?

Culturally and linguistically sensitive partnerships

Parents and families also need to be engaged as partners in ways that are culturally and linguistically sensitive. A family's involvement in their child's education is recognized by many as the single most important factor in school success and achievement. Research has shown that not only does family engagement increase academic achievement, as reflected in higher test scores and graduation rates, but it increases the likelihood that youth will pursue higher education (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Research has shown that families who are engaged in their child's learning experiences early (preschool) are more likely to be engaged as they continue in their school experience. Many families need assistance to be able to actively participate in their child's education. Successful schools help families become active participants by supporting families in feeling welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to the staff, and to what their child is doing in school.

Supporting families experiencing homelessness

Families experiencing homelessness face many barriers to successfully supporting their child's learning and educational success. McKinney Vento and Title I grant funds can be used to provide transportation to families

so that they can attend school functions, including Individualized Education Programs, meetings, parent-teacher conferences, family engagement activities, and other school sponsored events in which their child is participating. Funds can also be used to help teachers meet with parents off school grounds. This could include events held at local homeless shelters, churches, community centers, libraries, parks, or other places located in areas where families experiencing homelessness can access. When working with homeless families, schools are encouraged to use a two-generation approach, providing educational supports, resources, and referrals to both the parents/guardians and the child. Mentorship programs can offer additional supports for students outside the traditional family structure.

Supporting families of incarcerated students

Families of formerly incarcerated students, or any student in contact with the juvenile justice system, may vary widely based on the issues that the student is facing. Educators should work closely with local juvenile probation officers, group home directors, or facility directors to determine appropriate supports. Families may need mental health or substance abuse resources for their child. Like families experiencing homelessness, a two-generation approach is recommended. Parents/guardians may lack the skills to successfully support their child's education. Referrals to community programs that provide opportunities for restorative justice, mediation, and legal services can also be useful for these families. Mentorship programs can offer additional supports for students outside the traditional family structure.

<https://neglected-delinquent.ed.gov/resource/ndtac-guide-family-guide-getting-involved-your-childs-education-jvenile-justice-facility>

Trauma aware family engagement practices

Through the emerging research of the foundational Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study done through the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, understanding of how childhood abuse and neglect impacts adults in later life health and well-being is well researched. It is critical schools explore meaningful ways to engage families as a part of a school-wide approach when considering a trauma-informed lens.

Family engagement within a school system has the possibility of enhancing a student's school performance academically and socially. Family engagement is one trauma-informed method to building school-family-community partnerships.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) outlines six principles to a trauma-informed approach.

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and transparency
3. Peer support
4. Collaboration and mutuality
5. Empowerment, voice, and choice
6. Cultural, historical, and gender issues (<https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions>)

Tools and resources for additional information on family engagement within a school-wide framework utilizing a trauma-informed lens.

- <https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/Family%20Engagement%20in%20PBIS.pdf>
- http://cshca.wengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/parent_engagement_CDC.pdf

4. What evidenced-based practices and resources are available to support community and family engagement?

"The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes practice guides to share evidence and expert guidance on addressing education-related challenges not readily solved with a single program, policy, or practice. Each practice guide's panel of experts develops recommendations for a coherent approach to a multifaceted problem. Each recommendation is explicitly connected to supporting evidence. Using What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) group design standards and WWC pilot regression discontinuity standards, the supporting evidence is rated to reflect how well the research demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommended practices."

Strong evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.

Moderate evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.

Minimal evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools (Institute of Education Science, 2017)

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/24>

More than half a million high school students drop out of school each year. This guide includes both targeted and school-wide approaches so that educators can offer support to all students as well as more intensive support for those at high risk. The target audience includes leadership teams and all educators who have contact with students.

- Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.
- Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.
- Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school.
- For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do (Institute of Education Science, 2009)

The aim of the IES guide is to help schools and districts develop practices and processes to increase access to higher education. The target audience includes leadership teams and all educators who have contact with students.

- Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by ninth grade.
- Utilize assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for college, and assist them in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified.
- Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations.
- Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry.
- Increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid.
- Checklist.

Additional Resources

Center on Instruction <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/index.cfm>

Epstein, J. L. (2010). *Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships*. Retrieved April 20, 2011, from National Network of Partnership Schools-Johns Hopkins University: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm>

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Clark-Salinas, K., Rodriguez-Jansorn, N., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002).

School, Family, and Community Partnerships. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc. Harvard Graduate School of Education <https://rides.gse.harvard.edu/family-community-partnerships>

Henderson, A. T., & Berla, N. (2001). *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*.

Washington D.C Center for Law and Education.

Learning Forward Education Association <http://www.learningforward.org/standards/index.cfm>

Literacy First <http://www.literacyfirst.com/process/development.shtml>

Louisiana Department of Education. (2011). *Louisiana's Comprehensive Literacy Plan*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana Department of Education.

