NEVADA STATE
LITERACY PLAN

A Pathway To Possibilities

Nevada Department of Education

2015

THE NEVADA STATE LITERACY PLAN

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Dear Nevadans:

As the Superintendent of Public Instruction, I have focused this year on a number of new initiatives that will ensure all Nevadans are ready for success in the 21st Century, but literacy remains the sole foundation for all learning. One's ability to effectively read, write, speak, and listen ultimately becomes the primary factor for determining one's overall success in life – no matter what profession one chooses.

The Nevada Department of Education is dedicated to ensuring that all Nevada students, educators, and families are ready for the new demands and challenges that face our students as they prepare for college and careers. Everyone has a role to play in supporting Nevada's learners to develop the literacy skills needed to succeed in today's world. The revised Nevada State Literacy Plan provides a roadmap for all literacy efforts in the years to come.

I want to thank the Nevada State Literacy Plan Revision Team for its expertise, commitment, and time devoted to the development of this Plan. Team members represent multiple areas of experience and expertise including classroom and district educators, teachers of diverse learners, and early childhood leaders. The inclusion of library, higher education, and community and family literacy professionals allowed the Revision Team to design a cohesive, comprehensive literacy plan that truly encompasses birth through adult development. Their work will help teachers, families, and community members to identify specific elements that support literacy. Our joint efforts will ensure that all Nevadans are literate and successful in school and in life.

While there have been many successful initiatives and projects across the state that have improved literacy achievement over the years, I am confident that this statewide literacy plan will guide the New Nevada to ongoing improvement in literacy achievement for all students.

Respectfully yours,

DALE A.R. ERQUIAGA
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Overview

The Nevada State Literacy Plan

"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development … for everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right … Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential."

— Kofi Annan, Seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006)
Winner – the Nobel Peace Prize – 2001

I. Literacy — "The Road to Human Progress":

Kofi Annan's powerful words fully capture the extraordinary role that literacy plays in today's modern-day society. Certainly, the entire realm of world history would support Annan's 21st Century assertion that literacy is, indeed, "the road to human progress", for this is a road that has clearly dictated the successes and/or failures of every culture, every demographic, every language, every governance structure, and, particularly, every human life. Its present impact stretches beyond the immediately recognizable third-world regions, beyond the often reported American urban blight, and even beyond America's impoverished rural regions. Quite simply, the impact of literacy becomes every single individual's pathway to opportunity.

With these premises in mind, then, the Nevada State Literacy Plan begins with one overarching principle that literacy is the means through which every Nevadan "can realize his or her full potential". The NSLP further recognizes that the acquisition of sound literacy skills constitutes an invitation to empowerment for every Nevada learner.

Unfortunately, like Nevada's Sierra highways at the end of a cold harsh winter, Nevada's 2015 "literacy highway" has become very tough to navigate. Instructional methods of the past have become cumbersome and awkward. Where once they provided smooth and seamless travel, they now create roadblocks and obstacles. Timeworn methods of measurement have been replaced by a whole new collection of data-driven assessments (of students, teachers, administrators and entire systems). Old assessment road markers have become barely readable. The implementation of a whole new set of "rules of the road" (Nevada's state standards from Pre-K through the adult level age span) has also resulted in multiple layers of confusion. The entire modern-day vehicle of education altogether presents additional challenges for its learners as it continually strives to balance literacy learning with the technological tools of our times.

The manner in which every human "driver" arrives at this highway has become even more complex as well. Literacy drivers of today arrive with a vast array of learning needs. Some have arrived needing literacy for the acquisition of a second language. Some have arrived needing literacy to address their exceptional needs. Still others have arrived from a world of poverty where sheer survival has often taken precedence over literacy involvement. Most surprisingly, however, is the fact that many of the drivers who appear at Nevada's 2015 literacy on-ramp are no longer alone. Entire families and communities have joined them on their journeys. All in all, it becomes readily apparent that Nevada's outdated approach to literacy education in the past has become obsolete in the year 2015. The NSLP aims to provide research-based guidance to prepare Nevada learners for the needs of today.

Nevada's Governor Brian Sandoval recognized this critical fact in his *State of the State* address on January 15, 2015. In an historic move, Governor Sandoval, in partnership with Nevada's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dale Erquiaga, called on Nevada legislators to join him in a "comprehensive modernization of our education system to meet the needs of today's students and the *New Nevada* (Sandoval, 2015). In presenting his budget package, Governor Sandoval outlined several major educational initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of all Nevada learners - across all stages of development (from Pre-K to adulthood). Within every one of these programmatic recommendations, one central theme emerges - the role of literacy education is essential to our students' success. From the transformation of early Pre-K experiences, to a *Read by Three* implementation, to an expansion of ELL and STEM curriculums for middle and high school learners, the reality is clear. None of these recommended actions (nor any in the future) will assure solid long-term sustainability without first equipping every one of their participants with sound literacy foundations.

II. Purpose of the Nevada State Literacy Plan:

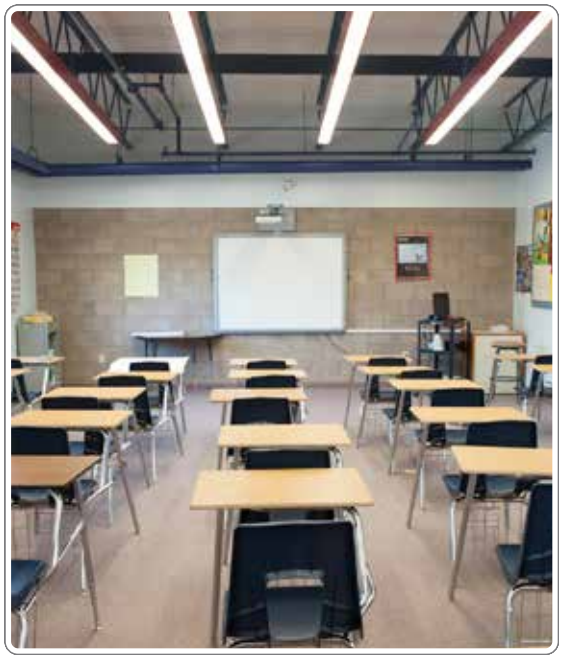
This newly revised *Nevada State Literacy Plan* (NSLP) is a direct reflection of the governor's *State of the State* address. It is designed to serve as an evidence-based guide for all Nevada educators (including teachers, families, and community members).The NSLP is meant to serve as a key foundational resource for Nevada educators (including families and community members). Its aim is to ground them professionally, direct them logistically, and empower them collectively. The NSLP is a guide for ensuring that all Nevadans are not only offered a "road to progress", but an *effective and meaningful* "road to progress".

> To provide a practical and dynamic
> instructional plan of action
> for all Nevada educators –
> including families and community members;
> one that outlines a specific set of strategies needed
> for the establishment of
> an effective and evidence-based
> delivery system of literacy instruction
> for all Nevada learners.
> This system becomes comprehensive in nature
> with a scope that navigates across
> the entire developmental continuum –
> from birth to adulthood.
>
> — Nevada State Literacy Plan Revision Team
> August 21, 2014

The NSLP purpose statement was written to align with several guiding statements that were established by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) (Erquiaga, 2015).

> **NDE Vision Statement:** "All Nevadans ready for success in the 21st Century."
>
> **NDE Mission Statement:** "To improve student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning, and promoting excellence."

III. Historical Context Behind the NSLP Revision Process:



Across this new millennium national efforts at meeting the literacy needs of American students have historically addressed specific age spans with one specific component of literacy as the focus – "reading". In 2001, a national reading initiative titled *Reading First* emerged as an outgrowth of the earlier *Reading Excellence Act*. Its focus became the reading acquisition of kindergarten through 3rd grade learners. By 2006, the U.S. Department of Education began expanding its focus on "reading" to a more comprehensive examination of every element of literacy that included reading, writing, listening, and speaking. One initial effort focused on the literacy needs of the adolescent learner. It was coined the "Striving Readers" grant. One Striving Readers grant recipient, the state of Wisconsin, experimented with its state initiative by expanding its focus from a very narrow focus of "adolescence" to a very broad focus that included the entire K (Kindergarten) through grade 12 developmental continuum. They referred to their model plan as a "comprehensive" literacy model. The success of the Wisconsin efforts prompted the U.S. Department of Education to introduce an historic literacy initiative titled the *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative* (SRCL) by 2010. This very first comprehensive initiative was aimed at expanding literacy efforts across the entire developmental spectrum from birth through grade 12. The comprehensive nature of this initiative had never before been attempted in America.

The U. S. Department of Education invited state departments of education across the nation to apply for this new SRCL grant. In order for any state's grant proposal to be considered, one prerequisite included a comprehensive state literacy plan. By 2011, members of the first Nevada State Literacy Team authored Nevada's first state literacy plan titled *Improving Literacy for a Strong Nevada: The State Literacy Plan for Nevadans: Birth Through Grade 12 and Beyond* (NDE, 2011). This document accompanied the Nevada Department of Education's formal grant application for the national SRCL grant. Nevada's proposal was funded, and in late 2011, Nevada became one of only six states in the entire country to be awarded a *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative* [often referred to as a SRCL (pronounced "circle")] grant with funding that included a five-year time frame.

For the next two years, the original draft of the *Nevada State Literacy Plan* guided the work of Nevada's SRCL Initiative. In January 2014, Nevada's new Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dale Erquiaga, included a revision of the *Nevada State Literacy Plan* in his first State Improvement Plan (STIP), which he presented to the Nevada State Board of Education. It was immediately adopted (Erquiaga, 2014). By April 2014, twenty-five members of the new Nevada State Literacy Plan Revision Team were announced. Literacy leaders gathered from across the state – from Pre-K classrooms to university ivory towers; from business offices to state PTA meeting rooms; from urban arenas to rural arenas. Professional consultants from the West Comprehensive Center, a program of WestEd, were enlisted to facilitate the work of this team right beside SRCL experts of the Nevada Department of Education. In addition, the team received the expert assistance of Dr. Michael Kamil throughout the entire process. The team's work transpired from May 2014 to May 2015. It resulted in this newly revised Nevada State Literacy Plan.

