



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: P

Date: June 21, 2024

Title: First and Final Review of Virginia Literacy Act Literacy Updated Professional Development List

Presenter: Em Cooper, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

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. 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.

The Board of Education previously approved, on April 25, 2024, the use of LETRS Volume 1 and Orton-Gillingham as alternatives to the state-prescribed VLP Training. In working with divisions to implement this approval, further clarification is needed as to options divisions have for the required training.

K-8 educators have three options for completing the required training by the end of the 2024-2025 school year:

- UVA-developed Canvas Courses
- LETRS Volumes 1 and 2 (2019 version) and UVA Capstone Course
- Orton-Gillingham courses that meet the below criteria and UVA Capstone Course.
 - 25 hours of training
 - Includes content on encoding/decoding, phonemic awareness for K-3, fluency, dyslexia, comprehension, complex text, and data literacy

- Embeds support for English Learners and students with difficulties learning to read and write

The UVA Capstone Course covers content specific to VLA implementation, including the new VALLSS screener and Student Reading Plans.

VDOE has partnered with UVA to create a capstone module that will be required if a division uses LETRS or Orton-Gillingham approved training options that will supplement the research-basis for LETRS and Orton-Gillingham. It is important that all Virginia teachers understand how the evidence-based research applies to Virginia's law and how to implement this law effectively. UVA holds this expertise and has built a asynchronous course that allows all required educators to finalize this understanding.

The superintendent's recommendation is to clarify the alternative options to the UVA-developed course given the requirements outlined above.

Action Requested

Action requested at this meeting.

Superintendent's Recommendation

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the clarification of the alternatives to the UVA-developed Canvas Course to include the following:

- LETRS Volumes 1 and 2 (2019 version) and UVA Capstone Course
- Orton-Gillingham courses that meet the below criteria and UVA Capstone Course.
 - 25 hours of training
 - Includes content on encoding/decoding, phonemic awareness for K-3, fluency, dyslexia, comprehension, complex text, and data literacy
 - Embeds support for English Learners and students with difficulties learning to read and write

The UVA Capstone Course covers content specific to VLA implementation, including the new VALLSS screener and Student Reading Plans.

Rationale for Action

There have been many questions from school divisions to clarify which components of LETRS and OG are approved as an alternative to the UVA-developed Canvas Course. This recommendation further clarifies for divisions the parameters of the approved alternatives for the evidence-based literacy instruction aligned to science-based reading research.

Previous Review or Action

Date: April 25, 2024

Action: First and Final Review of Virginia Literacy Act Literacy Professional Development List

Background Information and Statutory Authority

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.

Each such reading specialist shall have training in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction practices. In addition, each such reading specialist shall have training in the identification of and the appropriate interventions, accommodations, and teaching techniques for students with dyslexia or a related disorder and shall serve as an advisor on dyslexia and related disorders. (§ 22.1-253.13:2 G)

The Department shall also create a list of professional development programs aligned with science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction that includes programs that provide training in dyslexia for reading specialists as required by subsection G of § 22.1-253.13:2. The list shall be approved by the Board. (§ 22.1-253.13:5 C)

In addition, each local school board shall provide:

2. High-quality professional development and training in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction, from the list developed and the resources provided by the Department pursuant to subsection C of § 22.1-253.13:5 or an alternative program that consists of evidence-based literacy instruction and aligns with science-based reading research approved by the Department, for each elementary school principal and each teacher with an endorsement in early/primary education preschool through grade three, elementary education preschool through grade six, special education general curriculum kindergarten through grade 12, special education deaf and hard of hearing preschool through grade 12, or special education blindness/visual impairments preschool through grade 12, or English as a second language preschool through grade 12, or as a reading specialist that builds proficiency in evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research in order to aid in the licensure renewal process for such individuals; and

3. High-quality professional development and training in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction, from the list developed and the resources provided by the Department pursuant to subsection C, or an alternative program that consists of evidence-based literacy instruction and aligns with science-based reading research approved by the Department, for (i) each teacher with an endorsement in middle education grades six through eight who teaches English that builds proficiency in evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research and (ii) each middle school principal and teacher with an endorsement in middle education grades six through eight who teaches mathematics, science, or history and social science that builds an awareness of evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research. § 22.1-253.13:5(E).

Stakeholder Engagement

Multiple divisions have reached out for clarification on the parameters of the alternative professional development. VDOE and UVA collaborated on the clarification needed to meet the requirements of VLA.

Implementation and Communication

Upon approval by the Board, VDOE staff will communicate to school divisions the approved alternative professional development programs to support the requirements of the Virginia Literacy Act.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources

This item will not impact resources at the VDOE.