National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition

<http://www.nasetalliance.org/family/index.htm> Suite 101: Educational Issues

<https://www.loveandlogic.com>

<http://consciousdiscipline.com/>

<https://www.naeyc.org/familyengagement/principles/2>

<http://www.adi.org/journal/ss05/Graham-Clay.pdf>

<http://www.pthvp.org/> parent teacher home visit trainings

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement>

Indian Ed for All resources

<http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PEd-xDpGhY&feature=youtu.be> discussing the Johnson O'Malley Funding Act and the rights of the parents of Indian children to influence school policy and procedures based on that Act

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXrCfXs0k2g&feature=youtu.be> discussing of the rights of Indian parents and tribes under impact aid and Title VI funding and the changes made by the Every Student Succeeds Act

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

is about



**supporting
teachers to
improve student
learning**

through



an
understanding
of how to offer
high quality
options for all
content areas

to identify



evidence-
based
practices and
resources

to increase



teacher
capacity

by addressing



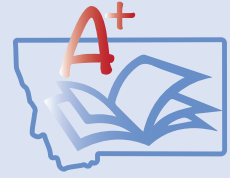
all four
categories to
impact teaching
and learning



Improving Instruction Component—Professional Development to Improve Instruction and Outcomes

Essential Questions

- What is high quality professional development, and why is it integral in providing students with effective literacy instruction?
- What are the four categories of professional development, and how do they impact the Birth to Grade 12 Continuum?
- What types of professional development activities are provided for educators?
- What evidenced-based practices and resources are available to provide relevant, high quality, job-embedded professional development?



At a Glance:

To increase educators knowledge and to provide effective instruction for all students, high quality professional development is necessary and a responsibility of all schools. Read this section to learn what high quality professional development is, how professional development activities can be provided for educators, and what evidence-based practices and resources school leaders can provide educators.

1. What is high quality professional development, and why is it integral in providing students with effective literacy instruction?

Professional development activities are an integral part of the school for providing educators (including educators, instructional coaches, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet Montana's challenging academic standards. All professional development activities should be sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data driven, and classroom focused (ESSA, 2017).

In June 2015, a group of Montana educators, administrators, and higher-education faculty came together to determine what made professional development effective. The group used the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Development, research studies, and other resources to determine that effective professional development had three factors in common.



Content that focuses on:

- Emphasizing the subject matter of the professional development.
- Specifying the changes in teaching practice that are modeled and/or demonstrated.
- Specifying goals for student learning.
- Emphasizing the ways students learn subject-matter content.

Active learning that should allow for:

- Observing of best instructional practices.
- Practicing of best instructional practices.
- Planning time for classroom implementation.
- Reviewing student work.

Coherence that should include:

- Building on what educators have already learned.
- Emphasizing content and instruction aligned with Montana content standards and local curriculum and assessments.
- Supporting educators in developing sustained, ongoing professional communication with other educators.

Evidence shows that professional learning communities, instructional coaching, and other structured learning opportunities for educators can lead to significant gains in students' achievement (Desimone, 2009).

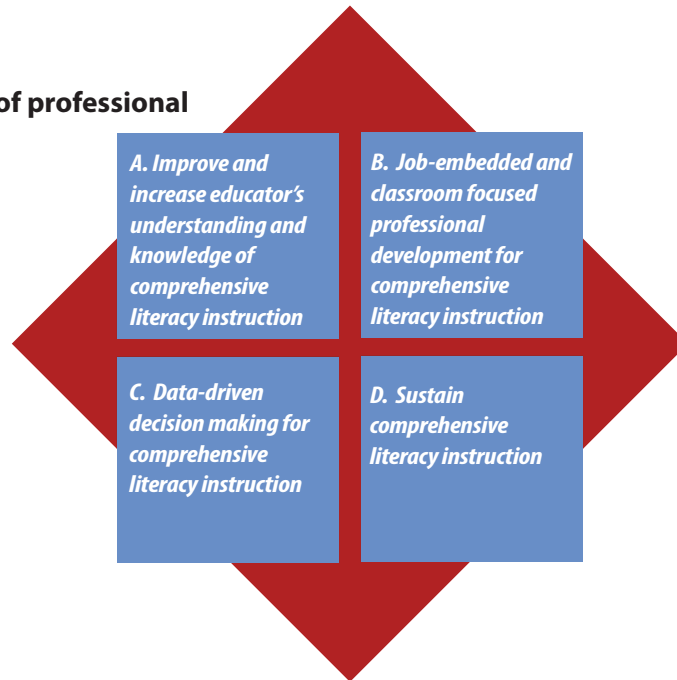
Montana has created a Comprehensive Needs Assessment that schools and districts can use to identify where strengths and weaknesses currently exist in improving teaching and learning. This assessment can be taken by all stakeholders of a school or district and allows leaders to gain a deeper understanding of areas that need to be supported through high-quality professional development at the classroom, school, and district level.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Components

- Program and/or Content Standards and Curriculum
- Assessment and Data—Driven Decision-Making to Inform Instruction
- Amount and Quality of Instruction
- Instruction and Supports for At-Risk Students
- Motivation in Teaching and Learning
- Evidenced-Based Intervention and Practice
- Academic Leadership to Improve Instruction and Outcomes
- Community and Family Engagement to Support Comprehensive Instruction