IV. Nevada's Definition of Literacy:

Even in the year 2015, there is a profound misunderstanding by many Americans with regards to the meaning of the word "literacy". If one was to conduct a poll today regarding this definition, many Americans would immediately define the word "literacy" to be synonymous with the word "reading" or "reading and writing". This issue has become so pronounced that the leading international organization guiding the work of literacy across the globe has recently changed its name from the *International Reading Association* to the *International Literacy Association*. Itoco Garcia writes of this action, "A shift in conception of the meaning of literacy away from simple notions of reading is necessary to successfully educate students in schools today" (2015). In an effort to address similar confusion within Nevada, the NSLP Revision Team established its own definition of literacy. It is as follows:

Literacy

The ability to actively and critically read, write, speak, and listen across all academic content areas and/or career pathways in order to construct meaning and communicate effectively. A literate individual is able to independently and collaboratively function in a global society by using evidence, creativity, questioning, reflecting, and problem-solving skills.

Nevada State Literacy Plan Revision Team
August 12, 2014

V. Guiding Principles for Literacy in the 21st Century:

The following table includes the research-based *Literacy Principles* outlined by Dr. Michael Kamil of Stanford University in his presentation to the Nevada State Literacy Plan Revision Team in June, 2014. These principles have been added to the NSLP as a critical source of guidance for all literacy instruction. (They are also embedded within each age band.)

Table 1. LITERACY GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Kamil, June, 2014, Presentation: Las Vegas, NV.)

Literate Individuals in the 21st Century need to . . .	
DEMONSTRATE INDEPENDENCE - Comprehend and evaluate complex text across disciplines. - Construct effective arguments and convey multifaceted information.	PRIVILEGE EVIDENCE - Cite text evidence for interpretations. - Make reasoning clear. - Evaluate others' use of evidence.
BUILD STRONG CONTENT KNOWLEDGE - Build knowledge in different subjects. - Become proficient in new areas. - Read purposefully. - Refine knowledge and share it.	CARE ABOUT PRECISION - Become mindful of the impact of vocabulary. - Compare meanings of different choices. - Attend to when precision matters.
RESPOND TO DEMANDS OF AUDIENCE, TASK, AND DISCIPLINE - Consider context in reading. - Appreciate nuances. - Know that different disciplines use different evidence.	LOOK FOR AND CRAFT STRUCTURE - Attend to structure when reading. - Understand how to present information in different disciplines. - Understand how an author's craft relates to setting and plot.
COMPREHEND AND CRITIQUE - Become open-minded and skeptical readers. - Understand what authors are saying. - Question an author's assumptions. - Assess the veracity of claims.	USE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY - Employ technology thoughtfully. - Efficiently search online for information. - Integrate online and offline information. - Select best suited media for goals.
UNDERSTAND OTHER CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES - Actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures. - Communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. - Evaluate other points of view critically and constructively.	

VI. NSLP Absolutes:

By combining extensive reviews of current literature and actual real-world experiences, members of the Nevada State Literacy Plan Revision Team have created the following list of "absolutes" or "guiding principles" as foundational principles for the entire NSLP. These statements are the "bedrock", the "non-negotiables," the *sine qua non,* without which the revised NSLP would not stand. The following table lists these core beliefs.

Table 2. NSLP ABSOLUTES
The Foundation of the Entire Document

- The primary focus of all literacy efforts becomes the empowerment of every individual Nevada student.
- The expectation that all learners can become successful at every component of literacy: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- Every Nevada student, family, and cultural heritage will be respected, honored and celebrated through literacy work.
- The Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) are meant to serve as guiding benchmarks for state educators to align instruction and intervention practices.
- True literacy leadership is possible only through the establishment of literacy networks that include instructional leaders*, key stakeholders, and community members.
- Effective literacy instruction in the 21st Century is established within an electronic environment that fosters digital and multi-media literacy for every student.
- The NSLP aims to address the literacy needs of all identified struggling student sub-populations in Nevada (English language learners, students with exceptional needs, students of poverty, etc.).
- Data must be utilized in order to identify additional groups of Nevada's struggling sub-populations (beyond the presently identified categories of English language learners**, students with exceptional needs, and children of poverty).
- Implementation of the NSLP includes an adherence to all Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and to all Nevada Administrative Codes (NAC).
- All NLSP professional learning is designed to intersect with the Nevada Educator Performance Framework.
- The NSLP has been designed to be a dynamic field-based tool. It is not designed to simply take up space on a shelf as a passive resource.
- An online platform of educational resources that are aligned to the NSLP will ultimately be provided to all Nevada educators.
- The NSLP will become a dynamic set of guidelines that will be reviewed and updated every two years in an online format.
- Nevada can and will become a community of readers and writers that values literacy.

***The role of "instructional leader" is inclusive of:** teachers, administrators, principals, instructional/literacy coaches, lead teachers, librarians, counselors, department chairpersons, superintendents, district directors, coordinators of professional learning, state department experts, and community members.

The NSLP Team acknowledges that the printing of this document fell during a name change from **English Language Learners to English Learners within this field. In order to provide a tone of familiarity for our audience, it was determined that ELL would be used for this first printing. All subsequent printings will use the new term.

VII. Organizational Structure of the NSLP:

The following graphic displays the overall organizational structure of the NSLP. The NSLP provides a specific "mini-plan" for each specific age band (Birth – Pre-K, Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Adult Literacy). Therefore, each age-band plan is meant to "stand alone". That means, for example, that if one specific site is a middle school site, it would be quite appropriate for a set of planners to simply utilize the "Middle School Literacy Plan".

Each age-band section of the NSLP begins with an organizational graphic that provides an outline to that particular age-band component. This outline reminds the reader of the five key Essentials. It is then followed by a *What Works* Summary that synthesizes current research-based recommendations for literacy efforts across each of the five essentials with a specific focus on this particular age band.

This outline reminds the reader of the five key essentials: Leadership and Sustainability, Data-Driven Standards Based Instruction & Intervention, Literacy Assessment Systems, Professional Learning, and Family & Community Engagement. Each of the five Essential sections is followed by a *Self-Assessment Tool*. Each site and/or district is recommended to utilize these self-assessment tools in order to gain a baseline of its current levels of sustainability across all five Essentials.

At the end of the five Essentials section, the reader will find a page titled *Recommendations for Effective Transitions.* Transitions here refer to successful transitions for the learner between this age-band and the next.

For example, the transition page at the end of the Birth-Pre-K piece will provide the reader with research-based methods for transitioning a child to the elementary level.

Following the transition page, the reader will find five Appendices. They are as follows:

Appendix A – NSLP Action Roadmap. This tool is provided as a holistic roadmap. It will assist district/local planners in determining present levels of sustainability across each of the five essentials.

Appendix B – Action Plan Framework form. This form is to be used by sites/districts for the development of a local literacy plan.

Appendix C – Professional Growth Plan Template. The purpose of this template is for educators to design a professional growth plan that strategically includes best practices in literacy as a central component.

Appendix D – NSLP Educator Planning Guide. This guide provides educators with a practical planning form that guides the teacher to effectively utilize authentic literacy-based practices in order to enhance content-based instruction.

Appendix E – Links and Resources. This listing offers links and resources for supplementary support.

Appendix F – References. This listing offers a complete set of references that have been cited in the text.

Birth to Pre-K: Growth

Nevada's forests and vegetation grow with the geography and history of this state. From arid droughts to lush meadows, they are always growing. This growth is synonymous with Nevada's youngest learners. Their incredible rate of growth underscores all of the other age bands.

Elementary: Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe is a gorgeous lake in northern Nevada. It is home to many different species. Its unique geography is ever-changing. The colors of its waters become multiplied in the Nevada sun. The fresh clear nature of this incredible mountain lake so resembles the fresh clear nature of Nevada's elementary-aged youth.

Middle School: The Great Basin

The Great Basin formed the landscape of modern Nevada. It appeared during the Cambrian Period. This period of the earth's development included an explosion of life and tumultuous transformations. In so many ways, Nevada's middle school learners reflect the history of Nevada's Great Basin.

High School: Mojave

As one of Nevada's most vibrant deserts, the 200 million year-old Mojave Desert symbolizes Nevada's vibrant high school cultures. With multiple layers of landscape intermixed with so many passionate shades of clay, the Mojave Desert artfully captures the spirit of Nevada's high school students.

Adult: Sierra Nevadas

The Sierra Nevada mountains are approximately 400 million years old. Their stark presence presents a unique mountain range for our state. Their diverse peaks and strong granite peaks provide a powerful reminder of Nevada's oldest literacy learners.

VII. How to Use the Nevada State Literacy Plan:

At the District and/or Site-Level Level:

The NSLP is designed for a site or district's immediate use. It is recommended that planners at the site/district level conduct their efforts toward creating their own local literacy plan. The following provides a simple set of steps for ensuring that the NSLP becomes a living document across the entire state.

STEP #1: Read the ***Overview*** of the entire plan to gain a sense of context.

STEP#2: Read the ***Introductory*** section of the age band plan that you will be using.

STEP#3: Read the ***What Works Summary*** in each ***Essential*** section in order to capture a summary of current evidence-based best practices.

STEP#4: Assemble a site/district-level Literacy Team to Complete the ***Self-Assessment Tool*** that follows each summary.

STEP#5: Refer to the ***NSLP Action Roadmap*** to identify the site's/district's present level of implementation for each of the five essentials (Levels 1-5).

STEP#6: Utilize the ***NSLP Strategy Form*** to begin creating an action plan framework for each of the five essentials.

STEP#7: Establish a monitoring process for determining your site's/district's progress. Continue to use the NSLP action plan process in a formative manner.

STEP#8: Continue implementing site/district level targeted actions identified in action plan with an aim toward ensuring long-term sustainability.

At the Teacher Level:

The NSLP Professional Growth Plan:

The purpose of this template is for educators to design a professional growth plan that strategically includes best practices in literacy as a foundational component.

The NSLP Educator Planning Guide:

Each age band plan includes this NSLP planning tool that will assist educators in the design of classroom instruction. This guide provides educators with a practical planning form that allows one to effectively utilize authentic literacy-based practices to enhance content-based instruction.

