

# THE VIRGINIA LITERACY ACT



Virginia Board of Education

October 2023

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

# OBJECTIVE AND AGENDA

**Today's presentation will provide an update on the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) and an overview of the instructional program reviews.**

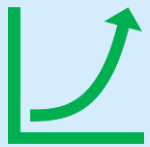
- Overview of the VLA
- Accomplishments to Date & Engagement Opportunities
- Overview of Instructional Program Reviews
- Cycle II Instructional Program Review & Next Steps

# Overview of the VLA

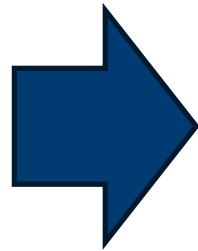
# WHY WE NEED THE VLA

**To...**

**Reverse the trend  
in literacy levels**



**Address learning  
loss from the  
pandemic**

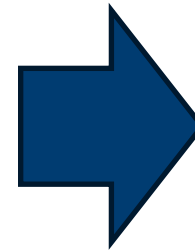


**Virginia must...**

**Provide support  
for increasing  
numbers of at-risk  
readers**



**Provide teachers with  
evidence-based  
instructional strategies  
and curricula**



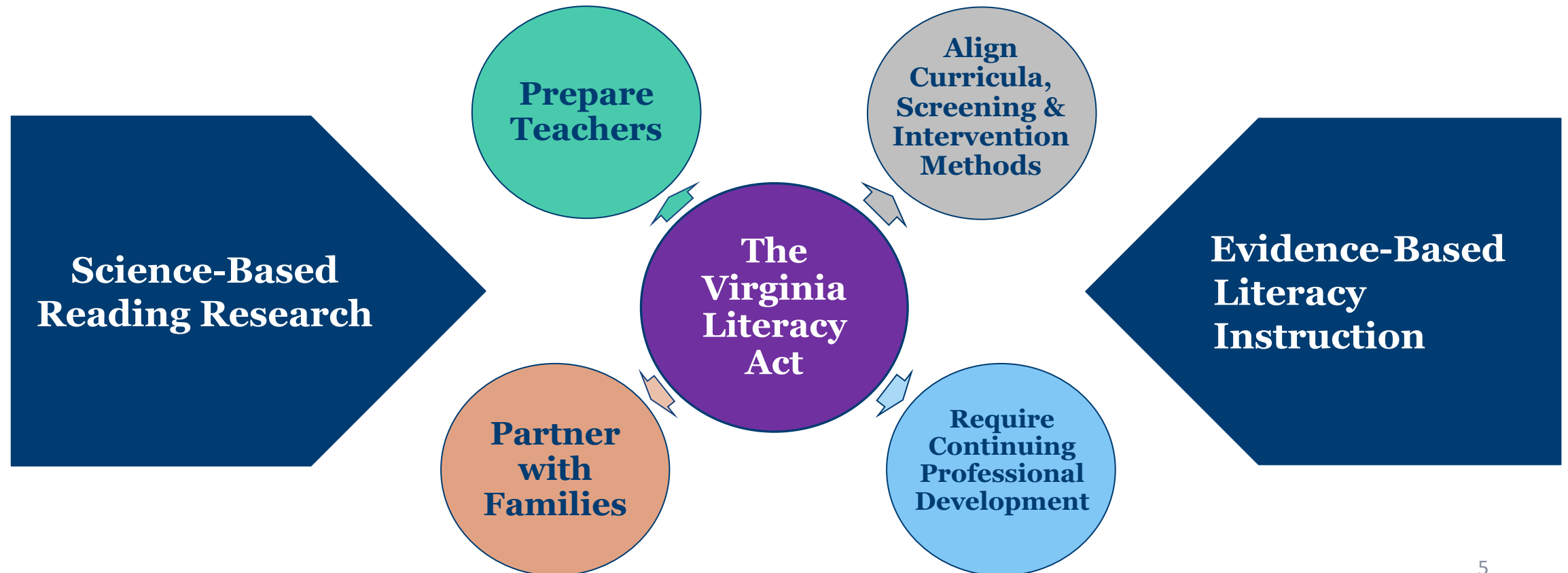
**Which will help...**

**Ensure  
all children  
read at  
benchmark in  
K-5**



# HOW THE VLA WILL IMPROVE LITERACY

Virginia is taking the lead to reverse these trends and improve early literacy outcomes for the Commonwealth's youngest learners.



