# INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF THE DIVISION LITERACY PLAN





The Virginia Literacy Act (VLA), passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2022 and expanded in 2023, focuses on improving literacy outcomes for all students in the Commonwealth. Required by the VLA and as a best practice, school divisions should have a well-articulated Division Literacy Plan that can be shared with stakeholders and assist in communicating implementation expectations across all schools. The literacy plan is designed to improve early literacy outcomes for students in pre-kindergarten through grade eight by requiring school divisions to address how the local school board will align the following with evidence-based literacy instruction practices aligned with science-based reading research. The plan requires school divisions to plan all aspects of the Virginia Literacy Act around:

* core reading and literacy curriculum,
* evidence-based training and High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) implementation support,
* screening, supplemental instruction, and interventions
* engaging parents and caregivers in collaborative literacy development of their children

This companion document is intended to provide division level guidance and support as divisions develop their literacy plan in compliance with the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA).

The Division Literacy Plan template is broken into the following sections:

* Section One: Planning for Comprehensive Communication
* Section Two: Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)
* Section Three: Ensuring Virginia Literacy Act Evidence-Based Reading Research Training
* Section Four: Monitoring Student Assessment and Progress
* Section Five: Assessing Division Level Progress
* Section Six: Engaging Parents, Caregivers, and Community

To assist school divisions in writing their plans, each section has guiding questions and considerations to help school divisions think through their plans and answer coherently and comprehensively. VDOE will support school divisions with questions, but the intent of this document is to provide leaders with a complete set of guidelines so that the plan not only addresses the required legislation, but also is designed and aligned to the vision of the school division.

Section One: Planning for Comprehensive Communication

Superintendents and their school divisions have a responsibility for creating and communicating a literacy vision. This vision should be clearly articulated by the Superintendent and be shared with members of the school community, educators, leaders, parents, and caregivers. When a vision is effectively communicated, all members of the community, but most importantly, educators and leaders within the school division can clearly articulate the vision themselves and know and understand exactly what they are working toward to demonstrate success.

School divisions, led by their Superintendent, have the responsibility of planning for a comprehensive and intentional communication plan for the community at large. Shifting practices to evidence-based literacy instruction and adopting new materials is hard work. It will take all members of a community to help develop the skills needed to improve student achievement outcomes. Providing the community and the educators within the school division with a clear view into the specifics of how success will be measured, how the community knows that the school division is making progress on its goals, what is expected from all members of the community, as well as how they can assist in ensuring the success of this vision, is an essential part of the success of any school division and ensures coherence and continuity of services to students. School divisions should consider the following questions as they complete section one of the division literacy plan template.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

* What is your literacy vision?
* How will you communicate and ensure that all school division staff, with a focus on educators and leaders, can communicate the literacy vision of the school division?
* How will you share with the community that you are making progress on this vision, including student success metrics?
* If your school division is already implementing this work, where are you on the journey and how are you communicating this progress with your community stakeholders? Where will you go next?

Section Two: Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

High quality instructional materials (or curriculum) are an essential component for improving literacy outcomes for students. Instructional materials aligned with science-based reading research reflect practices and skills are critical for learning to read. By adopting and using HQIM, teachers will have consistent access to high-quality grade-level content and will no longer need to spend significant time searching for or creating materials. In addition, adopting and using HQIM will provide assurance that all students receive grade level instruction daily across a grade level and in every classroom across the school.

The [Approved Core Instructional Program Guide (PDF)](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50411/638336673325970000) provides an overview of the approved core instructional programs. The [list](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/english-reading-literacy/literacy/recommended-core-instructional-programs-for-grades-k-3) approved by the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) includes materials providing a systematic, cumulative approach and ensuring skills and concepts are taught and mastered in a logical, systematic order. When teachers understand their materials, they use them more effectively, students have more success, students develop into stronger readers, and teacher investment grows. When filling out this section, school divisions should consider how they will select and use materials to fill gaps, extend learning, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

* Which VDOE-approved literacy instructional materials will your division use for core curriculum, supplemental instruction, and intervention?
* How will your division use materials to support special populations within the division?
* Has your school division adopted these materials yet and if not, what is the plan to have these in place and ready for instruction for the 2024-2025 school year?

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS:

#### In classrooms across the school division, there are a multitude of learners in each classroom with a variety of needs, some very specifically designated which may require a supplemental curriculum. Therefore, the following considerations should be given for the special populations listed below. Gifted Learners:

For students identified as gifted in General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) or Specific Academic Aptitude English/Language Arts (SAA), supplemental gifted curriculum materials may be used for language arts instruction provided students also receive instruction in evidence-based reading practices from a VDOE approved core (K-5) or supplemental (K-8) program. Teachers of gifted students should have access to division-provided training on evidence-based literacy instruction and HQIM implementation support.