NSLP Theory of Action

A theory of action is "a set of underlying assumptions about how a group might move its organization from its current state to its desired state" (Skupa, 2015). A theory of action is, at its core, a simple IF/THEN statement. It is based on a set of proposed strategies that state, "If we do this . . . then x will happen." Elizabeth City and her team have identified the key descriptors of a sound theory of action (2009).

A Theory of Action:

- Aligns intended theory with the realities of work within an actual organization.
- Connects strategy to the actions and relationships critical to good instruction and student learning.
- Identifies the mutual dependencies that are required to get the complex work of improvement done.
- Is grounded in research or evidence-based practice.
- Begins with a statement of a causal relationship between what I/we do and what constitutes a good result in the organization.
- Includes high leverage for achievement and equity.
- Is powerful enough to transform programs and practices.

Adapted from *Instructional Rounds in Education* – Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman and Lee Teitel, 2009

In July, 2014, members of the NSLP Revision Team, their facilitators, and members of the Nevada Department of Education Leadership Team created a *Theory of Action for the NSLP Revision Team Project*. This plan included the NSLP purpose statement, an overarching "If /Then" statement, needs, inputs, strategies, and both short-term and long-term outcomes. This document served as a springboard tool for guiding the remainder of the work for the NSLP Revision Team members. In examining it, please note that the *NSLP Theory of Action* functioned as a "working draft" throughout the process. In no way did this document become part of a more formalized structure of NDE. Its sole purpose was to provide a roadmap for the writers of the NSLP. The following page includes the *NSLP Theory of Action*.

THE NEVADA STATE LITERACY PLAN REVISION TEAM PROJECT'S THEORY OF ACTION

If we hold ourselves accountable to implement a strategic literacy plan, ***then*** we will strengthen literacy instruction and support, which will, in turn, improve literacy outcomes for all students and overall student achievement.

PURPOSE: To provide a practical and dynamic instructional plan of action for all Nevada educators; one that outlines a specific set of strategies needed for the establishment of an effective and evidence-based delivery system of literacy instruction for all Nevada children. The system becomes comprehensive in nature with a scope that navigates across the entire developmental continuum – from birth to young adulthood.

NEED

- To improve literacy skills and performance levels of all Nevada students.
- To build capacity of all Nevada educators to effectively teach literacy acquisition skills.

INPUTS

- Current evidence-based research on literacy acquisition.
- Trends in Nevada student performance data:

2013 NAEP Reading Scores:

4th Grade – lower than 38 states

8th Grade – lower than 35 states

2013 Quality Counts Report:

Nevada's Overall Score = 69.7%

National Ranking = 49 out of 50

Student Chance for Success Ranking = 50 out of 50

STRATEGIES

Nevada State Governance

- Establish policies that directly align to the NSLP (NV Superintendent of Public Instruction and NV Dept. of Education).
- Communicate public and political support for the NSLP (Governor's Office and State Board of Education).
- Form political partnerships between executive and legislative branches to ensure passage of state statutes that directly align to the NSLP.

17 School Districts & Charter Schools

- Create local literacy plan for all educators that directly aligns to the NSLP.
- Expand number of Pre-K classrooms that offer high quality early literacy instruction.

NSHE - Nevada System of Higher Ed.

- Integrate principles of NSLP in all educator preparation coursework.
- Establish vertical alignment teams with secondary schools aimed at implementing the Bridge components of the NSLP.

Community

- Establish partnerships aimed at effectively disseminating the NSLP.
- Establish effective partnerships aimed at expanding family literacy efforts.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES (1-3 years)

Nevada State Governance

- Statewide NSLP-aligned professional development increases in quantity and rigor.
- All NDE programmatic monitoring is aligned to the NSLP.
- Increase in and realignment of state funding specifically aimed at improving literacy acquisition across Nevada.
- Adoption of state statutes and regulations that increase the quantity and rigor of literacy coursework for educator licensure.

17 School Districts & Charter Schools

- Improved performance of Pre-K-12 literacy instruction as measured by Nevada Educator Performance Framework.
- Increased number of students entering kindergarten with solid early literacy skills.

NSHE – Nevada System of Higher Ed.

- Development of valid performance measures aimed at scoring NSLP-aligned instruction as exit requirements in educator preparation programs.
- Reduction in number of entering freshmen students needing remedial coursework in Reading and Writing.

Community

- Increased public awareness of NSLP as measured by evidence-based surveys.
- Increased rate of Nevada families involved in literacy-based family engagement activities.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES (4+ years)

All Levels of Implementation:

- All students enter kindergarten ready to learn with early literacy skills.
- All students read by 3rd grade.
- All students exit 8th grade w/ the literacy skills to succeed in high school.
- All secondary students exit high school "college and career ready."
- Graduation rates are at or above the national average.
- All classrooms and schools provide students with effective educators who align their efforts to the principles of the NSLP.
- Adult students exiting educator preparation programs demonstrate high levels of proficiency on NSLP-aligned literacy performance measures.
- Majority of Nevada's families actively engaged in family literacy activities.
- Nevada's national rankings in educational performance reports improve.

Alignment to NDE Goals

After several months of planning sessions with the entire Nevada Department of Education staff, Superintendent Dale Erquiaga unveiled a new set of NDE goals during July of 2014. Figure 1 depicted below illustrates how the NSLP contributes to the realization of these five NDE goals. In accordance with the backwards design model, all five age-band literacy plans begin with these five NDE goals.

THE NEVADA STATE LITERACY PLANS	NSLP FIVE ESSENTIALS
- Birth - Pre K - Elementary - Middle School - High School - Adult	- Leadership & Sustainability - Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention - Literacy Assessment Systems - Professional Learning - Family & Community Engagement

NDE GOALS

- All students proficient in reading by 3rd grade.
- All students enter high school with the skills necessary to succeed.
- All students graduate college career ready.
- Effective educators serving students at all levels.
- Efficient & effective use of public funds to achieve the highest return on educational investment.

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NEVADA'S BIRTH TO PRE-K LITERACY PLAN

Birth to Pre-K: Growth

Nevada's forests and vegetation grow with the geography and history of this state. From arid droughts to lush meadows, they are always growing. This growth is synonymous with Nevada's youngest learners. Their incredible rate of growth underscores all of the other age bands.

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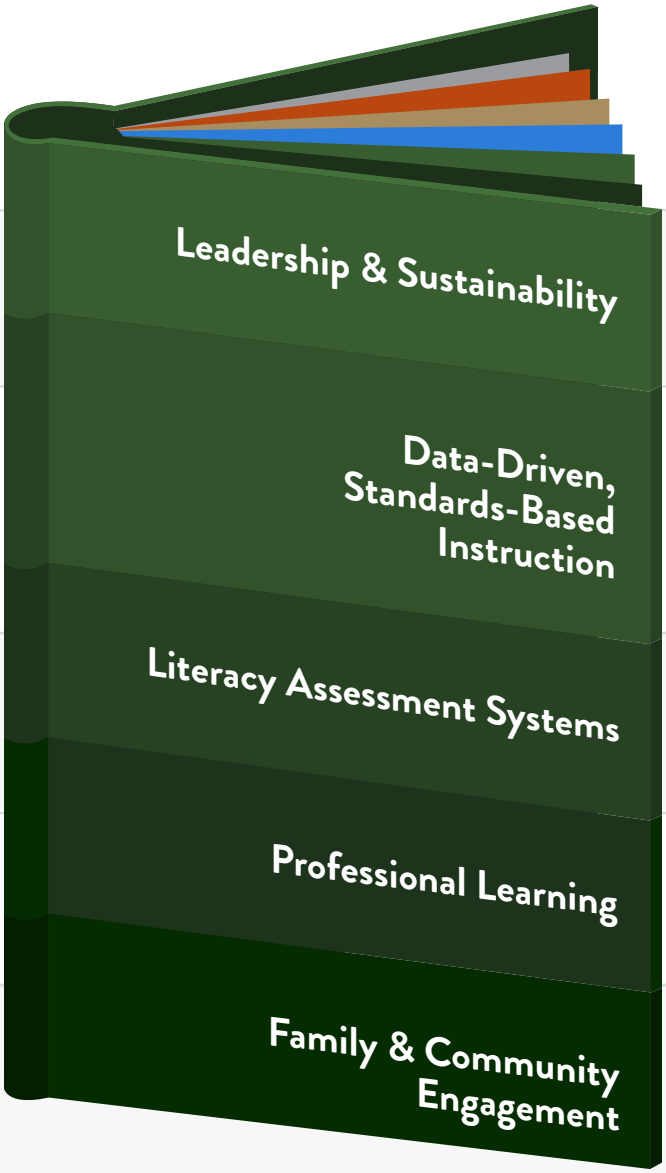
NEVADA'S BIRTH TO PRE-K LITERACY PLAN

THE FIVE NEVADA LITERACY ESSENTIALS



THE ESSENTIALS:

1. A group process aimed at strategically mobilizing others for the purpose of improving students' literacy growth. Sustainable reforms are persistent over time & circumstances.
2. All planning for literacy instruction occurs with a systematic analysis of student data. All instruction is explicitly aligned to state literacy standards. Classroom educators and interventionists use research-based strategies for delivering literacy objectives across all content areas.
3. The use of valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose students' literacy needs.
4. The development of learning opportunities, resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for all children, families, and educators.
5. A coordinated and collaborative system in which schools and other community organizations connect with families in meaningful ways to support the ongoing improvement of student, family, and community literacy.

Introduction

Maria Montessori, perhaps the most prominent early childhood educator in modern history, made quite a profound statement during her time when she wrote, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six" (1936). Today, decades later, research clearly supports Montessori's premier work in the field of early childhood development. Gisolo (2005) effectively captures her impact when he writes, "Montessori's methodology has shown an amazing degree of resiliency" for many decades.

Today, nearly 80 years later, it is widely accepted that the first five years of life do, indeed, form the foundation for all future learning. Evidence indicates that this is particularly so in the area of literacy learning. Literacy experts have coined this specific stage as the **emergent/early literacy** stage of literacy development. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) write,"Emergent literacy involves the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that area developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing" (p. 849).

