

VIRGINIA LITERACY UPDATES

May 2024



As school divisions continue planning and implementing the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA), VDOE has released an update for superintendents to share with key division leaders and school principals.

1. New Legislation
2. Instructional Materials
3. Use of VALLSS and Student Reading Plans
4. Professional Development
5. Planning
6. Frequently Asked Questions from the Field

NEW LEGISLATION

NEW* SB624, passed in the 2024 General Assembly session, clarifies several provisions of the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) 2022 which is effective with the 2024-2025 school year.

- Use of evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) that **does not require or encourage three-cueing** (students gaining meaning from print through semantic, syntactic or graphophonic cues); meaning, structure, and visual (MSV) cues; or approaches that rely on visual memory for word recognition. School divisions will include a professional development plan within their division literacy plans to address EBLI and science-based reading research.
- Removal of the **option** to use a literacy screener approved by the Department of Education. 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. VDOE contracted with UVA to create the VALLSS [screener](#) which was piloted by 17 school divisions in 2023-2024. A VALLSS K-3 certification tutorial is an online, self-paced, up to three-hour professional learning module that will be made available fall 2024.
- Requires the Department to develop a list of core literacy curricula for students [in K-5](#) and [supplemental instructional practices and programs and intervention programs](#) for students in K-8 that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with science-based reading research. Core instructional programs in K-5 were released first in July 2023 and an updated version was released in December 2023. K-5 Intervention and Supplemental Materials were Board approved April 25, 2024. 6-8 Intervention and Supplemental Materials will begin the review period in fall 2024.
- Requires each division-wide [literacy plan](#) to address how the school board will align 1) core reading and literacy curriculum for students in K-5 and 2) screening, supplemental instruction, and interventions for students in kindergarten through grade eight with evidence-based literacy instruction practices aligned with science-based reading research. [The Literacy Plan Guidance](#) provides instructions for divisions to create the Division Literacy Plan.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

K-5 ELA Core Instructional Materials

Pursuant to the VLA, “Each divisionwide literacy plan shall follow such template and address how the local school board will align (a) literacy professional development; (b) core reading and literacy curriculum *for students in kindergarten through grade five*; and (c) screening, supplemental instruction, and interventions *for students in kindergarten through grade eight* with evidence-based literacy instruction practices aligned with science-based reading research and how the school board will support parents to support the literacy development of their children. When developing such divisionwide literacy plan, each local school board shall use programs from the lists developed by the Department pursuant to subsection C of § **22.1-253.13:5** and subdivision H 2 of § **22.1-253.13:1** or seek approval from the Department for the use of alternative programs that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction and align with science-based reading research.”

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 be finalizing the adoption of K-5 Core Instructional Programs following local policies and procedures.
- Division selections should be included in the DLP due July 1, 2024.
- As divisions prepare for the initial implementation of HQIM in fall 2024, they should focus on engaging and investing stakeholders in shifting to HQIM and planning the processes and procedures they will put in place to enable the conditions for successful HQIM implementation. Divisions can use the [Playbook](#), [Literacy Implementation Network Series](#), [Summer Literacy and Math Symposiums](#), and EBLI trainings to support this process.

K-5 Supplemental and Intervention Materials

Supplemental programs provide additional evidence-based literacy instruction and/or practice on a specific literacy skill (i.e., phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing) aligned to science-based reading research. Supplemental programs are used to enhance a core instructional program during whole class or small group instruction. Teachers use supplemental programs for additional support to meet student needs. **NEW*** *The Virginia Board of Education approved the [Supplemental Program Guide](#) at the April 25, 2024, meeting.*

Intervention programs provide systematic, explicit evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) aligned to science-based reading research (SBRR) to students who persistently struggle to master literacy skills including phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The Virginia Board of Education approved the [Intervention Program Guide](#) at the April 25, 2024, meeting.

A [K-5 Supplemental and Intervention webpage](#) has been created for divisions to access the guides, approved programs, and rubrics.

