

The Virginia Literacy Act

Like children across the nation, Virginia's children are in the midst of a literacy crisis. Across the Commonwealth, **one in three kindergarten to second grade students are reading below benchmark**, and far too many third graders are not passing their Reading SOL. This impacts students for years to come; students who are not proficient in reading by the end of third grade are **four times more likely to drop out of high school** than proficient readers.

Virginia is leading the nation in addressing this challenge by passing the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA), which aims to reverse these trends and improve early literacy outcomes for the Commonwealth's youngest learners. As a result of the VLA, the Governor and the General Assembly have made additional investments in early reading to ensure divisions have the resources they need. As planning for implementation begins, the Virginia Department of Education will continue to partner with school divisions, educators, and families on this multi-year effort.

When the VLA goes into effect in the 2024-2025 school year, it will ensure that:



Every **student** in kindergarten to grade 3:

- ✓ Receives core literacy instruction from an evidence-based literacy curriculum¹ for the entire literacy block
- ✓ Receives additional evidence-based instruction and intervention, as outlined in a student reading plan, if they do not meet literacy benchmarks



Every **family** of a student in kindergarten to grade 3:

- ✓ Has access to free online evidence-based literacy instruction resources to support their child's literacy development at home
- ✓ Can participate in the development of their child's student reading plan, if they do not meet literacy benchmarks



Every **teacher** of students in kindergarten to grade 3:

- ✓ Uses evidence-based literacy curriculum for the entire literacy block
- ✓ Assesses student learning using approved literacy screeners routinely throughout the year
- ✓ Uses student-level data to inform both whole group instruction and individualized instruction and intervention
- ✓ Provided with pre-service preparation and/or in-service training in evidence-based literacy instruction



Every **reading specialist** working with students kindergarten to grade 3:

- ✓ Coordinates and implements intervention services for students not meeting literacy benchmarks
- ✓ Develops, oversees implementation of, and monitors student progress on student reading plans, in collaboration with teachers and families



Every **division**:

- ✓ Develops a division-wide literacy plan
- ✓ Ensures all kindergarten through grade 3 teachers have and use evidence-based literacy curriculum
- ✓ Staffs at least one reading specialist for every 550 students in kindergarten through grade 3
- ✓ Provides professional development² in evidence-based literacy instruction to teachers, reading specialists and principals
- ✓ Receives coaching and support from regional literacy coaches



Every **educator preparation program**:

- ✓ Requires aspiring teachers and reading specialists to complete coursework in and demonstrate a mastery of evidence-based literacy instruction

¹ VLA requires school divisions to use evidence-based literacy curriculum approved by the Board.

² VLA requires school divisions to provide evidence-based literacy instruction professional development approved by the Board, at no cost to the teachers and reading specialists.