In 2002 the National Early Literacy Panel convened under the auspices of the National Institute for Literacy. The sole purpose of this panel of internationally acclaimed early literacy experts "was to synthesize research to contribute to decisions in educational policy and practice that affect early literacy development" (p. iii). The culmination of their final report titled *Developing Early Literacy*, [more commonly known as the *NELP* (National Early Literacy Panel) *Report*], was published in 2008. The key findings of this report identified six variables that correlate with later success in literacy achievement. They included: alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid automatic naming of letters or digits, rapid naming of objects, writing or writing name, and phonological memory.

In addition to the *NELP* work, the state of Nevada has established a set of ELDS (Early Literacy Development Standards) that address two stages of development: *Nevada's Infant and Toddler Early Guidelines* (ages birth – 4 years) and *Nevada's Pre-K Standards* (ages 4-5 years). At this point in time, Nevada is committed to strengthening the ELDS by aligning them to World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Development Standards (for English Language Learners). In 2014 the Nevada Department of Education (in partnership with several other agencies) created a supplement to the already standing set of Nevada Pre-K Standards. This document is titled *Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards Common Core Crosswalk: A Supplement to the Nevada Pre-K Standards* (NDE – Pre-K Crosswalk, 2014). Referencing this document will help to establish vertical alignment between the Pre-K and elementary levels of education across Nevada.

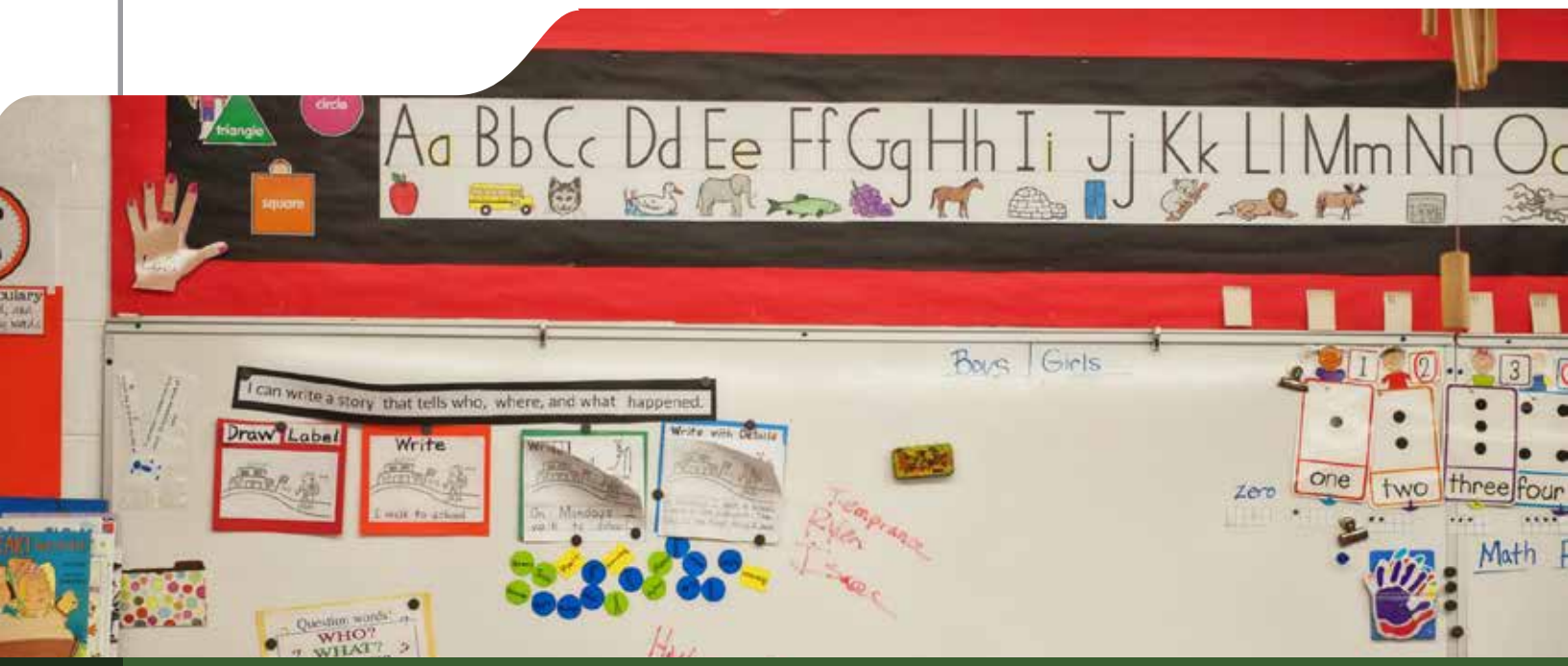
The Birth – 3 Years of Age Stage of Emergent Literacy:

Literacy development begins with a "dance of language". This "dance" occurs at the moment of birth when every young infant is immediately thrust into his/her journey with a world of language. It begins with unintentional nonverbal exchanges such as glances and stares that become more purposeful with the addition of goal-directed verbal exchanges such as cooing, babbling, and crying. Oral language development is the cornerstone of literacy learning during these foundational years. Like language coaches, the adult's primary task during these years becomes that of providing consistent scaffolding of the child's use of language. As primary caregivers, both parents and childcare providers play a key role in shaping a child's oral language development.

The Pre-K (Pre-kindergarten) Stage of Early Literacy:

"Research shows pre-school programs – if they're of high quality – can provide an enormous boost that changes children's lives forever (Lamy, 2013). Such "high quality" pre-K experiences are not possible without a comprehensive implementation of research-based literacy practices. Literacy learning that occurs during the Pre-K years is essential to all future learning. These are the years that bridge the acquisition of early literacy skills to the actual application of conventional literacy skills that typically begins at the kindergarten level. The 2008 National Early Literacy Panel defines the more *conventional* literacy skills as: "decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling . . . they are to be contrasted with *precursor* or *emergent* literacy skills" (p. vii).

This work further notes how a successful transition between these two stages of learning profoundly impacts a child's overall ability to read. Citing Scarborough (2001), the NELP describes how, "young children who demonstrate oral language proficiency and early abilities in processing print do better in learning to read in first, second, and third grades" (p.49). The NELP findings clearly identify the critical role that oral language development and pre-reading play in creating sound foundations for a child's early success in conventional reading.



The Comprehensive P-3 Reform Effort:

A thorough examination of the Birth-Pre-K stage of literacy learning would be incomplete without a brief discussion of the ever-growing practice of embedding this entire layer of early learning (Birth – Pre-K) right within a P-3 (Pre-K through 3rd grade) continuum. This practice has emerged nationally as an educational "reform effort"; it is one that has captured the attention of many educational leaders across Nevada. A clear definition of the P-3 movement is provided by the Colorado P-3 Consortium (2007):

> P-3 focuses on the earliest years of the P-20 education continuum, beginning with the years before children enter school (Pre-school) and extending through 3rd grade, transcending the traditional boundaries of early care and education (ECE) and elementary school. Here, the term "pre-school" is used not to describe a specific program, but to encompass all of the voluntary services and programs that children experience before their entry into the formal K-12 school system, including early intervention services, home visitation, nursery school, child care, family child care, pre-kindergarten (a distinct type of program that provides educational services to 3- and 4-year old children), Early Head Start, and Head Start programs. P-3 also includes the important primary school years.

Several school districts across Nevada have begun to implement a P-3 approach to early learning. Much of their work has revolved around the national framework designed by Kauerz & Coffman (2013). An expansion of the P-3 reform effort is being explored by multiple early childhood leaders across the state.

Conclusion:

Emergent literacy skills begin developing in early infancy and toddler years (birth – 3 years) and continue on through the Pre-K years (ages 4-5) when many children are exposed to their first formal school experience. All children acquire these skills through active participation with adults in meaningful activities that involve *talking and exposure to print*. Therefore, the actual act of reading to youngsters by B-Pre-K providers becomes critical. Evidence suggests that the three primary domains of emergent literacy are causally related to conventional reading and writing. They are: oral language development, phonological processing, and print knowledge (Phillips, 2005).

Essential 1: Leadership and Sustainability

What Works Summary

The role of early learning in the realm of literacy achievement has recently been identified as a very critical issue at both the national and state levels across the United States. Indeed, many leaders across the nation have begun identifying solutions for what has unfortunately become recognized as a national failing. As Gloria Bonilla Santiago (2015) writes, "one of the most daunting challenges about early learning in this country is a lack of public funding for teaching children from birth to 3 years of age. . . without quality early-childhood education and affiliated services, this is a lost generation waiting to happen. America cannot afford to lose half of its future taxpayers, householders, parents and workers." Sadly, the state of Nevada presently emerges as an unfortunate stronghold for many young children of a "lost generation". The statistics tell the story. Findings of the Annie E. Casey Foundation were reported in 2014: "Nevada's public school system remains dead last in the nation for a third year running. Nevada remained at 48th for children's well-being, and almost one in four Nevada children lives in poverty" (Milliard, 2014).

Collaborations in Leadership:

At the State Level

In order to prevent another layer of Nevada's children from becoming lost, leaders from across Nevada's entire system of Early Childhood Education (ECE) must band together in a collaborative spirit in order to take bold and deliberate action. Further, these actions must be well contrived in order to establish a solid path toward sustainability. The first action to take is to create an Early Childhood Literacy Network. *The Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network* is an excellent model for an ECE literacy network (2015). The following table (while not exhaustive) provides a listing of both public and private organizations that might provide representation in the development and implementation of a new Nevada early literacy network.

Table 1. IDENTIFYING KEY ORGANIZATIONS FOR REPRESENTATION IN A STATEWIDE EARLY LITERACY NETWORK

Nevada Families	Nevada's Pediatricians
Governmental Health Agencies	Nevada Department of Education's (Premier) Office of Early Learning and Development
Governmental Agencies working with Children with Exceptional Needs	Grant-writing teams for Early Childhood
Local Early Childcare Providers	Community organizations
Head Start and Early Head Start Agencies	Nevada's 17 school districts (many of which now provide public Pre-K programs)
Local County/City Governmental Agencies	Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE)
Early Childhood Education Settings	The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council
NV Advisory Council on Family Engagement	Early Childhood Special Education
School and Community Libraries	
Experts in ECE Family Poverty	

As one of the above-mentioned organizations, Nevada's Department of Education (in partnership with the Governor's Office) has already begun to take a lead in early childhood literacy. Two historic developments recently occurred during this past fall of 2014. First, the Nevada Department of Education established Nevada's very first Office of Early Learning and Development and, second, Nevada became a recipient of a U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services' Preschool Development Grant. It will be essential to watch the development and implementation of this multi-million dollar preschool grant over the next five years. Its efforts will undoubtedly pave the road for sustainability of Nevada's entire Pre-K future. Players engaged in both of these exciting new ventures will undoubtedly become pivotal participants in the establishment of an early literacy network for Nevada's youngest learners.

