

VIRGINIA LITERACY UPDATES

April 2024



INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

K-5 ELA Core Release

The Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) requires divisions to use approved core instructional materials in K-5 by the 2024-2025 school year. The Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) approved the [Core Instructional Program Guide in July 2023](#) and an updated version in December 2023.

- Divisions should follow local policies and procedures to adopt a K-5 Core Instructional Program.
- Division selections should be reflected in the Division Literacy Plan (DLP) due July 1, 2024.
- Divisions purchasing new materials should make selections as soon as possible to ensure materials will be available to begin implementation at the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

K-5 Intervention and Supplemental Materials

An initial list of supplemental and intervention program materials for K-5 is anticipated to be reviewed for VBOE approval in April 2024. Results from the ongoing cycle of review is scheduled for VBOE consideration in late summer.

- Divisions can review the **proposed** list of supplemental and intervention programs [here](#).
- Upon final VBOE approval (anticipated April 25), divisions should follow local policies and procedures to determine which supplemental and intervention programs will be selected.
- Final division selections must be submitted in revised Division Literacy Plans by December 6, 2024.

6-8 Intervention and Supplemental Materials

VDOE has contracted with the University of Virginia (UVA) to review literacy intervention and supplemental programs for Grades K-8. In Grades 6-8, supplemental and intervention programs will be reviewed using an updated rubric that captures what quality programming looks like in these grades. UVA anticipates that these rubrics will be posted online by mid-July; the application window will open mid-August; first review by the VBOE in November 2024 and anticipated approval in January 2025.

- Upon final Board approval of Grades 6-8 Supplemental and Intervention Materials, divisions will follow local policies and procedures to determine which programs will be used.
- Divisions will include 6-8 Supplemental and Intervention Materials in the updated DLPs beginning with the biennial plan submitted to VDOE in the 2025-2026 school year.

Note: For any 6-8 Supplemental and Intervention Materials currently being used, divisions will be asked to ensure that vendors are submitting these materials for review in this round.

USE OF VALLSS 2024-25

Kindergarten through Grade 3

The Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) supports services to students in K-3 who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their individual performance on a literacy screener provided by the VDOE. Beginning in 2024-2025, the statewide literacy screener will be the Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS) and will be fully implemented by all school divisions for Grades K-3. VALLSS was created by UVA, piloted in Virginia in 2022-2023, and soft launched in 17 Virginia school divisions in 2023-2024. The purpose of the screener is to serve as an early warning system for educators to better understand early literacy teaching targets. The screener will provide data that will help schools develop student reading plans as a requirement of the Virginia Literacy Act.

The EIRI sample assessment schedule was released on March 7, 2024, through the Virginia Education Update through the [Virginia Literacy Updates](#) article. An update was sent in a direct email to division superintendents on April 5. The 2024-2025 EIRI Assessment Schedule includes further recommendations to support divisions with assessment planning. The Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) assessment is offered mid-year only and divisions should consider using this assessment with all kindergarten students. Additionally, students who are new to Virginia public schools during the second grade should be given the spring assessment. [Attachment: 2024-2025 EIRI Assessment Schedule](#)

- All divisions will utilize the Kindergarten through Grade 3 screener (VALLSS) in 2024-2025.
- Divisions will use the 2024-2025 EIRI Assessment Schedule for K-3 assessment planning purposes.

VALLSS Spanish Pre-K - Grade 3 and 4-8 Screeners

To be more responsive to dual language learners, UVA has created the Spanish Pre-K – Grade 3 VALLSS screener. This Pre-K-3 screener was piloted during the 2023-2024 school year. In 2024-2025, UVA will continue to work with divisions to test and scale the Spanish Pre-K – 3 VALLSS. Full launch is expected in fall 2025.

In response to legislation, the VDOE has contracted with UVA to create a new, aligned 4-8 screener. Item development began in 2023; data collection began in March 2024 (piloted in select divisions); further data collection and item refinement is slated for 2024-2025; and statewide launch is anticipated in 2025-2026. This timeline meets the expectation of statute as listed below.

[Item 117 \(DOE/ COO\) Instructional Services. HB30 - Enrolled \(virginia.gov\)](#) Notwithstanding §22.1-253.13:1 G and H of the Code of Virginia, for students in grades 4 through 8, the administration of literacy screeners and development of student literacy plans shall not be required until the 2025-2026 school year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Pursuant to the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) effective at the start of the 2024–2025 school year, contracted teachers should start receiving evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) training. Initial training should conclude by the end of the 2024-2025 school year. Additional professional development for educators should be provided on an as needed basis. Details regarding the upcoming available trainings are outlined below.

K-3 Virginia Language & Literacy Screener - VALLSS Professional Development

VDOE has contracted with UVA to produce professional development support for VALLSS implementation, which was piloted with 17 school divisions during 2023-2024. The VALLSS K-3 certification tutorial is an online, self-paced, up to 3-hour module that will be made available in fall 2024.

- Divisions will have access to all resources beginning fall 2024.
- Divisions should begin planning for 2024-2025 by considering which teachers will need to complete the VALLSS certification tutorial in the fall 2024.