- 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 Supplemental and Intervention 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 instruction should look like in these grades.

- 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 grades 6-8 Supplemental and Intervention Materials in the updated DLPs beginning with the biennial plan submitted to VDOE in the 2025-2026 school year.

USE OF VALLSS AND STUDENT READING PLANS

Kindergarten through Grade 3

For decades, 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.

- 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.

Student Reading Plans

The VLA requires that “each local school board shall provide reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through grade eight who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their performance on the Standards of Learning reading assessment or a literacy screener provided or approved by the Department. 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...” (§ [22.1-253.13:1](#) G). VDOE has contracted with the University of Virginia (UVA) to develop the student reading plan template and guidance documents. The Virginia Board of Education approved the Student Reading Plan Template at the April 25, 2024, meeting.

- Divisions will use the Student Reading Plan Template for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.
- All students who score in the high-risk band on VALLSS must have a student reading plan.
- 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.
- **NEW*** Divisions can now access the [Student Reading Plan](#) (SRP), [Division Student Reading Plan Guidance](#), and [Practitioner Student Reading Plan Guidance](#) documents on the VDOE website.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Professional Development

As part of the VLA, [K-8 educators are required to receive training](#) in evidence-based literacy instruction aligned to science-based reading research. 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 middle school principals. VDOE contracted with the University of

Virginia (UVA) to design, develop, and facilitate a statewide knowledge-based professional development training at no cost for Virginia educators. As part of this training, Canvas courses designed for different audiences are being offered beginning June 2024. The courses will focus on building a strong literacy knowledge base on key topics but also focus on the application to instructional practice in the classroom. The trainings are self-paced and recommended to be taken one per month. Divisions may choose to pay teachers for training hours outside of contracted time which could include using the All-In funding source in the VLA section of the budget.

NEW* At the April 25, 2024, meeting, the Board of Education approved LETRS Volume 1 (or LETRS 1 and 2) and Orton-Gillingham to be considered as alternatives to the state-prescribed VLA training. Teachers who took LETRS or Orton-Gillingham (OG) beginning in 2022 only need to complete the capstone module of the VLP training.

Audience for Canvas Courses	Estimated Date of Release	Number of Modules <i>All modules will be released at the same time to encourage individualized pacing.</i>	Approximate Completion Time <i>This will vary based on module content and individualized pacing.</i>	Requirements
K-5 Reading Specialists <i>(who have not already completed modules)</i>	September 2024	9	3-6 hours per module	Required
K-5 Teachers <i>(e.g., classroom, SPED, EL, Title 1)</i>	June 2024	9	2-3 hours per module	Required
6-8 Reading Specialists	September 2024	9	3-6 hours per module	Required
6-8 ELA Teachers	September 2024	9	2-3 hours per module	Required
6-8 Content Area Teachers	September 2024	9	1-2 hours per module	Required
Capstone Course <i>(for teachers who have completed LETRS Vol 1 and/or Orton-Gillingham training)</i>	May/June 2024	3	1-1.5 hours per module	Required for K-5 teachers who have completed LETRS Vol 1 or OG
Specialty and Resource Teachers <i>(e.g., art, music, PE)</i>	September 2024	1	1-2 hours	Optional and available on the public UVA website

Principal Professional Development

Elementary and middle school principals are required to attend literacy professional development for school leaders. Assistant principals who lead instruction are invited to attend. Please share the registration details below with your school leaders. **NEW*** Based on superintendent feedback, divisions may choose to register a superintendent and/or division leader to attend as space allows. If space is not available, there will be several district leader webinar options

that superintendents and/or division leaders can also choose to attend to receive a division-level version of the principal training.

Registration for these trainings will operate on a first come-first served basis. Registration has been capped based on capacity at individual venues. If you do not get your first choice, there will be an option to join a wait list for other locations that have availability. **NEW* Additional trainings will be offered in the fall.** You will receive notification of waitlist status by June 5th.