# KEY COMPONENTS OF THE VLA

## 1. Defines Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction and Science-Based Reading Research

## 2. Aligns Core Curricula, Supplemental, and Intervention Materials

- Requires all divisions to use core instructional (K-5), supplemental (K-8), and intervention (K-8) programs in grades K-8 that are aligned with science-based reading research, as set out in their literacy plan.
- Adds a division-wide staffing ratio of one reading specialist per 550 students in K-5 and one reading specialist for each 1,100 students in 6-8.

## 3. Requires Professional Development for Reading Specialists, Teachers, and Principals

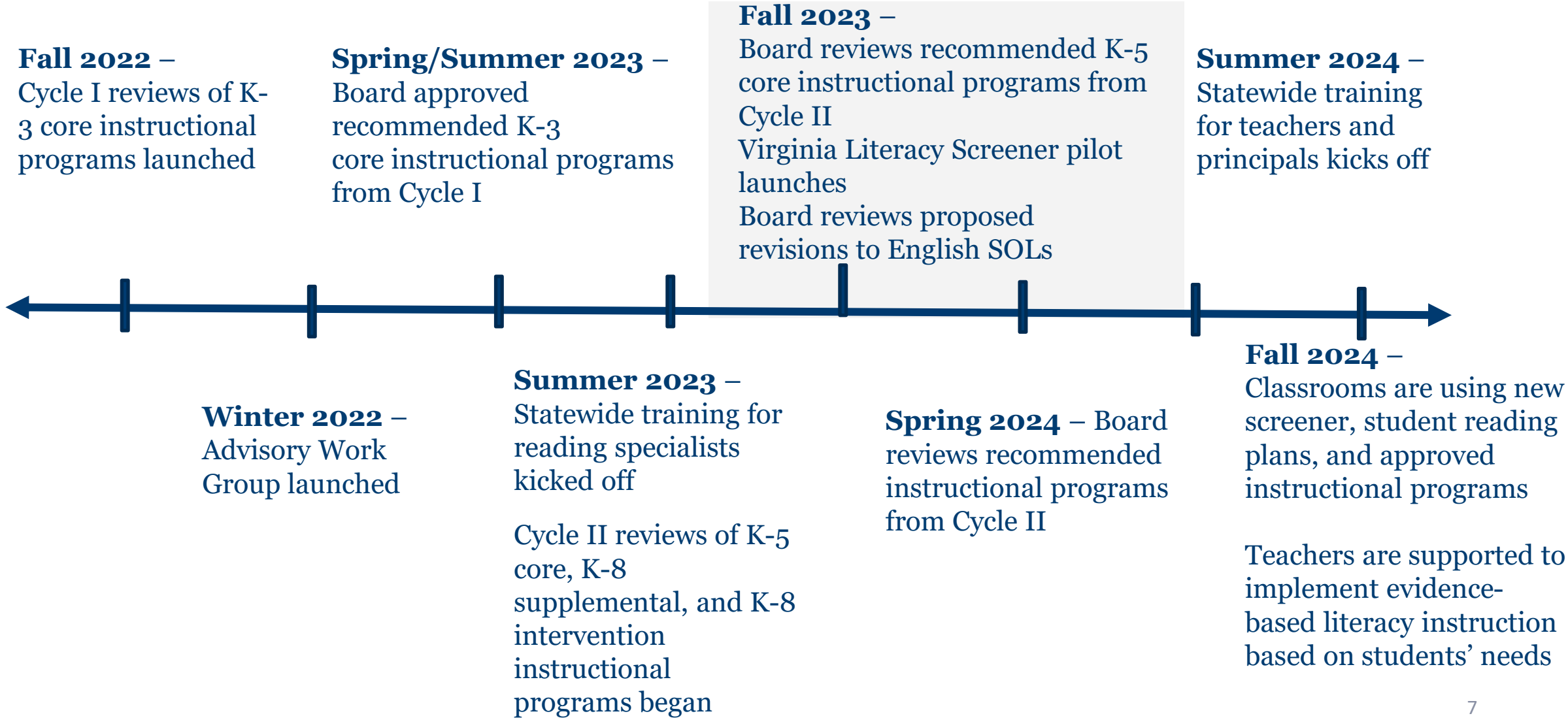
## 4. Partners with Families

- Ensures parents are engaged in student reading plans and have access to resources.

## 5. Aligns Educator Preparation and Licensure

- Requires certain educator preparation programs to ensure candidates have a program of coursework and demonstrate mastery in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction.
- Requires literacy assessment for licensure or alternate route to licensure with certain endorsements.
- Establishes a micro-credential program for add-on reading specialist endorsement.