#### English Learners:

For students identified as [English Learners under ESSA section 8101](https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-legislation-table-contents/title-viii-general-provisions/), supplemental English Learner curriculum materials may be used for language arts instruction provided students also receive instruction in evidence-based reading practices from a VDOE approved core (K-5) or supplemental (K-8) program. Teachers of English Learners should have access to division-provided training on evidence-based instruction and HQIM implementation support.

#### Students with Disabilities:

For students with disabilities, a VDOE approved core (K-5) or supplemental (K-8) program must be implemented. Reading intervention curricula and instructional strategies must align with evidence-based practices grounded in science-based reading research and be based on specifically designed instruction and the nature and severity of the student’s disability and need for specially designed instruction. School divisions must ensure teachers of students with disabilities receive training on evidence-based instruction and HQIM implementation support.

Note the following:

1. Core HQIM may be the same for general education and special populations.
2. Until supplemental and intervention materials have been Board approved, divisions may list this item as “TBD” on the Division Literacy Plan. It is possible that supplemental and intervention materials will only be approved for certain instructional components. Divisions may only use the approved instructional components of selected Board approved supplemental and intervention materials.

Section Three: Ensuring Virginia Literacy Act Evidence-Based Reading Research Training

Implementing the VLA will require training in knowledge building of evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with science-based reading research. This knowledge building training for teachers, reading specialists, special educators, ESL teachers, and building administrators will not only ensure educators understand the pedagogy around evidence-based reading research, but will also support the understanding of and effective use of high-quality instructional materials and practices. This training in evidence-based literacy instruction is required by the VLA and should be noted in the plan as to not only what training will be used but for whom and when it will take place.

School divisions should also plan for support in the implementation of HQIM that has been adopted. Therefore, the VLA required curriculum materials should be part of the division literacy plan as educators will be interacting with the newly adopted high-quality instructional materials in combination with pedagogical practices. When planning for curriculum based HQIM implementation support, school divisions should consider who should be included in this training. Training in high quality instructional materials should extend beyond the core content area teachers to include ELL teachers, gifted teachers, and special education teachers.

The combination of these experiences will have a considerable impact on the literacy outcomes for all learners and support the division in achieving their literacy priorities. School divisions should consider any ongoing evidence-based literacy instruction training and HQIM implementation support that may be needed to ensure that educators, including building leaders, are fully grounded in implementation of the science-based reading research and the newly adopted HQIM.

Section Four: Monitoring Student Assessment and Progress

The Virginia Language and Literacy Screener (VALLS) is the screener provided and approved by the Virginia Department of Education. School divisions are required to utilize the VALLS screener. VDOE has [provided a link here](https://literacy.virginia.edu/sites/g/files/jsddwu1006/files/2023-02/revisions-to-literacy-screener-flyer-v5%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf) to share more about the new VALLS screener to support school divisions in understanding the role of VALLS in their literacy plan. Using the VALLS screener for progress monitoring is an essential component to improving outcomes for students and guiding instruction in the classroom. Using the VALLS data to provide support to educators as they work with students is foundational to the success of the students as they grow into strong readers.

In addition to the required VALLS screener, some school divisions may decide to have additional literacy assessment tools that are used within a school division to monitor student growth and progress. When used consistently and continuously, progress monitoring allows divisions to identify individual student areas of growth and challenges to support instructionally. When completing this section, school divisions should consider the list of progress monitoring tools currently in place within the division. It may be helpful to consider how often progress monitoring occurs, what information is collected, and how that information fits within the comprehensive plan, so that divisions can quickly react when priorities need to shift in support of student learning.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

* Which tools will your division use to monitor student progress beyond VALLS?
* How often will you screen and/or assess students to progress monitor their improvement?
* What role do teachers, school leaders, and reading specialists play in using VALLS and other reading data to inform and adjust instructional practice?

Note the following: Screeners associated with Board approved materials may be listed as “TBD” until final approvals are complete.

Section Five: Assessing Division Level Progress

School division leaders will be able to monitor and assess the quality of classroom instruction to identify trends, strengths, and challenges within a building. Classroom walkthrough tools should be utilized to norm school leaders, coaches, and teachers on expectations for curriculum usage, monitoring, and support. This will allow for intentional and deep conversations around evidence-based literacy instruction, implementation of HQIM with fidelity, and the role of student assessment within a literacy classroom. For example, school leaders and reading specialists should monitor and support educators in using the VALLS and other reading data in their planning for quality literacy instruction. School leaders should ensure and monitor that data are being used to support student growth.