- Please register no later than May 28th.
- If your registration request cannot be accommodated this summer due to capacity or individual schedules, fall dates and locations will be forthcoming. New principals/assistant principals will also be included in fall trainings. Once fall dates and locations have been determined, VDOE will share that information and provide a new registration form.
- Principals **must attend** a summer or fall training session.
- Divisions will be responsible for travel arrangements and expenses.
- An email with registration information was sent on Friday, May 3, 2024, to ELA supervisors as identified in SSWS with registration links and a password.

Location/Address	Date/Time
Radford University 801 East Main Street Radford, VA 24142	June 10 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Henrico County Public Schools Glen Allen High School 10700 Staples Mill Road Glen Allen, VA 23060	June 14 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center P.O. Box 1987 Abingdon, VA 24212	June 17 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Shenandoah University: Halpin-Harrison Hall 600 Millwood Ave. Winchester, VA 22601	June 21 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Longwood University 201 High Street Farmville, VA 3909	June 24 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Chesapeake Public Schools Indian River High School 1969 Braves Trail Chesapeake, Virginia 23325	June 27 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

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. 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.

Reading Specialist Provisional Microcredential

Divisions should consider the following requirements when determining local needs for employing reading specialists for the 2024-2025 school year. The reading specialist microcredential for a provisional endorsement meets the requirements below.

- [Chapter 1. 137 B. 7. h.](#) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection G of § 22.1-253.13:2 of the Code of Virginia, each local school board shall employ a reading specialist for each 550 students in kindergarten through grade three. To provide flexibility, school boards may employ other staff such as reading coaches or other instructional staff who are working towards obtaining the training and licensure requirements necessary to fulfill the staffing standards that become effective at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. School divisions are encouraged to deploy these positions to assist in reading instruction and intervention to students in kindergarten through sixth grade.
- [125 B. 7. h.](#) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection G of § 22.1-253.13:2 of the Code of Virginia, school boards may employ other staff such as reading coaches or other instructional staff who are working towards obtaining the training and licensure requirements necessary to fulfill the reading specialist staffing standards.

VDOE is offering a Reading Specialist microcredential that will support divisions in implementing this requirement.

To obtain the microcredential, educators will complete a Canvas course that will provide a provisional reading specialist endorsement valid for five years upon successful completion for individuals who currently hold a Valid Virginia license and wish to serve in the capacity as a reading specialist in a Virginia school. This course is offered at no cost. Participants will explore evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research as well as the identification of the appropriate interventions, accommodations, and teaching techniques. Participants will complete seven modules that are self-paced and offer checks for understanding. Two modules will offer a Summative Performance Task that participants must pass in order to receive a certificate of completion. It is estimated to take 45 hours to complete the course. The Reading Specialist Microcredential certificate can be submitted with an application for an Add-On Provisional Reading Specialist endorsement to the licensure department at VDOE.

Enrollment in a university program is not required for the provisional endorsement as a reading specialist. Beyond the provisional endorsement for reading specialist, an individual may wish to complete the regulatory requirements to obtain a full reading specialist endorsement in Virginia.

Teachers interested in enrolling in the Reading Specialist Microcredential Course must [complete the pre-registration form](#).

PLANNING

Division Literacy Plan

Divisions should be in the final stages of developing the 2024-2025 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.

Pursuant to the VLA in section [§ 22.1-253.13:6](#), each local school board shall use programs from the lists developed by the Department pursuant to subsection C of [§ 22.1-253.13:5](#) and subdivision H 2 of [§ 22.1-253.13:1](#) or seek approval from the Department for the use of alternative programs that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction and align with science-based reading research. Divisions who request curriculum or supplemental resources that are not on the Board approved list should use the [Core Instructional Review Rubric](#) or the [Supplemental Review Rubric](#) to review the strengths and weaknesses of those materials. Existing rubrics are located on the VDOE website for [Approved Core Instructional Programs](#) and [Approved Supplemental Instructional Programs](#). Requests are made in the DLP, and VDOE will

review the request with the same rigor as the instructional materials review process. Feedback will be provided to divisions if changes need to be made to their selected and/or requested materials. The DLP is due **July 1, 2024**, via email to vla@doe.virginia.gov.