2. What are the four categories of professional development, and how do they impact the Birth to Grade 12 Continuum?

Four categories of professional development



The Four Types of Professional Development Across the Birth to Grade 12 Continuum			
	Birth to Age 5	Kindergarten through Grade 5	Middle School and High School
Improve and increase educator's understanding and knowledge of comprehensive literacy instruction	Provide professional development on the implementation of the Montana Preschool Program Guidelines and the Montana Early Learning Standards.	Provide professional development of the implementation of the Montana Content Standards, specifically the foundational skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards.	Provide professional development of the implementation of the Montana Content Standards, specifically the standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, writing, and disciplinary literacy.
Job-embedded and classroom focused professional development for comprehensive literacy instruction	Provide on-going support in all domains and content areas of early childhood through a variety of professional development activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Mentoring • Literacy teams • Professional learning communities 	Provide on-going support in all areas of comprehensive literacy instruction through a variety of professional development activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Mentoring • Literacy teams • Professional learning communities 	Provide on-going support in all areas of comprehensive literacy instruction through a variety of professional development activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Mentoring • Literacy teams • Professional learning communities

Data-driven decision making for comprehensive literacy instruction	<p>Provide ongoing support in the analysis of student data including disaggregating the data into subgroups, particularly disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Analyze data within each classroom and across classrooms for like age student groups to determine status, set goals, and monitor progress toward those goals.</p> <p>Analyze walkthrough data and student data to determine skills and needs of educators.</p>	<p>Provide ongoing support in the analysis of student data including disaggregating the data into subgroups, particularly disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Analyze data at the classroom, grade, and school levels to determine status, set goals, and monitor progress toward those goals.</p> <p>Analyze walkthrough data and student data to determine skills and needs of educators.</p>	<p>Provide ongoing support in the analysis of student data including disaggregating the data into subgroups, particularly disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Analyze data at the classroom, content area, and school levels to determine status, set goals, and monitor progress toward those goals.</p> <p>Analyze walkthrough data and student data to determine skills and needs of educators.</p>
Sustain comprehensive literacy instruction at the SEA and LEA levels	<p>Provide professional development for comprehensive literacy instruction for new educators.</p> <p>Complete and analyze the comprehensive needs assessment to develop an action plan aligned to the school's or district's continuous improvement cycle.</p> <p>Routinely provide academic leaders and school board members critical information of comprehensive literacy instruction and the local literacy plan.</p>	<p>Provide professional development for comprehensive literacy instruction for new educators.</p> <p>Complete and analyze the comprehensive needs assessment to develop an action plan aligned to the school's or district's continuous improvement cycle.</p> <p>Routinely provide academic leaders and school board members critical information of comprehensive literacy instruction and the local literacy plan.</p>	<p>Provide professional development for comprehensive literacy instruction for new educators.</p> <p>Complete and analyze the comprehensive needs assessment to develop an action plan aligned to the school's or district's continuous improvement cycle.</p> <p>Routinely provide academic leaders and school board members critical information of comprehensive literacy instruction and the local literacy plan.</p>

Improve and increase educator's understanding and knowledge of comprehensive literacy instruction

The Montana Content Standards set requirements not only for English Language Arts (ELA), including the reading foundational skills, but also for discipline specific literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects; therefore, a focused professional development plan is needed to prepare all educators to teach reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language effectively. In addition to understanding what to teach, educators should understand how to deliver instruction and adjust instruction based on student progress. School districts should provide regular professional development for effective use of assessments, instructional materials, and strategies for explicit, systematic, and differentiated instruction, including the Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indian Education for All. For more information about

the essential understandings, refer to Indian Education for All (Appendices). The academic leadership team should use the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) to identify and support the implementation of the necessary professional development to improve knowledge of comprehensive literacy instruction.

Literacy Instruction						
MT Early Learning Standards	Reading Foundation Skills	Standards for Literature	Standards for Informational Text	Writing Standards	Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects	Disiplinary Literacy
PreK through Grade 12						

Job-embedded and classroom focused professional development for comprehensive literacy instruction

Ongoing, job-embedded professional development is provided in many ways to meet varying staff needs. Increasing the effectiveness of professional development is the leverage point with the greatest potential for strengthening and refining the day-to-day performance of educators (Learning Forward, 2012). Professional development incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory.

Knowles (1984) identified factors that support adult learners

- Set a cooperative climate for learning in the classroom.
- Assess the learner’s specific needs and interests.
- Develop learning objectives based on the learner’s needs, interests, and skill levels.
- Design sequential activities to achieve the objectives.
- Work collaboratively with the learner to select methods, materials, and resources for instruction.
- Evaluate the quality of the learning experience and make adjustments, as needed, while assessing needs for further learning.

https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/11_%20TEAL_Adult_Learning_Theory.pdf

Simply providing or receiving professional development does not ensure that educators will implement the instructional practice. Academic leaders must set the expectations for implementation and provide feedback and support. Regular instructional walkthroughs with meaningful feedback can provide the academic leaders insight into the implementation trends for groups and individual educators. Then, feedback and support can be provided to the practice into alignment with the expectations.