Methods for establishing an effective early childhood literacy network in Nevada have been identified by national experts. Strategies for successfully establishing leadership capacity within the early childhood arena have been identified by Kristie Kauerz and Julia Coffman (2013) in their publication titled *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches*. They recommend the following collective actions:

aligning a cross-sector of mechanisms, resources, and structures to support a shared vision of literacy;

building cultures and organizational structures that ensure high quality interactions for all children to promote and strengthen school readiness and success;

understanding and committing to building teacher effectiveness in the use of all Nevada standards, research-based developmentally appropriate instruction, and assessment aligned for instructional coherence in academics and social-emotional skills;

establishing and promoting environments of collaboration and engagement which support the health and wellness of children and adults;

facilitating effective use of current, relevant, and high-quality data from multiple sources to inform and improve systems;

engaging families as educational partners;

ensuring every child has access to a continuity of services and education needed for school success.

At the Site Level

As noted in the above introduction, the critical role of early childhood education in America has moved to the frontlines of educational leadership. Indeed, Dorothy Strickland (NIERR, 2013) captured it well when she discussed how "Literacy achievement is at the forefront of accountability in our country. For better or worse, schools, teachers, and children are measured in large part by student performance in reading and writing. Attention to early literacy as a function of school readiness is reflected in early childhood education classrooms and in the public policy arena." Many researchers have begun to investigate what constitutes an effective style of leadership at the early childhood site. In her book, *Leadership in Early Childhood,* Jillian Rodd (2013) provides a clear and succinct model of leadership at this level of education. She writes, "Today, effective leadership in early childhood is associated with the collective efforts of teams of educators who work together to influence and inspire each other rather than the efforts of one single person who focuses on getting the job done". Rodd goes on to describe how true leadership is not management.

Rodd's description of an effective leadership model for the early childhood arena includes the:

> "Fostering of a culture of trust, developing an openness to learning, encouraging and stimulating learning, communicating aims and visions with clarity and mission, direction, and inspiration rather than designing and implementing plans, getting things done, and ensuring that other people work efficiently."

Sustaining Leadership in Birth-Pre-K Literacy:

In order to develop a sound pathway for sustainability of Early Childhood literacy leadership, ECE instructional leaders must continually work to meet the current challenges facing their field. Strickland and Riley-Ayers' work titled *Literacy Leadership in Early Childhood: The Essential Guide* identifies some of these most pressing challenges as: "the change in the meaning of literacy, the increase in student performance expectations, the increase in teacher performance expectations, accountability for student achievement, and the demographics of the student population" (2007).

In order to effectively meet these identified challenges, one responsibility of ECE literacy leaders is to articulate a clear vision for addressing them – one that includes a concrete plan of action. Inherent within this plan would be the development of positive cultures of literacy. It is further recommended that literacy leaders maintain a clear tone of transparency, accessibility, and communication about their vision through both internal and external platforms. An ECE literacy network would serve this purpose. Lastly, it is recommended that ECE leadership promote early literacy achievement through data-driven decision making. All of the measures noted above would certainly ensure the long-term sustainability of early literacy learning across the state of Nevada.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

BIRTH – PRE-K LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Essential #1. LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Instructional leaders have established measurable literacy goals that explicitly align to the NELDS (Nevada Early Learning Development Standards). These include the Nevada Infant-Toddler Learning Guidelines (Birth – Age 3) and the Nevada Pre-K Standards (Ages 4-5) with particular attention being made to Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Standards Common Core Crosswalk.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional leaders establish a literacy management system that includes data-based decision-making in order to ensure continuous improvement.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Instructional leaders have established specific plans for educating Nevada families about the critical role that they play in the Birth-Pre-K stage of emergent literacy. (Methods for informing Nevada families who are not accessing any formal daycare or school experience have been identified).				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders have developed research-based literacy goals targeted for all students that include customized goals for children and families of Nevada's struggling sub-populations.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Instructional leaders effectively direct the education of children, families, school sites, and entire communities about the critical role that both oral language and reading play in the development of emergent literacy.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders research the statistical reliability and validity of the assessment, instruction, and intervention resources to be utilized through national resources such as the What Works website and the What Works Clearinghouse.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Site-level instructional leaders have established a culture that includes the "collective efforts of teams of educators who work together to influence and inspire" one another by assisting every teacher to reach his/her potential in literacy instruction and every child to reach his/her potential in literacy achievement.				1 2 3 4 5
8. Site-level instructional leaders consistently update their own professional knowledge base on all aspects of effective literacy instruction.				1 2 3 4 5
9. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Leadership & Sustainability:

Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention

What Works Summary

Data-Driven Decision Making:

Data-driven decision-making during the early childhood years refers to the intentional process of using informed observations and formative assessments to impact powerful learning opportunities, environments, and interactions for every child's optimal development. This process occurs when educators identify where each child is in his or her development plus effective supports for determining next steps needed for learning. A profound shift in the ECE realm of daily practice mandates that instructional decision-making (including intervention work) now be driven by a strategic analysis of relevant student data. National experts have begun to recommend such practices (NGA & NDE, 2014). However, frontline educators are quickly learning that in order to successfully utilize student performance data (at both daycare and pre-K settings), they must work to create practical systems of documentation. Experts have come to identify methods that can be seamlessly embedded into the daily classroom routine. Such protocols include: the taking of short anecdotal notes, capturing student behaviors with a sticky-note system, and using teacher-created classroom checklists to easily capture student performance across multiple literacy skills. A second shift in the world of early childhood is also occurring – this being the onset of data-based decision making teams. This practice is slowly being implemented at the early childhood level.

Standards-Based Instruction:

Standards-based instruction refers to: "systems of instruction, assessment, grading and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education" (Glossary of Education Reform, 2015). The state of Nevada presently ascribes to the ELDS (Early Learning Development Standards). These include: the 2011 *Nevada Infant Toddler Early Learning Guidelines 0-4* (Nevada Registry) and the 2010 Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards (Nevada Registry). In 2014 the Nevada Department of Education (in partnership with several other agencies) created a supplement to the already standing set of Nevada Pre-K Standards. This document is titled *Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards Common Core Crosswalk: A Supplement to the Nevada Pre-K Standards* (NDE, Pre-K Crosswalk 2014). Referencing this document will help to establish vertical alignment between the Pre-K and K-12 levels of education across Nevada. It is recommended that all emergent literacy instruction be aligned to these documents. Frontline alignment begins at the planning stage of all instruction (see Appendix C: *The Birth—Pre-K Professional Growth Plan Template* and Appendix D: *The NSLP Educator Planning Guide*).

Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework and Interventions:

"RTI integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral problems," (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010; Allain & Eberhardt, 2011). One recent joint paper in Early Childhood cites Greenwood (2011) as defining RTI in Early Childhood Education as "a means of providing high-quality teaching and responsive caregiving through the delivery of differentiated support for all young children. . . . that occurs through a data-based decision-making process" (Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children). This same paper goes on to note that "the goal of implementing an RTI framework with young children is to be aware of areas (academic, behavioral, etc.) in which each child has differing needs and to match instructional and behavioral systems of support to those individual needs." All efforts in Early Childhood literacy instruction and intervention must be aligned to the RTI framework.

The Literacy Guiding Principles:

The following list of guiding principles has been identified by experts as supplemental skills necessary for success in the 21st century. Strict adherence to this list is not recommended for application at the ECE level. However, an integration of the broader categories (noted in red) is highly recommended for all ECE instructional leaders.

Table 2. LITERACY GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Kamil, June, 2014, Presentation: Las Vegas, NV.)

Literate Individuals in the 21st Century need to . . .	
DEMONSTRATE INDEPENDENCE - Comprehend and evaluate complex text across disciplines. - Construct effective arguments and convey multifaceted information.	PRIVILEGE EVIDENCE - Cite text evidence for interpretations. - Make reasoning clear. - Evaluate others' use of evidence.
BUILD STRONG CONTENT KNOWLEDGE - Build knowledge in different subjects. - Become proficient in new areas. - Read purposefully. - Refine knowledge and share it.	CARE ABOUT PRECISION - Become mindful of the impact of vocabulary. - Compare meanings of different choices. - Attend to when precision matters.
RESPOND TO DEMANDS OF AUDIENCE, TASK, AND DISCIPLINE - Consider context in reading. - Appreciate nuances. - Know that different disciplines use different evidence.	LOOK FOR AND CRAFT STRUCTURE - Attend to structure when reading. - Understand how to present information in different disciplines. - Understand how an author's craft relates to setting and plot.
COMPREHEND AND CRITIQUE - Become open-minded and skeptical readers. - Understand what authors are saying. - Question an author's assumptions. - Assess the veracity of claims.	USE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY - Employ technology thoughtfully. - Efficiently search online for information. - Integrate online and offline information. - Select best suited media for goals.
UNDERSTAND OTHER CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES - Actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures. - Communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. - Evaluate other points of view critically and constructively.	

Best Practices and Implementation:

The extensive analysis of data in the NELP (National Early Literacy Panel) Report (2008) examined a range of relationships between early literacy skills and conventional literacy skills. The report's final analysis determined that three primary early literacy skills were found to yield significant student gains when intentional developmentally appropriate instructional practices were implemented. These early skills included: **1. Oral language development**, **2. Phonological awareness**, and **3. Alphabet Knowledge.** These findings indicate that a stronger emphasis should be placed on these three early literacy skills when designing Birth - Pre-K literacy instruction and intervention practices. In addition to these three skills, the role of early writing experiences has also been identified.