# HIGH-LEVEL TIMELINE



# Accomplishments to Date & Engagement Opportunities



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

**The VDOE, in partnership with Virginia Literacy Partnerships at the University of Virginia, has made progress towards VLA implementation:**

- Designed, launched, and completed Cycle I of the instructional program review process, resulting in 8 core programs in the Recommended Core Instructional Program Guide for grades K-3.
- Expanded the instructional program review process in Cycle II to include core K-5, supplemental K-8, and intervention K-8 programs.
- Trained approximately 1500 reading specialists representing all school divisions in Virginia in Summer 2023.
- Launched Advisory Workgroup with 33 members that meets quarterly.
- Began piloting an updated statewide literacy screener in 17 school divisions in 2023-2024 with full statewide implementation slated for 2024-2025.
- Increased awareness via webinars, memos, meetings, and conference sessions; launch VLA-specific website.

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

**Implementing the VLA successfully requires building partnerships, securing buy-in, and ensuring the perspectives of leaders, educators, experts, and families are fully included. Here are the key ways the VDOE is engaging stakeholders:**

- Conducting quarterly meetings with the Virginia Literacy Act Advisory Work Group that includes a broad set of stakeholders (33) to solicit their insights and feedback.
- Engaging 125+ Virginia literacy experts and educators through the instructional program review process.
- Engaging a separate Task Force that is advising the pilot of Virginia's New Literacy Screener.
- Conducting outreach within existing structures including conferences, webinars, regional meetings, and other events and activities.

# Overview of Instructional Program Reviews

# PURPOSE OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

- Provide a vetted list to the VDOE and VBOE for approval
- Provide high-quality reading instruction to every student in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Ensure that evidence-based literacy curriculum is implemented during the entire literacy block
- Ensure teachers feel supported and well-equipped to meet student needs

# DEVELOPMENT OF RUBRICS

The VDOE partnered with Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) at the University of Virginia to design and implement a rigorous and comprehensive review process that is unique to Virginia, starting with the development of rubrics by grade band. To produce the rubrics, VDOE and VLP:

- Examined rubrics in other states that have similar requirements or passed similar legislation;
- Sought and incorporated feedback from national experts, Virginia K-12 educators and colleagues in higher education;
- Posted rubrics online and shared with vendors in advance; and
- Ensured that rubrics fully align with the law.

# INSTRUCTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

Using the established rubrics, VLP facilitates the reviews of K-5 core instructional programs, K-8 supplemental program, and K-8 intervention programs through a robust process led by Virginia educators.

- Reviewers include competitively-selected teachers, reading specialists, administrators, division representatives, and other educational leaders from all 8 regions of Virginia.
- The facilitator team comprises of literacy experts who train reviewers to norm on the rubrics and guide the process.
- Reviewers independently evaluate programs using a comprehensive rubric. Facilitators meet with review teams weekly to compile review findings and build consensus.
- Facilitators then integrate findings to reach a final result and norm across all program submissions.