Data-driven decision making for comprehensive literacy instruction

Professional development is more effective when it is an integral part of the school’s larger standards-

based reform effort and linked to content, curriculum, texts, and assessment practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Academic leaders need to use multiple sources of student and school data when planning and implementing professional development. The school leadership team uses student assessment results to identify student needs and to guide both the instructional plan for students and the professional development plan for educators. As a result, data-driven professional learning is a central part of the total school improvement effort, with the ultimate measure of success being student achievement. It is essential that professional development is provided for administrators to strengthen academic leadership.

Student level data is the achieved curriculum. It should reflect the district's intended curriculum but is dependent upon the delivered curriculum. Therefore, student level data can not only inform educators about student performance but educator performance. It is important to pair student level data with educator level data, such as walkthrough data, to obtain a comprehensive view of an educator's strengths and areas of needed improvement. Academic leaders identify needs for improvement, then differentiation, like in the classroom, should occur. Group educators with like needs provide support that may be a professional development refresher combined with a model lesson. The cycle of observation, feedback, and support should be ongoing until desired practice is implemented regularly. See the MLP Academic Leadership section.

Student level data assists educators in determining how students are progressing with the delivered curriculum and can be analyzed at the individual student level, grade level, classroom level, or intervention level. Student level data may be both in program and out of program assessments and may include student work. When overall student data is analyzed and it is determined that many students are in need, then a possible action an educator could take is evaluating the general instruction and delivery of the grade level content and improve the Tier 1 instruction. When the student need is much smaller, then a possible action for educators to take might include providing additional instructional support for those students. See the MLP Assessment and Data-based Decision Making section for more details.

Sustain comprehensive literacy instruction

Successful professional development must be job embedded, but it also must be of sustained duration. It should be included in the overall local literacy plan and is directly aligned with the district and school literacy goals and action plan. Professional development should provide ongoing support, feedback, and training for educators and academic leaders to reach high levels of student literacy learning. Additionally, as staffing changes occur, the school and district should provide professional development to new staff members and allow for personalized plans for each educator to address the specific needs that were identified through the observation and feedback cycles.

Academic leadership teams should put into practice a continuous improvement cycle. Therefore, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment should be regularly taken and analyzed, instructional walkthroughs should be regularly conducted, and student level and educator level data should be regularly analyzed. These data should be analyzed to determine the action plan that include goals and actionable steps to attain those goals. Additionally, continually monitoring these data and the progress of the action plan is necessary and all part of the continuous improvement cycle.

3. What types of professional development activities are provided for educators?

School-wide collaboration and professional development should incorporate all school staff including educators, academic leaders, paraprofessionals, school support professionals, and early childhood educators.

When designing a comprehensive professional development plan, selecting evidence-based, collaborative strategies will positively impact educator development and student success. “Networking with colleagues through such activities as joint planning, study groups, and lesson study provides opportunities for educators to learn from one-another” (Danielson, Framework for teaching, p, 99).

Collective learning and ongoing analysis of student work and results provide educators the opportunity to openly discuss problems and concerns and share ideas about how to address those problems and concerns. Goddard and Tschannen-Moran (2007) studied student achievement in math and reading and found students have higher achievement in both “when they attend schools characterized by higher levels of educator collaboration for school improvement.” This held true even when they accounted for student characteristics such as race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Opportunities for collaboration extend to outside agencies including early childhood learning agencies on up to colleges and universities. Collaboration with Montana tribal colleges and tribal leaders will help to ensure ongoing learning focused on the Indian Education for All standards.

Professional development provides coaching and expert support

Joyce and Showers (2002) have proven that transfer of practice rarely occurs without the use of coaching within the classroom environment. Effective coaching offers educators opportunities to practice new strategies more often and with greater skill. Educators who have had experience with classroom coaching are able to adapt new strategies more appropriately to their own goals and contexts, retain and increase skills over time, and are more likely to explain the teaching strategies to their students, ensuring that students understand what is expected of them. Coaching provides educators opportunities to learn from and with one another within the classroom and can increase the instructional capacity of schools and educators and, in turn, increase student learning.



Differentiated Support	Classroom Management	New Staff	Disadvantaged and English Learners
Professional development should meet the needs of the school system as evidenced by school data, but it should also be tailored to meet the needs of the individual educators. Individual action plans should be established to help educators develop the skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of the students served. As part of the professional goal setting process identified in the Montana EPAS system, educators should work collaboratively with academic leadership to identify personalized professional development goals and action plans that fit within the local literacy plan.	<p>When considering comprehensive professional development plans, schools should make sure to address classroom routines and management strategies that support school literacy goals.</p> <p>These include ensuring high levels of student engagement, identifying time on task, and creating routines that support school-wide and classroom literacy (Knight, J, 2007).</p>	Coordinating support for new staff must include resources, strategies, and practices for understanding the operational infrastructure of the school community. Although educator ability is not the only factor that plays into students' success in school, studies have shown that students with more experienced and better trained educators tend to score better on standardized tests. Schools who have mentoring and peer network processes for new educators to engage in discussion, self-reflection, and planning with experienced educators improve educator performance as well as the new educators' professional well-being.	Professional development plans should also address English language learners to ensure "experiences provide a common understanding of EL education core practices and enable educators to develop a shared language, build their background knowledge, discuss ideas with colleagues and experience effective practices as learners" https://eleducation.org/resources/framework-for-professional-development-in-el-education-schools .