Clarity around the vision for quality instruction will be important for stakeholders and throughout the school division. Educators should understand what is expected of them from attending the evidence-based literacy training, the HQIM implementation support, and from the various tools and resources the school division may create to level set expectations across the school division to ensure that all students receive quality, grade level instruction daily. Communication outside of the Division Literacy Plan will be required of school division leadership to provide educators with a clear sense of expectations and support.

Therefore, as school division leaders create plans, leadership should be thinking about how progress will be assessed, monitored, and adjusted as needed at the individual school level and throughout the division. Planning in this area is essential to ensure that at the end of the first year, school division leaders, school principals, and educators are aware of the progress made on the implementation of the VLA in the first year.

### SAMPLE SUGGESTIONS INCLUDE:

* Engage in monthly walk-throughs to look for implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction
* Create look-fors per grade level on what implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction looks like per grade level
* Review student work samples from schools and analyze data across the division to determine trends and next steps
* Assess the usage of the adopted materials in all classrooms within a school
* Host monthly conversations with school level leaders around progress and data
* Communicate with building leaders to share successes and next steps for continued progress

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

* How will your division monitor the implementation of your Division Literacy Plan?
* How does your Division Literacy Plan monitor data collection and provide information to schools regarding assessment results?

Section Six: Engaging Parents, Caregivers, and Community

Parents, caregivers, and community members are instrumental partners in the education of our youth. School divisions will want to partner with parents and caregivers in this journey to provide them with the tools and resources they need to be the best advocates for children. Parents, caregivers, and community members should understand what this work will look like, both in the classroom and at home, throughout the year. This allows stakeholders to know how they can best support the local school division, individual schools, and students in increasing student achievement and fulfill the promise of creating strong readers.

When completing this section, school divisions should consider methods of communication, multiple avenues for community involvement, and treat parents and caregivers as essential supports in the education of students and increasing student literacy. It’s important to engage with parents, caregivers, and community members early and often to have the greatest impact on student outcomes. Consider who at the division and school level may serve as key points of contact for schools when organizing family literacy nights, parent resource centers, and seeking feedback when making important decisions about literacy in the school community. Various roles within the school division can help to support the community-at-large in understanding this important work and providing the tools and resources to invite parents and caregivers in as school division partners.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

* How will your division provide support and guidance to schools regarding how parents and caregivers may get involved in the development of the student reading plan?
* How will your school division share individual student data from assessments to parents and caregivers so they can understand how their child is performing in reading?
* How will your division share resources with families to support literacy development outside of school? Including parents and caregivers of gifted, English Learners, and Special Education students?
* How will your division create community partnerships around the literacy development of all students?

## AFTER WRITING THE PLAN, WHAT IS NEXT?

The VDOE is dedicated to supporting divisions as they engage in creating systems change to improve literacy outcomes for all students across the Commonwealth. Division level leaders, building administrators, reading specialists, classroom teachers, instructional aides, community stakeholders, and families all play an important role in the successful implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act. The VDOE will provide continued partnership and guidance to school divisions around the implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction, science-based reading research, and high-quality instructional materials. We know that this is very hard work and VDOE is here to support school divisions as they create their plans and move towards full implementation.

### TIMELINE FOR CREATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE DIVISION LITERACY PLAN:

* SY 2024-2025: Baseline Data Collection
  + Division Literacy Plan submitted from all school divisions - July 1, 2024
  + Approval of Division Literacy Plans from VDOE - August 1, 2024
* SY 2025-2026: Year 1 of the Biennial Division Literacy Plan
* SY 2026-2027: Year 2 of the Biennial Division Literacy Plan

SY2024-2025 will be the first year of the Virginia Literacy Act requirements. Therefore, during the first year of the VLA, VDOE is requiring a one-year plan so that school divisions, while in varying stages of implementation, can intentionally and thoughtfully think through the first year of required implementation and how to ensure all educators are trained and supported with HQIM usage. Prioritizing HQIM usage and educator training ensures a focus on student achievement and growth, allowing students to become the strongest readers possible.