Four Primary Domains of Emergent Literacy:

A. Oral Language & Pre-K Vocabulary Development:

Learning language is developmental. Learning language also provides one with the ability to think. It's a point that is often missed. The entire "dance of language" has been proven to be a critical component in cognitive development. Dahlgren cites Bruner's (1983) early findings: "Proficiency in oral language provides children with a vital tool for thought. Without fluent and structured oral language, children will find it very difficult to think" (Dahlgren, 2008). A domino impact becomes blaringly apparent when one begins to consider the critical role that thinking plays across conventional literacy skills in both reading and writing.

Any effective mastery of language is dependent on a young child's successful acquisition of listening and speaking skills – both of which are considered to be specific components of literacy. Therefore, the home front becomes the starting point. The ground-breaking study of Hart & Risley (2003) discovered that there is "a clear correlation between the conversation style of parents and the resulting speech of their children" (p. 8). Whitehurst, et al. (2003) have identified five key strategies for developing early oral language development including Pre-K vocabulary:

- Using varied vocabulary during meal times
- Providing intellectually challenging conversations
- Developing rich curriculum in pre-school
- Utilizing dialogic reading in the home and at the school setting
- Developing a home book reading time

Additional strategies for fostering emergent literacy development have been outlined in the *Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix* (2006), sponsored by the National Center for Family Learning. Some of the strategies outlined in this tool include: word games, the use of dialogic reading, and shared reading activities. It is recommended that Nevada's early childhood educators consult this matrix as a primary resource for making instructional decisions in emergent literacy (See Appendix E: *Links and Resources*).

B. Phonological Awareness:

Phonological awareness is the understanding of different ways that oral language can be divided into smaller components and manipulated. It occurs through listening and speaking. The most sophisticated level of this process occurs with phonemic awareness. *Phonemic awareness* is the understanding that words are made up of individual sounds (phonemes or syllables). First, the child comes to understand the oral components of language. He/she then connects these sounds with written symbols of the alphabet (letters). **It is important to note that phonological awareness is not phonics.** Phonics is the association of letters and sounds to sound out written symbols. Table 1 below pairs the stages of phonological awareness with effective teaching strategies.

Table 3. ACQUIRING PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS SKILLS
(Reading Rockets, 2015)

Stages of Phonological Awareness	Strategies for Instruction
Word awareness	Tracking words in sentences
Responding to oral rhyme & alliteration during word play	Reciting learned rhyming words or alliterative phrases in familiar storybooks or nursery rhymes
Syllable awareness	Counting, tapping, blending, or segmenting a word into syllables
Onset & rime manipulation	The ability to produce a rhyming word depends on understanding that rhyming words have the same rime. (e.g. cat/bat/fat/etc.)
Phonemic awareness	Identify and match the initial sounds in words, then the final and middle sounds; blending sounds into words; manipulate phonemes by adding or substituting sounds.

C. Alphabet Knowledge:

Alphabet knowledge is the child's knowledge of the names and sounds associated with printed letters. The Creative Curriculum System (2015) provides a succinct list of strategies for enhancing a child's alphabet knowledge in a school setting. Though not exhaustive, it provides a nice framework for some of the primary strategies for enhancing a child's alphabet knowledge.

- Display the alphabet at the child's level
- Read alphabet books and adding them to classroom library
- Sing the alphabet song & other songs with letter names
- Individualize alphabet instruction especially during small-group time
- Encourage sensory exploration of the alphabet
- Provide ample time, materials, and space for children to write during the day
- Use children's names to help them learn alphabet letters and sounds
- Model writing during daily shared writing experiences

D. Early Writing:

Head Start's framework for 3-5 aged Pre-K students provides a description of early writing objectives. It defines early writing as: "the familiarity with writing instruments, conventions, and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols, and letters" (2010). Specific instructional strategies include:

- Experimenting with writing tools and materials
- Recognizing that writing is a way of communication for a variety of purposes
- Using scribbles, shapes, pictures, and letters to represent objects, stories, experiences or ideas
- Copying, tracing, or independently writing letters or words

Digital and Multi-Media:

The role of digital and multi-media tools for enhancing early literacy is becoming more prevalent in Early Childhood classrooms. The reality is that today's young children interact with modern-day technology on a daily basis. In order to assist ECE educators, the National Association for the Young Child (NAEYC) and the Fred Rogers Center (2015) have created the following list of recommendations for integrating these tools into literacy instruction:

Select, use, integrate, and evaluate technology and interactive media tools in intentional and developmentally appropriate ways, giving careful attention to the appropriateness and the quality of the content, the child's experience, and the opportunities for co-engagement.

Provide a balance of activities in programs for young children, recognizing that technology and interactive media can be valuable tools when used intentionally with children to extend and support active, hands-on, creative, and authentic engagement with those around them and with their world.

Prohibit the passive use of television, videos, DVDs, and other non-interactive technologies and media in early childhood programs for children younger than 2, and discourage passive and non-interactive uses with children ages 2 through 5.

Limit any use of technology and interactive media in programs for children younger than 2 to those that appropriately support responsive interactions between caregivers and children and that strengthen adult-child relationships.

Carefully consider the screen time recommendations from public health organizations for children from birth through age 5 when determining appropriate limits on technology and media use in early childhood settings. Screen time estimates should include time spent in front of a screen at the early childhood program and, with input from parents and families, at home and elsewhere.

Provide leadership in ensuring equitable access to technology and interactive media experiences for the children in their care and for parents and families.

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. English Language Learners:

"Currently, ELL's represent approximately 20% of the nation's young learners . . . they are particularly vulnerable to low literacy levels at the end of third grade" (Espinosa, 2010). This representative national data demonstrates how critical ELL literacy achievement has become across the nation. It also demonstrates the critical role that ELL Early Childhood literacy instruction plays in helping to prevent a continuation of these daunting gaps in student achievement.

In a review of current literature, Espinosa (2010) has identified effective ECE strategies for the ELL learner. These strategies are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 4. RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE READING COMPREHENSION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
(Espinosa, 2010)

Oral Language: Listening & Speaking	Decoding: Word Level Skills	Language of Instruction	Engaging Families
- Strategic use of home language to build comprehension - Use gestures, visual cues to communicate meaning - Frequent opportunities for extended conversations - Systematically teach high priority vocabulary words - Model and teach academic language - Build narrative skills - Provide multiple opportunities across contexts for ELLS to use and practice all emerging oral language skills - Expand time available for language learning	- Use meaningful print connected to child's background to build print knowledge - Explicitly teach names and sounds of alphabet letters - Promote phonological awareness through songs, chants, rhymes, finger-plays, and skilled story-book reading - Encourage daily writing	- Incorporate home language to the extent possible through books, tapes, native speakers, etc. during specified times of day (ideally 50%) - Introduce English at least 25%-30% of day	- Complete family languages and interest surveys - Use family primary language for all communications - Encouraged family literacy activities in home language - Invite families into schools and classrooms - Incorporate family "funds of knowledge" - Provide parent education, advocacy, and empowerment activities

In addition to Espinosa's recommendation, it is important to note that Nevada is a member of the *World-Class Instructional Design Assessmen*t (WIDA) *National Consortium.* The NSLP recommends that all ECE educators (including families) utilize the four WIDA components to Early Language Development. They include using the WIDA Early Language Development standards, building state and local capacity, utilizing the WIDA early language development assessments, and promoting family engagement (WIDA). (See Appendix E: *Links and Resources*).

B. Learners with Exceptional Needs:

In adherence to federal law (IDEA 2004), Nevada is required to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities from birth through age 21. For children birth to age 3, IDEA 2004 Part C provides for Early Intervention Services. For children age 3-5, they receive these services through Part B, Section 619 of the act; typically through the local school district. Once eligibility has been determined, an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) for children birth-3 or an Individual Education Program (IEP) for children 3-5 is written based on the child's individual needs for special education and related services. These plans are reviewed periodically and modified to reflect the need of the student. While the content of each plan is determined on individual need, the primary components of emergent literacy (as noted above) are often a part of the child's IFSP or IEP.

C. Learners Living in Poverty:

"On average, children from poor families score far below their peers from higher-income families in early vocabulary and literacy development, in early math, and in the social skills they need to get along well in their classrooms" (Lamy (2013) citing Halle et al., 2009; Lee & Burkham, 2002).

As Lamy (2013) further notes, "to fight poverty, preschool must provide an enormous early boost that changes the academic trajectory of a child forever. Only a high-quality preschool program will do the job."

In order for any system to begin working with families of poverty, they must first identify the children and caregivers who comprise this group. Upon this identification process, it is then recommended that literacy training opportunities be provided to these families. This would include teaching the family members how to support their young learner. A whole range of creative parent training programs have emerged across the United States. One local program was designed by the University of Nevada's Cooperative Extension Program (2015). It is called *The Family Storyteller Project.* Here, early childhood experts provide struggling parents with systematic training materials for enhancing literacy growth (typically in both English and Spanish). Similar programs have emerged across the country.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

BIRTH – PRE-K LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Essential #2. DATA-DRIVEN AND STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Parents and families of the Birth-Pre-K learner are provided with multiple training opportunities that include specific strategies for enhancing their child's emergent literacy development.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Parents and families of the Birth-Pre-K learner have become integral partners with professional providers in their child's emergent literacy development.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Birth - Pre-K systematic literacy instruction primarily targets: oral language development, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional content and materials are aligned to NELDS (Nevada Early Learning Development Standards). These include the *Nevada Infant-Toddler Learning Guidelines* (Birth – Age 3) and the *Nevada Pre-K Standards* (Ages 4-5) with particular attention being made to Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Standards Common Core Crosswalk.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Data that captures children's early learners' literacy outcomes are systematically gathered and analyzed by educators (in a daycare and/or school setting) in order to continuously improve instruction and intervention practices.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instruction & Intervention strategies have been strategically customized to meet the needs of Nevada's B-Pre-K struggling sub-populations.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Tiered literacy instruction (per the RTI model) is clearly identified and implemented with fidelity and is based on national ECE RTI protocols.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Data-Driven and Standards-Based Instruction and Intervention:

Essential 3: Literacy Assessment Systems

What Works Summary

Assessment Framework:

Assessment at the Birth – Pre-K level refers to: "the methods through which early childhood professionals gain understanding of children's development and learning. Systematic observations and other informal and formal assessments enable professionals to appreciate children's unique qualities, to develop appropriate goals, and to plan, implement, and evaluate effective (literacy) curriculum" (NAEYC, 2009). The task of choosing an appropriate assessment for this age group is complex. It must begin with research. The position statement by NAEYC and NAECS in SDE has long provided expert guidance complete with specific criteria for any ECE program that is attempting to choose appropriate Early Childhood assessments (2003). It is a recommended resource.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems:

A. State of Nevada Assessment System:

At the present time the state of Nevada gathers formal data only on two specific Pre-K programs: state Pre-K programs and the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program (which utilizes the PPVT 2nd Edition).