Professional development offers opportunities for feedback and reflection.

The Montana EPAS system places a heavy emphasis on actionable feedback and reflection. "As in other professions, the complexity of teaching requires continued growth and development for educators to remain current" (Danielson Framework for Teaching, 2013, p. 99). When establishing the professional development plan, plan for feedback and reflection to facilitate the process of creating a school-wide culture of literacy.



Below are summaries of job-embedded professional development activities

Action Research	Action research allows for educators to select an aspect of their teaching to systematically investigate, such as their wait time during questioning. They record data and consider theories from the research literature, drawing conclusions about how teaching is influencing learning, and vice versa, and informing future instructional decisions. The primary intent of action research is to improve the educators' immediate classroom teaching. Secondly, if applicable, the intent is to generalize it across other contexts in the school or beyond (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).
Instructional Coaching	Instructional coaching differs from mentoring in its focus on the technical aspects of instruction rather than the larger personal and nonacademic features of teaching (Rowley, 2005). An instructional coach provides ongoing, consistent follow-up by way of demonstrations, observations, and conversations with educators as they implement new strategies and knowledge. Typically, instructional coaches have expertise in the applicable subject area and related teaching strategies. Some coaches continue to teach part-time, some come from the school, and others travel throughout the district working with educators. The National Staff Development Council offers multiple resources for instructional coaching, including publications and interactive online tools http://www.nsd.org .
Critical Friends Group	Critical friends groups meet and analyze each other's work including artifacts such as student work, a lesson plan, or assessment. They also may discuss challenges they are facing with presenting the subject matter or with meeting a students' needs. See Norman, Golian, and Hooker (2005) for illustrative examples.
Data Teams	Data teams meet and analyze results from standardized tests or educator-created assessments. Together, they formulate what the evidence from the data tells them about student learning and discuss teaching approaches to improve student achievement. Educators also may work on refining assessments to gather more useful student data.
Examining Student Work/ Tuning Protocol	Examining student work enables educators to develop a common understanding of good work, identify student misconceptions, and evaluate their teaching methods. Through the tuning protocol, educators share student work (or their assignments and rubrics), describing the context in which the work is used. Other educators ask questions and then provide feedback on how the work may be fine-tuned to improve student learning. (Blythe, Allen, and Powell, 1999) and Brown-Easton, 1999) for more details.
Implementing Individual Professional Growth Learning Plans	Alongside an academic leader, such as a master educator, the principal, or members of a professional learning community, educators develop their own professional growth plans to understand what professional development opportunities they should engage in as well as to track their growth in a competency area.
Lesson Study	During sessions known as "research lessons," educators alternate in preparing a lesson to demonstrate a specific teaching and learning goal (e.g., help a student master a literacy skill, conduct a peer review of writing within groups). Other educators observe and document what they see through video, a word processor, or pencil and paper. After the lesson, the educators meet and discuss the strengths of the lesson and make suggestions for improvement. Sometimes, the lesson is revised and presented again. (Stepanek, Appel, Leong, Mangan, and Mitchell, 2006 and Lewis, Perry, and Murata, 2006) for practical implications.

Mentoring	Increasingly implemented as part of the induction phase for new educators, mentoring may develop into coaching or peer support relationships as educators gain experience. Best practice includes matching educators of the same content area, establishing common planning time, and structuring time for further collaboration. Mutual observance of classroom teaching is usually included. (Portner 2005) or visit the New Educator Center website http://neweducatorcenter.org/ for more information.
Portfolios	Portfolios are educator assembled lesson plans, student work, reflective writing, and other materials that are used to prepare for teaching or are used directly in the classroom. This body of work can be used to track an educator's development in a competency area or for reference by other educators. Educators report that developing a portfolio is a powerful learning activity as they reflect on their teaching practice considering standards (Gearhart & Osmundson, 2009).
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	<p>PLCs allow educators to collaborate and analyze their practice and discuss new strategies and tactics, testing them in the classroom, and reporting the results to each other. Hord (1997) lists five attributes of effective professional learning communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive and shared leadership • Collective creativity • Shared values and vision • Supportive conditions • Shared personal practice <p>Professional learning communities address educator isolation, create shared educator responsibility for all students, and expose educators to instructional strategies or knowledge they did not have access to previously. Such communities can be a venue for job embedded professional development as well as other forms of reform-based professional development.</p>
Study Groups	In small groups or as a faculty, educators generate topics for study related to school improvement goals or student data and then read and react to educational research or other literature on teaching and student learning. They engage in structured dialogue or discussion that explores issues deeply and considers the implications for school or classroom practices.
Online Professional Development	<p>While there is a plethora of online professional development, the OPI provides the following resources for professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learning HUB www.opi.mt.gov/learninghub • The OPI Learning Opportunities Portal http://www.mtplportal.org • Montana Teach http://montanateach.org • Social Media resources: #mtedchat

Professional Development Planning Template

Long Term Goal							
Short Term Goals							
	Type of PD	Date of PD	PD Trainer	Attendees	Materials	Location	Monitor Implementation
PD for <i>all</i> educators							

PD for some educators							
PD for few or individual educators							

4. What evidence-based practices and resources are available to provide relevant, high quality, job-embedded professional development?

