# Agenda Item: A

## Date: May 11, 2023

## Title: First Review of Virginia Literacy Act Core Instructional Program Guide

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#### Presenter: Jenna Conway, Deputy Superintendent

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state law.

## Executive Summary:

The Virginia Literacy Act (VLA), passed by the Virginia Legislature in 2022, and expanded in 2023, focuses on improving literacy outcomes for all students in the Commonwealth. The VLA requires that “each local school board shall provide a program of literacy instruction that is aligned with science-based reading research and provides evidenced-based literacy instruction to students in kindergarten through grade eight” (§ [22.1-253.13:1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/section22.1-253.13%3A1/#v1/) G). To support school divisions to comply with this requirement, the VLA requires the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to develop a list of instructional programs in literacy – including core, supplemental, and intervention – that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) and align with science-based reading research (SBRR). Recommended resources must also be aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL).

VDOE, in partnership with the Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) at the University of Virginia, has conducted Cycle 1 of reviews, which focused on core instructional programs for grades K-3. The Core Instructional Review Process is unique to Virginia and consists of two phases, each with discrete rubrics for each grade level. Initial rubric drafts were developed by VLP, reviewed by national experts, Virginia higher education partners and Virginia educators. Final rubrics were posted online. The review process was designed to align with Virginia’s textbook adoption process. Reviews were conducted by Virginia educators comprised of competitively-selected teams of administrators, reading specialists, division representatives, and teachers from all eight regions. Teams were led by literacy experts facilitating the process. Reviewers conducted independent reviews using comprehensive rubrics. Facilitators met with review teams weekly for discussion of norming and building consensus. Facilitators compiled final rubric results, consulting as a facilitator team for consistency across all program submissions. The review process resulted in the recommended Core Instructional Program Guide being submitted to the VBOE for review. As additional rounds of review are completed, additions to this guide will be brought to the VBOE for approval.

The current recommendations for the Core Instructional Program Guide include eight core curriculum resources that cover either K-3 or K-2. The Program Guide enables school divisions to begin the following:

* Select and implement evidence-based literacy instruction during core instructional programing as defined in the VLA;
* Understand the strengths and challenges of each approved core curriculum to guide purchasing decision and implementation, especially when considering supplemental resources;
* Select the option that best meets the needs of their students, educators and communities; and
* Ensure compliance with the VLA by the 2024-2025 school year as required by the law.

## Action Requested:

First review. Action requested at next meeting.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive for first review the recommendation for Core Instructional Programs to comply with the VLA.

## Previous Review or Action:

## No formal action has been taken on this item previously. On March 16, 2022, the Board received an overview briefing on the VLA. On November 16, 2022, the Board received an update briefing on the VLA. On March 22, 2023, at its publicly noticed meeting, the Board received a briefing on the instructional materials review process and the intent to develop a list of instructional programs in literacy that consist of EBLI and align with SBRR and the SOL.

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## Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Subsection H 2 of § [22.1-253.13:1](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13%3A1) state that “[t]he Department shall develop a list of core literacy curricula, supplemental instruction practices and programs, and intervention programs that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with science-based reading research. The list shall be approved by the Board.”

## Timetable for Further Review/Action:

After first review, VDOE staff will post a general notice on Town Hall requesting public comment, in accordance with § 22.1-17.5 of the Code of Virginia, and will post material on the VDOE website for inspection by the public. Public comment will go to vla@doe.virginia.gov.

Final review of the Core Instructional Program Guide will take place on June 15, 2023. VDOE is launching a second review cycle for core (K-5), supplemental (K-8), and intervention (K-8) programming. Additional recommendations for the Core Instructional Program Guide as well as recommendations for a Supplemental Program Guide and Intervention Program Guide are slated to be submitted to the Board no later than the first quarter of 2024. Concurrently, the VDOE and VLP are also working with divisions who have submitted their locally-created core instructional programs to review materials for alignment with VLA and will submit recommendations to the Board on a rolling basis.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The VDOE receives state general funds to conduct the instructional materials process and produce resources to school divisions to support curriculum and resource implementation. The state is providing additional funding for reading specialists and statewide training for reading specialists, teachers and principals that will support educators to implement quality curriculum and other instructional resources.