B. QRIS:

In 2008 the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in Nevada coined the Nevada Silver Stars QRIS was developed as a rating system for Nevada licensed childcare centers. It began as a pilot in Southern Nevada. Pre-Post data was collected using the Environmental Rating Scales. Nevada families can now access this website to make informed decisions regarding their child's daycare provider (Nevada Silver State Stars QRIS, 2015). This scale examines child outcomes, facility curriculum and learning environment, curriculum (learning & assessment), professional learning and family engagement.

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Methods:

Experts recommend that ECE instructors use both formal and informal measures to assess student progress in both development and learning. "A variety of assessment tools and approaches, including rating scales, checklists, norm-referenced tests, portfolios, and observations, can be used to learn more about the child's strengths and challenges" (NAEYC, 2005: Sandall, McLean, & Smith, 2000). It is critical to note that a huge distinction is made between the use formal assessments of early learners and informal assessments with young learners at this age. Current research indicates that results taken from formal assessments early learner have been found to be less reliable and valid than similar assessments conducted of older children. The reality is that younger children's competencies tend to be more dependent on situations and environments. Children of this age span devise working theories of the world that are rapidly changing. This dynamic nature of early childhood assessment has therefore resulted in a cyclical relationship with early childhood curriculum. This relationship is clearly identified in the *NAEYC's* landmark work titled, *Where We Stand on Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation (2009)*:

> Assessment evidence is gathered from realistic settings and situations that reflect children's actual performance. To influence teaching strategies or to identify children in need of further evaluation, the evidence used to assess young children's characteristics and progress is derived from real-world classroom or family contexts that are consistent with children's culture, language, and experiences.

The following table summarizes the most common methods of assessment utilized at this level of learning. It is not considered to be an exhaustive list. For a more thorough national listing that specifically includes major literacy assessments, it is recommended that one consult the *2006 Verizon Life-Span Literacy Matrix* (see Links & Resources Appendix). The NSLP writers acknowledge the diversity of statistical protocols used across this set of tools.

Table 5. METHODS OF COMMON ASSESSMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Assessment Type	Administered to	Possible Examples	Purpose
Environmental Assessment	B-Pre-K instructional settings	**ELLCO –** Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation **CLASS –** Classroom Assessment Scoring System **ECERS –** Early Childhood Environmental Rating Score **ITERS –** Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale **ELOC –** Early Literacy Observation Checklist	To establish national program quality assurances. To capture pre-post measures for teacher effectiveness and student performance.
Initial Assessment	All students	**Ages & Stages Parent Questionnaire** Pre-Assessments Screenings Local Assessments **Teaching Strategies Gold™**	To establish a baseline measure of students' knowledge, skills, and abilities. (These are often conducted at the beginning of a unit or school year).
Formative Assessment	All students	A myriad of strategies to gather evidence of teaching and learning and inform next steps Local Assessments Classroom Observations **High Scope/Child Observation Record**	To monitor teaching and learning and make adjustments that meet the needs of all students. To provide feedback on progress related to desired outcomes
Diagnostic Assessment	Identified students	Inventories Probes Progress Monitoring - Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Child-Find Selected Assessments for Children with Possible Exceptional Needs	To monitor student progress and assess instruction and interventions to meet the needs of all students
Summative Assessment	All students	**Teaching Strategies Gold ™** End-of –Year Report Student Portfolio Assessments	Report progress toward desired outcomes

B. Environmental Rating Scales:

The most prevalent tool being used across American childcare settings and pre-schools today is the environmental rating scale. This type of scale (meeting QRIS standards) captures multiple elements of the entire ECE setting. The above mentioned table includes a listing of these tools. Please note that the tools that capture specific *literacy* instruction and learning include the: ELLCO, ECERS, and ELOC assessments.

C. Systematic Observation:

Systematic observation plays a critical role in the assessment of the young child. The renowned developmental psychologist, Marie Clay (1991) recognized this early on with her groundbreaking work *Becoming Literate*. She wrote, "If teachers are to recognize what achievements children bring to school they need to become good observers of young children, and even better listeners than they usually are" (p. 37). Effective observations eventually transform into learning interactions. These occur on a daily basis as the Early Childhood educator (including parents, care providers, teachers, etc.) interacts, notices, recognizes, and responds simultaneously to both the child's attempts and successes in his/her learning. Therefore, instructional feedback becomes much more intentional and immediate for the birth-Pre-K learner.

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. English Language Learners:

In order to best address the assessment needs of Nevada's English Language Learners at the ECE level, it is important to note that Nevada is a member of the *World-Class Instructional Design Assessme*nt (WIDA) *National Consortium.* The NSLP recommends that all ECE educators (including families) utilize the four WIDA components to Early Language Development. They include using the WIDA Early Language Development standards, building state and local capacity, utilizing the WIDA early language development assessments, and promoting family engagement (WIDA). (See *Links & Resources* for access to additional WIDA Early Childhood information).

B. Learners with Exceptional Needs/Early Reading Screening:

Early reading screening is typically a quickly administered assessment used to identify children who may have needs for more in-depth assessment. These tools are often brief and appear quite simple. Such tools still should be constructed according to technical standards. In addition, only trained staff should conduct screenings. This type of assessment is typically a first step toward identifying other potential learning problems. Experts recommend caution for using assessments without predictive validity. Some of the early reading screening assessments most often used include: the BEAR (Basic Early Assessment of Reading), the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), the GRADE (Group Reading Assessment & Diagnostic Evaluation), the PAR (Predictive Assessment of Reading, the TERA-3 (Test of Early Reading Ability – 3).

Nevada State Literacy Plan

BIRTH – PRE-K LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Essential #3. LITERACY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Valid and reliable assessments are being used to assess the early learner's emergent literacy performance in both daycare and/or Pre-K settings.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Emergent literacy assessments being used in daycare and/or school settings have been aligned to the NELDS (Nevada's Early Learning Development Standards).				1 2 3 4 5
3. Public and private daycare and Pre-K settings provide all caregivers with specialized training on how to utilize assessment data in order to effectively inform their instruction.				1 2 3 4 5
4. An assessment framework has been established at childcare and/or Pre-K settings that includes multiple measures and data points. Data that is gathered includes all categories of literacy performance (environmental, diagnostic, formative, interim, summative, etc.).				1 2 3 4 5
5. All early childhood providers have received specialized training on how to use the data-driven decision-making process.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Literacy data discussions are structured via an evidence-based collaborative inquiry model; one that includes strategies for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. These discussions are incorporated into the PLC process.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Literacy Assessment Systems:

Essential 4: Professional Learning

What Works Summary

National Guidelines:

The realm of professional learning in the world of Birth-Pre-K literacy is quite complex. The complexity begins with the great diversity of the many providers. (Please note that the professional learning opportunities for parents are noted in the section on Family & Community Engagement). Both the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and the NACCRRA (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies) recognized this factor in their development of a national training glossary. They describe the diversity of this group of educators:

> Some of the early childhood workforce have college degrees in early education, some have degrees in closely related fields, some are enrolled in degree programs, some are taking college courses, some are graduates of technical high schools or technical school programs, some have no previous related education – and almost all of them are engaged in training every year (2011).

Not only are these educators quite academically diverse, their typical professional learning venues are as well. The NAEYC/NACCRA national glossary identifies six primary methods for professional learning. They include: training, technical assistance, mentoring, coaching, consultation, and professional development advising. When designing ECE professional learning activities, the NAEYC/NACCRA glossary structures each method with the following components: focus, relationships, process, duration, and delivery.

It is recommended that professional learning providers begin with this concise set of national guidelines in the establishment of an effective Birth-Pre-K professional learning system. It is further recommended that early learning educators individualize their professional learning by creating an individual professional growth plan. The design of an effective PGP should revolve around early learning literacy objectives (see specific literacy objectives noted in earlier sections). For the reader's use, the NSLP has provided a sample Birth-Pre-K Professional Growth Plan (See Appendix D: *NSLP Educator Planning Guide*).

Alignment to Nevada State Student Standards (ELDS):

In order to establish a statewide tone of continuity of service for early childhood education providers, all professional learning curricula must be aligned to Nevada's Early Development Standards (Nevada Infant Toddler Early Learning Guidelines and the Nevada Pre-K Standards). It is further recommended that all ECE providers utilize NDE's 2014 ECE Crosswalk between Nevada's State Pre-K standards and the K-12 NVACS in order to establish vertical alignment across these two levels of education.

Alignment to Nevada's Educator Performance Framework (NEPF):

In 2013 the Nevada State Legislature enacted NRS 391.460. This law requires a statewide educator performance evaluation system for teachers, school administrators, and counselors, librarians, and other licensed educational personnel. Regulations for the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) are outlined in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC 391.565 – NAC 391.580). Within the state of Nevada, it is only those Early Childhood educators who teach at Nevada State Pre-K settings who will be required to be evaluated by the new NEPF system. However, it is recommended that all ECE providers utilize the elements of the NEPF as additional sources of content for designing professional learning.

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Professional Learning Communities:

Professional learning communities have historically existed as an integral component of the early childhood arena. The school culture, itself, reflects this phenomenon. "Early childhood classrooms are unique learning environments where collaborative and productive teaching teams are essential to student success" (Elner, 2014). "PLCs" were undeniably operating in the early childhood level well before this formal title even emerged. Some actual towns and cities have begun establishing ECE professional learning communities that include both public and private educators. Effective PLCS play an integral role in early literacy.

Additional ECE professional development communities are emerging across the nation. With the availability of online resources, many national ECE organizations, universities, school districts, (to name a few), have begun offering professional learning communities in an online format. ECE educators have begun to connect via blogs and tweets. The use of technology has created an exciting new frontier in this field.