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Strong evidence means positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.

Moderate evidence means well-designed studies show positive impacts, but there are questions about whether the findings can be generalized beyond the study samples or whether the studies definitively show evidence that the practice is effective.

Minimal evidence means that there is not definitive evidence that the recommended practice is effective in improving the outcome of interest, although there may be data to suggest a correlation between the practice and the outcome of interest.

The following resources point to specific IES guides that align with this section of the MLP. Click on the link(s) to download the entire guide(s).

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making (Institute of Education Science, 2009) https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

How educators use the collected data to better inform instructional practice is the focus for this guide. It provides a framework for using student achievement data to support instructional decision making. The target audience includes school leadership teams, instructional coaches, and educators.

Recommendations:

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.
- Establish a clear vision for school wide data use.
- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.
- Develop and maintain a districtwide data system.
- Checklist.

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades (Institute of Education Science, 2009) <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>

The aim of the IES guide is to help elementary schools implement an RtI framework to ensure all students, regardless of skill level, learn to read. The target audience includes academic leaders, instructional coaches, school leadership teams, and educators.

- Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.
- Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels (Tier 1).
- Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20-40 minutes. (Tier 2).
- Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a Tier 3 intervention plan.
- Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction (Tier 3).
- Checklist (p. 9).


Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (Institute of Education Science, 2008) https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Many students in Grades 4 and up experience literacy difficulties in content areas. The five recommendations should be part of every content area classroom to allow access to content. The target audience includes leadership teams, instructional coaches, and instructional educators.

- Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
- Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.
- Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.
- Checklist.

5

Appendices



How educators use the collected data to better inform instructional practice is the focus for this guide. It provides a framework for using student achievement data to support instructional decision making. The target audience includes school leadership teams, instructional coaches, and educators.

Instructional Components

School Quality	
Not Being Implemented	1-----2-----3-----4 Sustained Practice
Subcomponents of School Quality	
CLIMATE	
Development of a vision and mission statement that leads the direction of the school.	1 2 3 4
The use of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework is clear, consistent, and evident within the school.	1 2 3 4
Meaningful annual climate goals are developed, communicated clearly, written into required plans, and revisited at least monthly with staff.	1 2 3 4
School conditions are safe, healthy, and conducive to student learning.	1 2 3 4
Parents and families feel welcome in the school and in every classroom as observers, volunteers, and active participants in the learning experience.	1 2 3 4
Culturally responsive pedagogy is a part of the school climate.	1 2 3 4
Positive environment for staff and students to create buy-in, motivation, community culture, and supportive experiences.	1 2 3 4
Identified support services for teachers, students, and families promoted for usage including homeless, foster care, English learner, special education, at-risk, etc.	1 2 3 4
Students/student focus groups provide a voice in decision-making in the school.	1 2 3 4
High-quality nutritional food follows the healthy food program guidelines and students well-being.	1 2 3 4
COMMUNICATION	
Clear, consistent, and communication of teachers, staff, administration, analysis, and students to identify and meet the needs.	1 2 3 4
Teachers, administration, and staff are provided a way to develop leadership skills through varied, quality professional learning opportunities including introductory and ongoing training on trauma, secondary trauma, and positive behavior supports.	1 2 3 4
School policies are clearly communicated to staff, students, and families regarding discipline, attendance, etc. All school affiliated calendars, including assessment schedule, published and posted no later than August.	1 2 3 4
Written and reinforced antibullying policy to ensure safe learning environment for all and aligned with Montana suicide prevention.	1 2 3 4
An effective school-wide discipline policy is utilized and supported by all staff consistently across the instructional day.	1 2 3 4
School board support of open communication, ideas, and plans that align to district goals with effective administration to meet the goals.	1 2 3 4

Comprehensive Gap Analysis

Step 1: Gather Child and Student Data

Gather both local and Montana State Assessment data including disaggregated by at-risk subgroups. Examples of possible local assessments and the Montana State Assessments are listed below. List the data you will use in the chart below.

Assessments	Birth through age 5	Students in Grades K through 5	Students in MS and HS
Local assessments	ISIP , Dial, Expressive and Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (E/ROWPVT)	That is, ISIP, DIBELS, MAP, SBAC Interim, STAR	That is, ISIP, MAP, SBAC Interim, STAR Math, ACT, Aspire
Montana Assessments	Dial (Montana Preschool Development Grant)	SBAC-Student data reports can be found on the Student Achievement data domain in the Montana Statewide Longitudinal Data System (GEMS) at http://gems.opi.mt.gov/StudentAchievement/Pages/Overview.aspx Reading Writing Mathematics	ACT SBAC-Student data reports can be found on the Student Achievement data domain in the Montana Statewide Longitudinal Data System (GEMS) at http://gems.opi.mt.gov/StudentAchievement/Pages/Overview.aspx English Mathematics Reading Science

Step 2: Analyze Child and Student Data

Analyze student data by reviewing data reports. Complete the chart below by identifying ideas for improving student outcomes (i.e., more instructional time, regular attendance, improved parent engagement for at-risk subgroups). An example has been provided for English learners.