### IN ADDITION, HERE ARE SOME OTHER REQUIRED NEXT STEPS:

#### Step One

Local school superintendents will be required to certify that the information reported in their division literacy plan is accurate. School divisions will bring together a cross-functional team, including the Superintendent, to create the plan and ensure all aspects of the plan not only address the required legislation, but also the vision of the school division. The VDOE will require that all local superintendents certify the plan. The division plan will be signed and submitted to the Virginia Department of Education through the SSWS portal by July 1, 2024.

#### Step Two:

Each local school board shall post, maintain, and update as necessary on each school board’s website the following:

* A copy of its Division Literacy Plan
* The job description and contact information for any reading specialist employed by the school division
* The job description and contact information for any dyslexia specialist employed by the school division

To raise awareness of the extraordinary efforts of Virginia’s school divisions in promoting literacy across the commonwealth, each Division Literacy Plan will be posted on the VDOE website. The VDOE looks forward to supporting school divisions on this journey as we know that all educators across the commonwealth want the very best for the students of Virginia. Together we can and will ensure that #EVERYBODYREADSVA.

For questions and additional support, please contact Dr. Michelle Wallace, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction at the Virginia Department of Education, michelle.wallace@doe.virginia.gov.

## Relevant legislation to support the VLA:

[§ 22.1-253.13:1. (For Effective Date, see 2022 Acts cc. 549, 550, cl. 2) Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives (virginia.gov)](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:1/)

[§ 22.1-253.13:2. (For Effective Date, see Acts 2022, cc. 549, 550, cl. 2) Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel (virginia.gov)](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:2/)

[§ 22.1-253.13:6. (For Effective date, see 2022 Acts cc. 549, 550, cl. 2) Standard 6. Planning and public involvement (virginia.gov)](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:6/)

## APPendix

### Sample Division Literacy Plan

The following document is not complete and should not be considered an exemplar.

The example document is being provided to demonstrate to divisions possible ways to develop the division literacy plan. Divisions should create a plan that is relevant to the unique needs of the students and staff in each school. Divisions should follow the guidance provided in the Guidance and Support document to create a thorough and comprehensive division literacy plan.

# Division Literacy Plan- Example Document





## Division Contact Information

School Division: **(First, Last) | name@division.domain**

Superintendent: **(First, Last) | name@division.domain**

Local School Board Chair: **(First, Last) | name@division.domain**

Division VLA Lead: **(First, Last) | name@division.domain**

Local Board Adoption Date for Division Comprehensive Plan: **00/00/0000**

SECTION ONE: Planning for Comprehensive Communication

Directions: Describe the division literacy vision and when and how the vision will be communicated with all stakeholders to be certain that all members of the community understand what progress towards this vision looks like as the VLA is implemented. Stakeholder groups may include parents, teachers, community members and other groups who have an interest in evidence-based literacy instruction in the division.

### School Division Literacy Vision:

*Enter your literacy vision here.*

Literacy is the pathway to learning across all content areas. A solid foundation in literacy should include science-based literacy practices which address literacy difficulties, setting students up for long-term success. Students will become critical thinkers who will use literacy skills to identify problems, find solutions, and analyze outcomes in service of becoming productive citizens.

| STAKEHOLDER GROUP | TIMELINE | PLAN FOR COMMUNICATING |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Ex. Parents* | *April 2024* | *Division Parent Engagement Event and PTO meetings* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Section Two: Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials

Directions: List below the HQIM selected from the Virginia Board of Education approved list for each of the following tiers and populations. Instructional resources for special populations may be the same as those for general education. If a resource (core, supplemental, or intervention) material is different for special populations, indicate which population is receiving the resource. More than one resource per division may be utilized with the school and/or grade level indicated in the chart below. “Supplemental Instruction” and “Intervention” may be listed as “TBD” until final Board approved lists are provided.Divisions ***may only use*** the approved instructional components of selected Board approved supplemental and intervention materials. *(Example: Core (K-5): General Education: Approved Program 1, Special Populations: Approved Program 1).*

| Instruction Populations | GENERAL EDUCATION | SPECIAL POPULATIONS (ELL, Gifted, SWD) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Core (K-5): | *Ex. Approved program A (ABC Elementary*  *Approved program B (DEF Primary)*  *Approved program C (HIG Combined School, grades K-5, grades 6-8 TBD)* | *All special populations will receive the same core program by school.* |
| Supplemental Instruction (K-8): | *TBD* | *TBD* |
| Intervention (K-8): | *TBD* | *TBD* |

Section Three: Ensuring Virginia Literacy Act Evidence-Based Reading Research Training

Directions: List below the evidence-based reading research training that will be utilized in the division. Include name of training, who will attend each training, and when the training will be provided.

| NAME OF TRAINING | TARGET AUDIENCE | DATE/YEAR |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Ex. LETRS* | *All Core Area Teachers, EL Instructors, Gifted and Special Education Teachers* | *June 2024 – December 2024* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Please describe what additional training will be provided for educators on adopted curricular materials and when this training will occur.