Teacher Professional Development

The [VLA](#) requires that educators complete training to implement the reading science shifts outlined in the statute. VDOE contracts with UVA to offer no-cost training to school divisions to meet the requirements of the legislation. The chart below includes all teacher groups that require training and the delivery model offered by UVA.

- Divisions should begin working with principals to determine which teachers will complete training outlined below.
- Divisions will outline a training plan in section three of the DLP.

Teacher Group Identified in §22.1-253.13:5 Section E	Method of Training
Early/primary Pre-K – Grade 3	Modules K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)
Elementary Education Pre-K – Grade 6	Modules K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)
Special Education General Curriculum K-12	Modules K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)
Special Education Deaf and Hard of Hearing Pre-K –Grade 12	Modules K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)
Special Education Blindness/Visual Impairments Pre-K – Grade 12	Modules K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)
ESL Pre-K – Grade 12	Modules K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)
Reading Specialists	K- 3: Two-day institute held in fall 2023, Modules currently in progress 4-8: Two-day institute fall 2024, followed by Modules for Reading

Teacher Group Identified in §22.1-253.13:5 Section E	Method of Training
	Specialists (Seeking feedback from Regional Instructional Leaders for best dates/locations)
English Teachers Grades 6-8	Modules 6-8 ELA Teachers
Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science Teachers Grades 6-8	Modules 6-8 Content Teachers

Alternative Approvals to Professional Development

VDOE surveyed superintendents in March 2024 to evaluate which commercially available professional development they would like to be considered for inclusion in the Department’s recommended list of science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction for teachers. VDOE is reviewing options and will make recommendations to the VBOE at the April 2024 meeting.

Elementary and Middle School Principals Professional Development

This June, elementary and middle school principals and one of the school’s assistant principals will be invited to attend a one-day, in-person training on evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research. Topics will include using data to plan instruction, coaching systems change, core instruction, and the role of reading specialists.

Location/Address	Date/Time
Central Virginia Henrico County Public Schools Glen Allen High School 10700 Staples Mill Rd, Glen Allen, VA 23060	June 14 9a.m.-4p.m.
Southwest Virginia Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center One Partnership Circle Abingdon, VA 24212	June 17 9a.m.-4p.m. or June 18 9a.m.-4p.m.
Southern Virginia Longwood University 201 High St. Farmville, VA 23909	June 24 9a.m.-4p.m.
Tidewater Virginia Chesapeake Public Schools Indian River High School 1969 Braves Trl, Chesapeake, VA 23325	June 27 9a.m.-4p.m.
Western Virginia Radford University 801 E Main St. Radford, VA 24142	June 28 9a.m.-4p.m.

Location/Address	Date/Time
Charlottesville	commitment secured—details TBD
Northern Virginia	commitment secured—details TBD
Shenandoah Valley	commitment secured—details TBD

Registration for these events will open May 1st.

4-8 Reading Specialists and New K-3 Reading Specialists

VDOE has contracted with UVA to conduct training for Grades 4-8 Reading Specialists and new K-3 Reading Specialists for the 2024-2025 school year. This will include a two-day, in-person institute to be held in the fall, followed by virtual training through Canvas during the school year. VDOE is currently in listening sessions from the field to design these training options. Divisions can expect a release of fall dates by July 15, 2024.

- Divisions should begin identifying Reading Specialists who will need to attend this training.
- Divisions will outline a training plan in section three of the DLP.

Modules for Teacher Training

VDOE has contracted with UVA to create modules addressing the training needs of teachers for the 2024-2025 school year. The Canvas courses for each group have been tailored to meet the specific needs of the intended audience and will vary in intensity and length. Registration information will be shared through Virginia Education Updates. For courses available in June, registration will begin mid-May. For courses available in September, registration will begin in mid-August.

- Divisions should begin working with principals to determine which teachers will complete training outlined below.
- Divisions will outline a training plan in section three of the DLP.

Canvas Course Audience	Estimated Date of Roll-out	Number Modules	Approximate Completion Time Per Module**
K-3 Reading Specialists	Currently in progress	9	3-6 hours
K-5 Teachers (i.e., classroom, SPED, EL, Title I)	Early June	9	2-3 hours
Reading Specialists who have not yet completed training (4-8 or new hires)*	Early Sept	9	3-6 hours
6-8 ELA Teachers*	Early Sept	9	2-3 hours
6-8 Content Teachers*	Early Sept	9	1-2 hours

**In 2023, the VLA was expanded from the original requirements of training for elementary school teachers, elementary school principals, reading specialists, and special education teachers to include training for ESL teachers, middle school teachers and principals (see section E for exact language).*

***Modules are recommended to be completed one per month but will be released all at once to enable flexible, individualized pacing.*

Virginia Literacy Act Reading Specialist Microcredential Course

VDOE has established a microcredential program for the purpose of permitting any teacher who holds a renewable or provisional license to earn a provisional reading specialist endorsement. Upon completion of the Reading Specialist Microcredential Course, participants will have a strong understanding of the cognitive science and reading research that supports an evidenced-based approach to literacy instruction, what strong instruction consists of, and the alignment between the research and the Virginia Academic Standards for Literacy.