GAPS IN DATA FOR AT-RISK SUBGROUPS			
Disaggregated Data Compared to State and Local Data			
Disadvantaged Subgroups	Gaps in Data (compared to school or state average data)	Barriers to Success (specific deficits in data)	Next Steps for Improvement
Living in poverty			
Disability			

Process to Select Relevant Evidence-Based Interventions Final

Process to Select Relevant, Evidence-Based Interventions

Prerequisite: Complete Comprehensive-Literacy Gap Analysis

After you have completed the Comprehensive-Literacy Gap Analysis and have identified needed interventions for improving comprehensive literacy instruction, use the steps below to select relevant, evidence-based interventions. The steps will help you choose an intervention that aligns with your local literacy plan, supported by moderate or strong evidence that is differentiated and appropriate for your children and students, and is relevant to your local project and identified needs.

Step 1: Research and identify interventions that are supported by strong or moderate evidence.

Refer to research necessary to identify relevant interventions that are supported by moderate or strong evidence. The Office of Public Instruction recommends What Works Clearinghouse or the practice guides from the Institute on Education Sciences. These two sources provide an easy way to justify moderate or strong evidence in your MCLP Subgrantee Grant Application. If subgrantees choose to use other sources to select relevant, evidence-based interventions, additional validation demonstrating moderate or strong evidence will be required (i.e., attaching the study as an appendix).

- What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
- Institute on Education Sciences Resources such as their Practice Guides <https://ies.ed.gov>
- Other reputable source for interventions. Be sure the research study from these sources demonstrates moderate or strong evidence.
 - ERIC: <https://eric.ed.gov/>
 - JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>
 - Google Scholar: www.google.com/scholar
- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development Database: www.blueprintsprograms.com/
- Results First Clearinghouse <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2014/09/results-first-clearinghouse-database>
- Lists of programs reviewed by other departments of education.
 - Colorado Department of Education–K-3 programs
 - <http://cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/programming>
 - Louisiana Department of Education
 - <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/ONLINE-INSTRUCTIONAL-MATERIALS-REVIEWS/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>

Definitions of Evidence

- Is there at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study and a summary of the research included? (Strong evidence–meets MCLP Grant priority)
- Is there moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study? (Moderate evidence—meets MCLP Grant priority)
- Was there promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias? (Promising evidence–does not meet MCLP Grant priority)

Birth - Age 5	0	1	2	3	4	K	1	2	Definition
Communication and Language Development: Communication is the process of exchanging information through a common system of signs, gestures, symbols, and behaviors. Language development is the emerging ability of children to communicate with others to build relationships, share meaning, and express needs.									
Receptive Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		(Listening and Understanding) Children use listening and observation skills to make sense of and respond to spoken language and other forms of communication. Children enter into the exchange of information around what they see, hear, and experience. They begin to acquire an understanding of the concepts of language that contribute to further learning.
Developmental Continuum Benchmarks	a. React to familiar voices, sounds, words, facial expressions, and gestures								
	b. React to simple familiar words								
	c. Respond to simple where questions with words, gestures, or actions								
	d. Follow simple one-step directions related to her immediate and visible context								
	e. Use one or two words to respond to what, who, whose, and where questions in context								
	f. Respond to songs, rhymes, or stories								
	g. Follow a two-step interrelated direction								
	h. Demonstrate an understanding of words that describe spatial concepts								
	i. Use and respond to how, why, and when questions appropriately								
	j. Follow three and four-step directions								
	k. Focus on meaning of words to enhance understanding and build vocabulary								
Expressive and Social Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		(Speaking and Signing) Children develop skills in using sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and words for a variety of purposes, such as to help adults and others understand their needs, ask questions, express feelings and ideas, and solve problems. Social Communication - Children develop skills to interact and communicate with others in effective ways.
Developmental Continuum Benchmarks	a. Use a variety of sounds to communicate								
	b. Make sounds or signs in response to people and the environment								
	c. Experiment making different sounds								
	d. Follow simple one-step directions related to her immediate and visible context								
	e. Use consistent combinations of sounds or signs to indicate special objects or people								
	f. Respond to simple requests or comments with nonverbal or verbal answer								
	g. Use single words to communicate								
	h. Ask others to label unfamiliar objects								
	i. Produce two-word phrases								
	j. Talk or vocalize to self during play								
	k. Use multi-word phrases and full sentences								
	l. Express feelings with words								
	m. Initiate and participate in conversations with peers and adults								
	n. Use increasingly longer sentences								
	o. Demonstrate correct grammar								
	p. Use new words								
	q. Relate a story or event with increasing detail and coherence								
English Learners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		Dual Language Acquisition. Children develop competency in their home language while becoming proficient in English.
Developmental Continuum Benchmarks	a. Use home or first language								
	b. Demonstrate a period of adjustment to learning a new language								
	c. Follow simple directions in home language or in English								
	d. Speak in short phrases in English								
	e. Use English for informal purposes and rely on home language for formal learning								
	f. Adjust communication form for the audience								
Social Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		Children develop skills that help them interact and communicate with others in effective ways.
Developmental Continuum Benchmarks	a. Gaze at familiar adults								
	b. Respond when name is said								
	c. Use gestures and sounds to communicate and interact with others								
	f. Engage in give-and-take interactions								
	g. Initiate communication with others								
	h. Demonstrate turn-taking in play and conversation								