* LETRS Training: Training provided through online modules and monitored by Literacy Coaches at each school. Literacy Coaches will provide bi-weekly support during PLC meetings. Teachers will provide certificates of completion to building principals as evidence of professional learning. After each session, teachers will demonstrate evidence of implementation through lesson planning and work samples.

Section 4: Monitoring Student Assessment and Progress

Directions: List below the student assessments, screeners, and diagnostic tools that will be utilized in the division. Include how often these tools will be used. Screeners associated with Board approved materials may be listed as “TBD” until final approvals are complete.

| ASSESSMENT | HOW OFTEN | PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Ex. Virginia Language &Literacy Screener (VALLS): Pre-K* | *Beginning, Middle and End of Year* | *Reading Specialist, VALLS Coordinator* |
| *Ex. ABC Literacy Screener* | *Every two weeks* | *Classroom ELA Teachers* |
| *Ex. TBD-Intervention Assessment* | *TBD* | *TBD* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Section Five: Assessing Division Level Progress

Directions: Provide below the progress monitoring tools and resources utilized to monitor literacy progress in the division, who is responsible, and how often monitoring will occur.

| PROGRESS MONITORING TOOL | PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION | HOW OFTEN |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Ex. Classroom Walkthroughs* | *Principals* | *Bi-Weekly* |
| *Ex. ABC Literacy Analytics Reports* | *Classroom Teachers* | *Every two weeks* |
| *Ex. VALLS Pre-K Progression Charts* | *VALLS Instructors/Tutors* | *Weekly* |
| *Ex. Collaborative Planning Sessions with Lesson Plan Debrief* | *Principal and Reading Specialist* | *Weekly* |
|  |  |  |

Section Six: Engaging Parents, Caregivers, and Community

Directions: Complete the chart including information regarding parent and community engagement.

Describe your plan to involve parents and caregivers in the development and implementation of the Student Reading Plans based on diagnostic screener results.

Parents and caregivers will be informed of diagnostic screener results once completed. If the results indicate that a student has been identified for needing a Student Reading Plan, they will have the opportunity to participate in a meeting to determine the appropriate supplemental and/or interventions that will be used to support the individual student’s needs. If the parent does not attend the meeting to set goals and determine the best course of action, the Reading Intervention Team will make those determinations to build the plan. All Student Reading Plans will be provided to the parents and caregivers.

This space may be used to further describe the division’s intervention planning process used for individual students.

Describe your plan to build successful school, parent, caregiver, and community partnerships especially in relation to literacy development.

Anytown School Division has existing partnerships with XYZ University. They provide reading tutors who work virtually with students in the evenings after school with parent permission. Anytown School Division plans to expand this to include additional university partners. The following strategies will be used to grow our partnerships with families and other stakeholders.

* Parents and caregivers- Elementary PTA meetings will host parent training sessions on “How to support your growing reader at home” twice a year; Title I will host Family Engagement sessions: 1) Building home libraries with age-appropriate materials and 2) Family Reading Night
* Community Partnerships- Train volunteers from local businesses to help support reading strategies; contact the local library to establish a “Reading Buddy” program on weeknights and/or weekends

This space may be used to further explain partnership expansion relevant to the school division.

Per the Virginia Literacy Act, each local school board shall post, maintain, and update as necessary on each school board’s website a copy of its divisionwide literacy plan and the job description and contact information for any reading specialist employed by such school division pursuant to subsection G of [§ 22.1-253.13:2](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:2/) and for any dyslexia specialist employed by such school division The Department shall post each divisionwide literacy plan on its website.

Provide the link to where the divisionwide literacy plan will be housed on your school division website: *Enter the link here*

## Division Literacy Plan Certification:

We certify that the information reported in the division literacy plan is accurate. This information includes:

* Section One: Planning for Comprehensive Communication
* Section Two: Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials
* Section Three: Ensuring Virginia Literacy Act Evidence-Based Reading Research Training
* Section Four: Monitoring Student Assessment and Progress
* Section Five: Assessing Division Level Progress
* Section Six: Engaging Parents, Caregivers, and Community

Division Superintendent/ Authorized Designee Signature

Print Name

Date