Participants will explore the relevant research supporting a particular topic; define strong instruction in that topic; identify its progression in the Virginia Academic Standards for Literacy; analyze a video or materials model through the lens of research, best practice, and the Virginia standards; and learn how to support ALL readers.

Throughout each module, participants will have opportunities to reflect on their learning and make connections between the focus topic and comprehensive models of reading development. If you are interested in enrolling in the Reading Specialist Microcredential Course, [complete the pre-registration form](#). This form is available on April 11, 2024.

PLANNING

Division Literacy Plan

In the [March Virginia Literacy Update](#), VDOE released a Division Literacy Plan (DLP) Template-Version 2 which is an editable Word document. Divisions may choose to use either Version 1 or 2 as they continue to develop their plans. The focus on the initial DLP has been narrowed to focus on K-5 for 2024-2025. The 2025-2026 biennial plan will include K-8. Divisions that would like to use any K-5 core instructional materials not on the Board approved list can submit their requests through the DLP that is **due July 1, 2024**.

Important Links:

- [Virginia Literacy Act | Virginia Department of Education](#)
- [Division Literacy Plan-Version 1](#)
- [Division Literacy Plan Template-Version 2](#)
- [Instructions for Completion of the Division Literacy Plan updated March 2024](#)

Literacy Implementation Network Sessions

To support school divisions as they are making instructional shifts to the VLA and to facilitate the process of the DLP development, VDOE has offered a monthly Literacy Network Implementation Series. Additionally, the [VLA Implementation Playbook](#) was released on [March 14, 2024](#) through the Virginia Education Update. The VLA Implementation Playbook is designed to meet every school division where they are in the process of division literacy planning and will aid in providing a roadmap for a successful 2024-2025 school year. A summary of the Literacy Network Implementation Series is below.

Session 1 February 2024	Launching Our Work and Building Investment in a Literacy Vision	Session 1 PPT
Session 2 March 2024	Effective Leadership during Adoption and Early Implementation of HQIM	Session 2 PPT HQIM Guidance for VA Divisions
Session 3 April 2024	Establishing the Conditions for Successful HQIM Implementation	Materials will be shared with division superintendent leads upon completion of the regional sessions.
Session 4 Late April – May 2024	Deepening Support for Teachers: Professional Learning and Collaborative Planning	Materials will be shared with division superintendent leads upon completion of the regional sessions.

Timeline for Completion of the DLPs

- SY 2024-2025: Baseline Data Collection
 - DLPs submitted from all school divisions - July 1, 2024
 - Approval of DLPs from VDOE - August 1, 2024
 - Divisions submit updates to the DLP – December 6, 2024
- SY 2025-2026: Year 1 of the Biennial DLPs
- SY 2026-2027: Year 2 of the Biennial DLPs

Student Reading Plan

A draft of the Student Reading Plan was presented to the VBOE for initial review at the March 2024 meeting and will be on the April Board meeting for final review.

The VLA requires that divisions provide reading intervention services to students who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their performance on the Standards of Learning reading assessment or a literacy screener provided by VDOE (VALLSS). Such reading intervention services shall consist of evidence-based literacy instruction, align with science-based reading research, and be documented for each student in a written student reading plan. Divisions can access the **draft** Student Reading Plan [here](#).

Once approved, the final Student Reading Plan and a practitioner guidance document will be provided to divisions on the [Virginia Literacy Act webpage](#).

APPENDIX- TERMS:

Virginia Literacy Partnerships

The Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) Office is within the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Virginia (UVA). VLP administers a number of the supports and actions within the VDOE-UVA Contracts such as professional development and the new statewide screener.

VALLSS

Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS) measures components of reading that are key for comprehension aligned with the science of reading. It measures progress over time and after all of the subtests are completed, the student will receive an indication of an overall band of "risk." Teachers use this information to target instruction and provide intervention to ensure students success.

EBLI

"Evidence-based literacy instruction" (EBLI) means structured instructional practices, including sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative teaching, that (i) are based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence consistent with science-based reading research; (ii) are used in core or general instruction, supplemental instruction, intervention services, and intensive intervention services; (iii) have a demonstrated record of success in adequately increasing students' reading competency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension and in building mastery of the foundational reading skills of phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, phonics, spelling, and text reading fluency; and (iv) are able to be differentiated in order to meet the individual needs of students. "Evidence-based literacy instruction" does not include practices that instruct students to gain meaning from print through the use of (i) three-cueing, which includes semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues; (ii) meaning, structure, and visual cues; or (iii) visual memory for word recognition.

SBRR

"Science-based reading research" means research that (i) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective observational or experimental procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading and writing difficulties and (ii) explains how proficient reading and writing develop, why some children have difficulties developing key literacy skills, and how schools can best assess and instruct early literacy, including the use of evidence-based literacy instruction practices to promote reading and writing achievement.