Birth-Grade 12	0	1	2	3	4	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Definition
Communication and Language Development: Communication is the process of exchanging information through a common system of signs, gestures, symbols, and behaviors. Language development is the emerging ability of children to communicate with others to build relationships, share meaning, and express needs.																			
Receptive Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												(Listening and Understanding) Children use listening and observation skills to make sense of and respond to spoken language and other forms of communication. Children enter into the exchange of information around what they see, hear, and experience. They begin to acquire an understanding of the concepts of language that contribute to further learning.
Expressive and Social Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												(Speaking and Signing) Children develop skills in using sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and words for a variety of purposes, such as to help adults and others understand their needs, ask questions, express feelings and ideas, and solve problems. Social Communication - Children develop skills to interact and communicate with others in effective ways.
E Learners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												Dual Language Acquisition. Children develop competency in their home language while becoming proficient in English.
Literacy: Early or emergent literacy develops as children become aware of the relationship between the written and spoken word. Young children develop skills in using symbols, language, and images to become interested and competent in learning to read, write, and represent information.																			
Early Reading and Book Appreciation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												Children develop an understanding, skills, and interest in the symbols, sounds, and rhythms of written language as they also develop interest in reading, enjoyment from books, and awareness that the printed word can be used for various purposes.
Print Development and Writing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												Children demonstrate interest and skills in using symbols as a meaningful form of communication.
Print Concepts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												Children develop an understanding that print carries a message through symbols and words and that there is a connection between sounds and letters (the alphabetic principle). (Foundational Skills Page 17)
Phonological Awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												Children develop an awareness of the sounds of letters and the combinations of letters that make up words and use this awareness to manipulate syllables and sounds of speech. (Foundational Skills Page 17)

ACTION PLAN

School:	Leadership Team Members:	Date:
Goal #1:		
Correlating Subcomponent(s) CNA		
Action Step 1:	Person Responsible:	Resources Needed: Timeline:
Action Step 2:	Person Responsible:	Resources Needed: Timeline:
Action Step 3:	Person Responsible:	Resources Needed: Timeline:

Goal #2:		
Correlating Subcomponent(s) CNA		
Action Step 1:	Person Responsible:	Resources Needed: Timeline:
Action Step 2:	Person Responsible:	Resources Needed: Timeline:



School name
Data Worksheet

School Data

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Fall			
Winter			
Spring			

Grade Level Data

Gr.		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
K	Fall Prediction			
	Fall Data			
	Winter Goal			
	Winter Data			
	Spring Goal			
	Spring Data			
Gr.		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1	Prediction			
	Fall Data			
	Winter Goal			
	Winter Data			
	Spring Goal			
	Spring Data			
Gr.		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
2	Prediction			
	Fall Data			
	Winter Goal			
	Winter Data			
	Spring Goal			
	Spring Data			
Gr.		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
3	Prediction			
	Fall Data			
	Winter Goal			
	Winter Data			
	Spring Goal			
	Spring Data			
Gr.		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
4	Prediction			
	Fall Data			
	Winter Goal			
	Winter Data			
	Spring Goal			
	Spring Data			



School Leadership Team Meetings Structured Agenda for Implementing and Monitoring		
Time: Date:	Materials Needed:	Members Present:
Implement the Plan:		
Notes:		
Next Steps: (Items that may not be on the action plan but are still important.)		

Next Meeting Structured Agenda for Implementing and Monitoring		
Time: Date: _____	Data Needed:	Agenda Items:



Continuous Improvement Cycle			
DLT	SLT		Teacher Teams
Assess Local Needs			
Gap Analysis Process for Choosing Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions twice (fall/spring)	Gap Analysis Process for Choosing Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions twice (fall/spring)	Student Data	
Student Data •	Student Data •		
Walkthrough Data •	Walkthrough Data •	Progress Monitoring Data •	
Create a Plan for Implementation			
Action Plan & Detailed Action Steps •	Action Plan & Detailed Action Steps •	Lesson Plans	
		Student Data Goals •	
Implement and Monitor the Plan			
Action Steps/Key Activities • Walkthroughs •	Action Steps/Key Activities • Walkthroughs •	Provide Instruction Tier 1: core	
		Tier 2: Strategic Support	
		Tier 3: Intensive Support	
		Student Progress Monitoring	
		Daily Observations and Anecdotal Data	

Professional Development Planning Template

Long Term Goals:							
Short Term Goals:							
	What type of PD?	When will the PD occur?	Who will provide?	Who will attend?	What materials are needed?	Where will the PD occur?	How will progress be monitored?
Professional development for all educators							
Professional development for some educators							
Professional development for few or individual educators							



TEAM MEETING CALENDAR TEMPLATE

WEEKLY FOCUS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday



