**Research for Best Practices for Elementary Reading Blocks Webinar: November 18, 2019 (See webinar for citations and details). This material provides highlights only.**

[8VAC20-131-80. Instructional Program in Elementary Schools.](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section80/)- provides specifics on the time and focus of the kindergarten through 3rd grade instructional program.

[§ 22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/section22.1-253.13%3A1/)- provides information on the Standards of Quality and the components of effective reading instruction.

[Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in K-3rd Grade-](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/14) provides specific, systematic, research-based recommendations to improving reading in early elementary school

[Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers-](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/17) provides specific, systematic research-based recommendations to improving writing in elementary school

[Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction-](https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/ila-meeting-challenges-early-literacy-phonics-instruction.pdf) Literacy Leadership brief from the International Literacy Association- provides research-based best practices on phonics instruction.

**VDOE Resources:**

[2017 *English Standards of Learning*](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2017/stds-all-english-2017.docx)

[2017 *English Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework*](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2017/cf/english-cf-2017.docx)

**Panel Discussion:**

**Dr. Tammy Milby, Director of Reading, University of Richmond**

**Questions: There were five focus questions on the essentials to literacy blocks, the reading/writing connection, advice for new teachers, differentiated instruction, and recommendations.**

**Time:** Spend time on relevant academic tasks; Value opportunities for real reading and writing; Integrate reading and writing across the content areas & SOL strands; Aim for what you desire- more minutes per day focused on literacy! Primary- 120 minutes (90 is a minimum) Upper Grades- 90 minutes (60 is really a minimum)

**Physical Space:** How does the classroom arrangement support literacy? How meaningful is the print around the room? Does the classroom include: Literacy focused centers or stations? Choices? Word wall words at eye level? Anchor charts and visuals created with learners? Spaces appropriate for lessons and independent work? Published student work and writing?

**Access to Literature:** Select high quality literature; Balance fiction and informational texts; Utilize diverse texts across genres; Include all kinds of print (magazines, newspapers, source documents, pamphlets, references, menus); Volume (more minutes of reading can help to raise achievement); Interactive Read Alouds and Think Alouds = promote comprehension

**Instruction:** Whole Class: Build Community, Strategy Focus (Variety); Small Groups and Independent Reading- Provide for individual differences & extra help, Use data to determine specific needs and make groups flexible; Intervention (appropriate level of challenge)- People are a resource, who is most skilled to support the learner?

**Motivation:** Motivation has a significant impact on students’ learning (Pressley, 2001)

**Affective factors build engagement:** Foster a positive & encouraging environment with high expectations. Ask yourself-Is the task worthwhile? Is it interesting? Are students challenged? Cooperation is encouraged (lively and enthusiastic work space); Hands-on learning and manipulatives are used for learning goal; Well-established routines and procedures

**Advice for ALL:** Think Aloud & Model for your Students; Use literature whenever possible; get to know your learners and build relationships

**Differentiation:** Think about the needs of all learners (including those needing extra help, those on level, and higher achieving readers); Use a variety of literature and vary groups; Think about an up front/proactive approach to differentiation (UDL)- Can you engage in a different way? Choice, text, authentic task, visuals or hands-on? Can you vary the approach to teaching content?

**Research into Practice-** We do lots of work on fluency (including reading with expression) to build confidence & automaticity; Choral reading and echo reading; repeated text readings (voices, phrases); Readers Theatre

**Lori Wall, Director of Elementary Curriculum, Newport News Public Schools**

**Question One:** What are the essentials of the elementary literacy block?

**Answer:** 5 components of effective reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension), 4 skills of communication (speaking, listening, reading and writing), Integration across the day, choice and voice, application through real world experiences

**Question Two:** In what ways have you worked to incorporate the recommendations from the IES practice guides into the elementary literacy block?

**Answer:** Switch to a Code-Based Approach to literacy instruction in grades K-2, Implementation of Daily PPAC in Kindergarten and First Grade, Explicit phonemic awareness instruction in small group instruction for Emergent and Beginning Learners, Systematic and explicit handwriting instruction, Explicit and systematic phonics and spelling instruction, Use of decodable text to apply decoding strategies learned,

Writer’s Workshop Model

**Question Three:** What does differentiated instruction look like? Describe students’ daily routines.

**Answer:** Understanding and using a Balanced assessment approach (diagnostic, formative, and summative), Developmental Reading Continuum, Explicit instruction to address skill areas, like phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary, and grade level material with the appropriate scaffolds

**Question 4:** Describe how the reading/writing connection has been incorporated into students’ daily experiences.

**Answer:** Reciprocity between our Reading and Writing units of study; Use of Reader Response Journal; Studied the work of Jennifer Serravallo, Understanding Texts and Readers and Reading Conferences; Literature Circles/Book Clubs; Celebrations/Presentations at the end of each writing unit; Performance-Based Assessments; Use of technology

**Question 5:** What suggestions can you offer for divisions who are reworking their elementary literacy blocks to be efficient and effective?

**Answer:** Do your research, analyze your data, audit your practices.