Timeline for Completion of the DLP

- 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

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 the Literacy Network Implementation Series. Session 4 of the Literacy Implementation Network Series is occurring during the month of May. Materials from the Literacy Network Implementation Series are below.

Session 1	Launching Our Work and Building Investment in a Literacy Vision	Session 1 PPT Virginia Literacy Act Implementation Playbook
Session 2	Effective Leadership during Adoption and Early Implementation of HQIM	Session 2 PPT HQIM Guidance for VA Divisions
Session 3	Establishing the Conditions for Successful HQIM Implementation	Session 3 PPT Technical Conditions for Successful HQIM Implementation Chart
Session 4	Deepening Support for Teachers: Professional Learning and Collaborative Planning	Materials will be posted next week after the last session

VLA Implementation Playbook

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. The Playbook includes:

- An overview and importance of HQIM in literacy instruction incorporating science-based reading research.
- A process for divisions to develop a literacy vision, building on the investment of HQIM, and clearly defining roles and responsibilities for implementing literacy goals and HQIM.
- Key steps for adopting strong HQIM and providing structures to ensure consistency and integrity in implementing HQIM.
- Key steps for launching development and support structures for implementing a literacy planning cycle, establishing accountability and progress monitoring, continually adjusting strategy to deepen the impact.

Divisions can use the Playbook to engage with stakeholders as division literacy plans are created, to plan for the implementation of HQIM-based literacy implementation, develop systems that support teachers in the implementation of HQIM, and to plan for monitoring data trends to adjust processes and support as needed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

1. What is the timeline for the EBLI training to be completed?

Pursuant to the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA), contracted teachers should receive evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) training, and initial training should conclude by the end of the 2024-2025 school year. The UVA modules are recommended to be completed one per month but will be released all at once to enable flexible, individualized pacing. Those that completed LETRS or Orton Gillingham (OG) beginning in 2022 only need to complete the capstone module of the UVA training.

2. Who will monitor that principals/teachers have completed the required training?

Divisions have the responsibility of ensuring that educators receive the training required for the VLA. A professional development plan is included in the Division Literacy Plan. To assist divisions with monitoring teacher progress in Canvas, there will be a certificate of completion that teachers can download and/or print off at the end of each of the nine modules. UVA is developing a process to share module completion progress with designated school division leaders. Once this process has been finalized, it will be shared in a future literacy update.

3. Do divisions have discretion of which teachers receive the required training and when it should be completed?

Divisions must include in their Division Literacy Plan a professional learning plan for [all teachers who require the training](#). The UVA training modules are self-paced and do not have to be conducted in one setting. Modules are recommended to be completed one per month but will be released all at once to enable flexible, individualized pacing.

4. Do teachers who teach high school ESL or Special Education have to complete the training?

Pursuant to the VLA, all teachers with an ESL K-12 or a Special Education K-12 endorsement are required to complete the modules. K-5 ESL teachers should complete the K-5 elementary modules. Divisions may choose to have ESL and special education teachers of other grades complete the modules, and those teachers may want to complete them if they may want to teach K-5 in the future.

5. Do Pre-K teachers need to complete the K-5 modules?

They are listed in the Literacy Update, but we understand that could be in reference to endorsement rather than position. Pre-K teachers are not required to complete the K-5 modules. Divisions may choose to encourage Pre-K teachers to complete the K-5 modules to support a comprehensive division literacy implementation or those who may want to teach K-5 in the future.

6. Do high school exploratory and PE teachers complete the EBLI modules?

Divisions may prioritize and determine if certain teachers need to complete the training as an option. Divisions may choose to have exploratory and PE teachers complete the modules, and those teachers may want to complete them if they may want to teach K-8 in the future.