# CORE PROGRAM REVIEWS: TWO-PHASE PROCESS

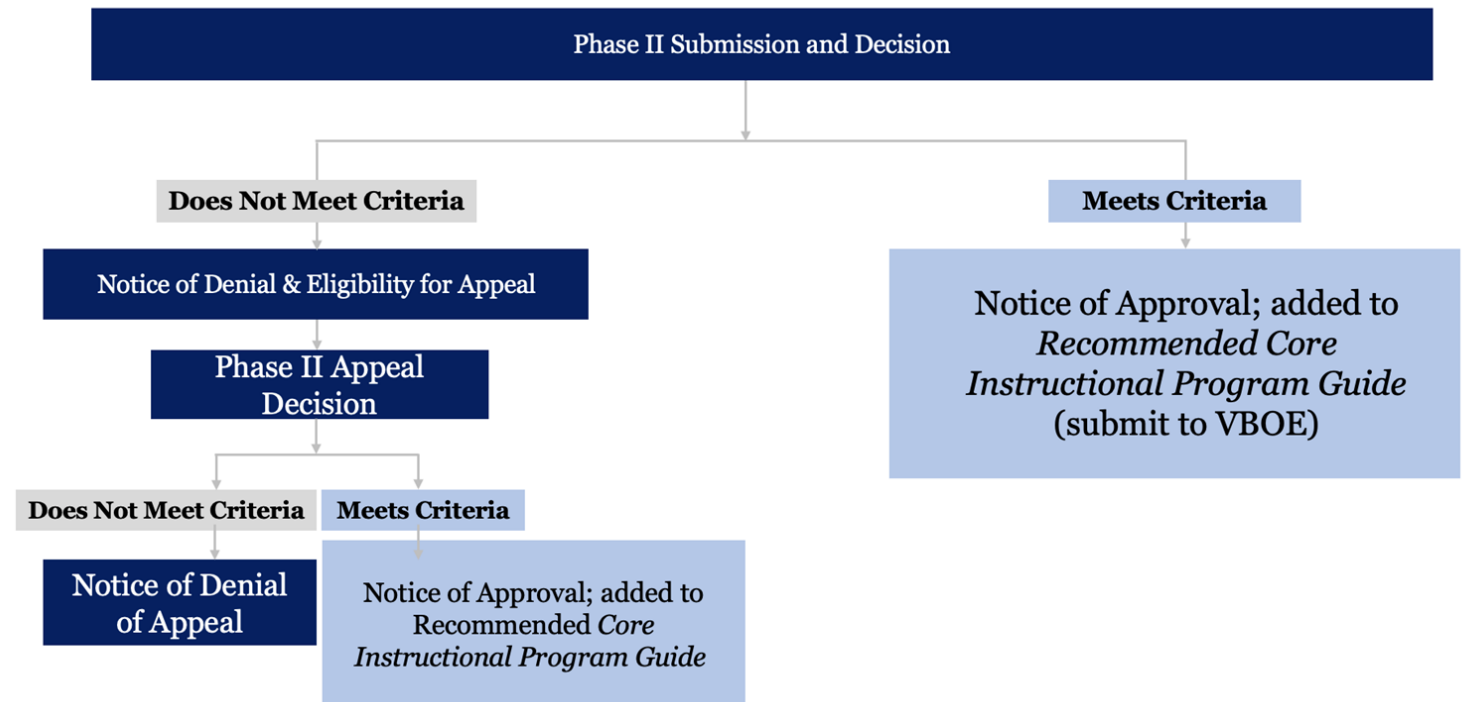
To ensure alignment, the VDOE, with VLP, employs a two-phase process to review core instructional programs:

	Phase I	Phase II
<b>Objective</b>	Ensure programs are aligned to science-based reading research, as well as Virginia Standards of Learning	Delve deep into instructional materials to evaluate program alignment to science-based reading research
<b>Focus of Evaluation</b>	Programs assessed using a broad evaluative rubric	Programs assessed using detailed evaluation of all components of literacy instruction
<b>Impact</b>	Programs that were clearly misaligned did not move to Phase II (e.g., programs with three cueing)	Programs that are not recommended may address gaps and apply during Phase II of the next cycle

# OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAL

Vendors that do not meet expectations have an opportunity to appeal after each phase.

Review teams, facilitators, and literacy experts evaluate additional evidence provided and make a final determination for each program.





# ALIGNMENT WITH TEXTBOOK ADOPTION

To support local procurement, the VDOE worked with VLP to align this review process with the textbook adoption process by:

- Requiring vendors to complete all certification forms;
- Demonstrating correlations with the Standards of Learning (SOLs);
- Soliciting reviewers who included educators and content specialists, represented all regions of Virginia and completed conflict of interest forms;
- Providing for public examination of materials prior to final review by the Board; and
- Establishing a mechanism for ongoing public comment.

# Cycle II Instructional Program Review & Next Steps

# CYCLE II INSTRUCTIONAL REVIEWS

VBOE approved the Cycle I [Core Instructional Program Guide](#) for K-3 in Spring 2023.

Cycle II expanded instructional program reviews: K-5 core, K-8 supplemental, and K-8 intervention programs launched in June 2023. Over 125 Virginia educators and 29 facilitators are reviewing Cycle II submissions.

Given the high submission rate, the VBOE will review Cycle II recommended program lists over the course of multiple meetings, beginning next month.

<b>Instructional Program</b>	<b>Anticipated Board Review</b>
Core Instructional Programs (14)	November/December 2023
Supplemental Programs (60)	Winter/Spring 2024
Intervention Programs (48)	

# NEXT STEPS

- VBOE will review the Recommended Core Instructional Program Guide K-5 for approval at its next meeting on November 15-16.
- Materials will be available for public review for 30 days.
- Cycle II reviews of K-8 supplemental and intervention programs will conclude in early 2024. The Recommended Instructional Program Guides will be presented in early spring 2024 to the VDOE and VBOE.
- The VDOE, in partnership with VLP, will launch curriculum adoption supports for divisions.
- Throughout 2023-2024, statewide literacy coaches will support reading specialists to prepare for classroom-level application of core instructional programming.

Questions?