B. Characteristics of Effective Professional Development at the Birth-Pre-K Level:

New Zealand's Ministry of Education embarked on a long-term investigation of effective professional development activities at the early childhood level in 2003. The following table depicts their primary findings aimed at Early Childhood providers.

Table 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEVEL
(Mitchell & Cubey, 2003)

The professional learning:
incorporates participants' own aspirations, skills, knowledge and understanding into the learning context.
provides theoretical and content knowledge and information about alternative practices.
involves participants in investigating pedagogy within their own early childhood settings.
requires participants to analyze data from their own settings. (Revelation of discrepant data is a mechanism to invoke revised understanding).
involves critical reflection that enables participants to investigate and challenge assumptions and extend their thinking is a core aspect.
supports educational practice that is inclusive of diverse children, families and cultures.
helps participants to change educational practice, beliefs, understanding, and/or attitudes.
helps participants to gain awareness of their own thinking, actions, and influence.

In designing effective professional learning opportunities for the Birth-Pre-K *literacy* educator, it is recommended that a seamless weaving of New Zealand's eight core components with sound literacy objectives (noted in the Instruction and Intervention section) establish the primary structure and content for all Birth-Pre-K professional learning activities.

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. Traditional Job-Embedded Training:

1. Meeting the Needs of the Nevada's Struggling Learners:

"Many of Nevada's young children are at risk for later problems" (NGA, 2014). Current statistics tell the story. Early childhood risk factors become immediately recognizable when examining the numbers. The National Governor's Association (2014) lists some of the risk factors presently facing Nevada's youngest learners:

- 17% have parents with no high school degree
- 51% live in low-income families
- 12% live in households without English speakers
- 29% have moved residences at least once in the last year
- 8% of 3 year-olds and 14 % of 4 year-olds are enrolled in state Pre-K, Head Start, & Special Education Pre-K settings in Nevada

ECE professional learning opportunities should be designed in reflection of these current statistics. Customized training must be offered for the ECE educator in order that he/she can be best prepared to meet the needs of Nevada's struggling learners (inclusive of English language learners, learners with exceptional needs, and children in poverty).

B. Meeting the Unique Needs of Nevada's Site Administrators:

Nevada's public elementary schools have experienced a rapid increase of Pre-K classrooms on their sites over the past five years. Nevada's Striving Readers' Comprehensive Literacy federal initiative is one indicator of Nevada's increasing number of Pre-K classrooms. This program has added several additional public pre-K settings since 2012 (NDE SRCL, 2014). The addition of this new level of instruction to a typically K-5 setting has resulted in a knowledge and application gap for many site administrators. The majority of these individuals have had little to no teacher preparation and/or graduate level coursework to prepare them for effectively overseeing both literacy instruction and intervention in the Early Childhood setting. The NSLP recommends that professional learning opportunities professional learning opportunities in Early Childhood Education instructional practices in literacy.

C. Literacy Coaching at the Early Childhood Level:

The role of the literacy coach in the Early Childhood arena is quite new to this field. Evidence of the expansion of this role can be found in ECE teacher preparation programs such as Georgia State University that now offers an advanced certificate in ECE Literacy Coaching within its Early Childhood Education Program. Some researchers have begun to explore the impact. Byington (2013) reports that "literacy coaching has gained prominence during the past decade as a professional development strategy for changing teacher practices". Her recent study indicates that "when literacy coaching was provided a statistically significant change in teacher's implementation of literacy instructional practices occurred". She found that teachers improved on their overall implementation of five targeted literacy practices within Early Childhood Education settings.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

BIRTH – PRE-K LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

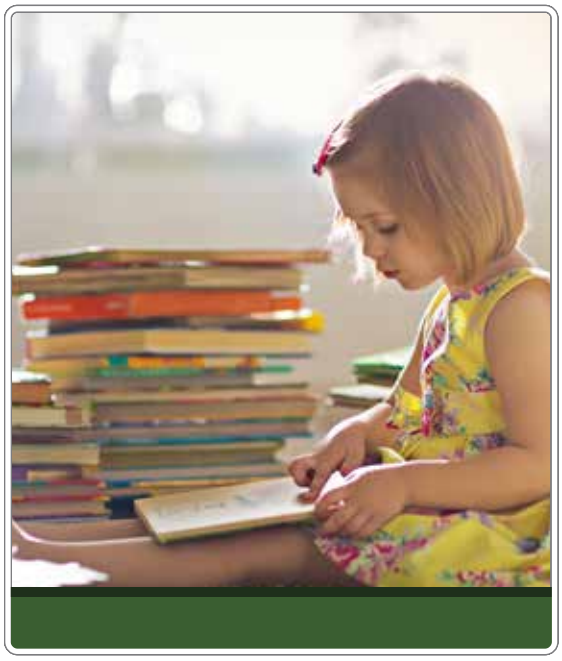
Essential #4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING				
Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	**Level 2** Strategic Planning is in place	**Level 3** Beginning Level of Implementation	**Level 4** Expanded Level of Implementation	**Level 5** Sustained Practice
1. Birth-Pre-K student literacy data (of daycare and/or Pre-K settings) are routinely gathered and analyzed by early childhood educators in order to drive the content of professional learning curriculums.				1 2 3 4 5
2. B-Pre-K professional learning curriculums for daycare and/or Pre-K settings have been aligned to the NELDS (Nevada's Early Learning Development Standards) - with particular attention being made to the NVACS crosswalk.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Birth – Pre-K literacy training is provided to all early childhood providers with a systematic review of the role that listening, speaking, pre-reading, and pre-writing play in the development of emergent literacy (including specific training for sub-populations: English language learners, children with exceptional needs, and children in poverty.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Birth-Pre-K literacy training focuses on the three primary components of emergent literacy: oral language development, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Birth - Pre-K literacy training incorporates the following skills into professional learning: 1. Rapid automatic naming of letters or digits.2. Rapid automatic naming of objects. 3. Writing or writing name. 4. Phonological memory.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Birth-Pre-K literacy training incorporates strategies for early childhood educators that extend both home/school conversations and home/school exposures to print (through dialogic reading and shared reading).				1 2 3 4 5
7. Birth – Pre-K professional learning guides early childhood educators (in daycare and/or Pre-K settings) in their development and use of a literacy-based professional growth plan that aligns to Nevada's Educator Performance Framework (often with an ECE literacy coach).				1 2 3 4 5
8. All Birth-Pre-K literacy-based professional learning is provided to all site administrators with a specific emphasis on his/her role in evaluation.				1 2 3 4 5
9. Structures are in place for measuring the short-term and long-term impact of B- Pre-K literacy-based professional learning on educator/administrator effectiveness and student performance.				1 2 3 4 5
10. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Professional Learning:				

Essential 5: Family and Community Engagement

What Works Summary

"Parent involvement is the number one predictor of early literacy success . . . parent involvement in early literacy is directly connected to academic achievement" (Burton, 2013). In addition, the National Early Literacy Panel Report (2008) stated in its extensive study that "successful parental involvement programs help parents understand the importance of their role as first teachers and equip them with both the skill and the strategies to foster their children's language and literacy development"(p. 173). How might Nevada equip its parents with the necessary skills for optimizing their children's literacy growth? The following provides specific recommendations across the Birth- age 3 stage and the Pre-K stage of literacy development.

National Guidelines:



A. Strategies for Families Aimed at Optimizing Infant and Toddler (Birth – Age 3) Literacy Growth:

The importance of the critical foundation that parents and caregivers provide cannot be understated. The work of Hart and Risley revealed the impact of socioeconomic status on preschoolers' acquisition of words. Children from families in poverty have significantly less vocabulary development than children from higher socioeconomic status households by the time they reached preschool. Children who grow up in environments with few or no literacy experiences are already playing "catch-up" when they enter school. According to Susan B. Neuman (2006), the achievement gap starts during this most critical language acquisition experience in the home. To eliminate the knowledge gap families, caregivers, and teachers must "provide knowledge-building experiences that help children understand their worlds and build rich vocabulary. We need to encourage children to question, discover, evaluate, and use higher-order thinking skills." The research is clear – the scaffolding of children's oral language development at this stage is critical.

B. Strategies for Families Aimed at Optimizing Pre-K Literacy Growth:

Nevada is also committed to strategically enhancing the role of parent involvement for literacy learning during the Pre-K stage. In addition to the skills identified in the Instruction and Intervention section, parents can begin to provide support for the child's use of conventional literacy skills through shared reading. "The latest research on parent involvement in early literacy has stressed that children need to be given more specific skills while being read to in order to be successful with early literacy skills" (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005). In response to this work, one ECE family literacy expert, Erika Burton (2013), recommends the following strategies as part of a family's daily literacy routine with shared reading:

- Point to each word on the page as you read.
- Read the title and ask your child to make a prediction.
- Take "picture walks".
- Model fluency while reading. Bring your own energy and excitement for reading to your child.
- Ask your child questions before and after reading every book.
- Connect reading and writing activities (if possible).

Nevada State Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

In 2011 the Nevada State Legislature passed the Assembly Bill (AB) 224. This bill established Nevada's first Advisory Council on Family Engagement and Office of Family Engagement within the Nevada Department of Education. In creating a vision for family engagement across Nevada, this group adopted a set of national research-based PTA standards for Family-School Partnerships (See Appendix E: *Links and Resources*). These six standards include:

1. Welcoming All Families into the School Community
2. Communicating Effectively
3. Supporting Student Success
4. Speaking Up for Every Child
5. Sharing Power
6. Collaborating with the Community

Efforts aimed at improving the literacy skills are embedded within this state framework. It is recommended that literacy family engagement activities be aligned to Nevada's six standards.

Best Practices and Implementation for Family Literacy:

A. The New Multi-Generational Approach:

The research is clear regarding the benefits of effective family engagement at this level of development. "One meta-analytic review found that children whose families are more involved in school . . . display higher levels of achievement than similar children whose families are less involved in school" (NCFL, 2014). And those displays of higher achievement are grounded in literacy.

In order for the students of today to be successful with 21st Century skills, the role of literacy acquisition has become even more critical. Acknowledging that timeworn efforts to implement "family engagement" activities in the support of literacy have fallen short for several decades, "a convergence around the power of family engagement as a dual or multi-generational approach to education has occurred . . . findings indicated that family learning programs had a positive impact on student achievement, attendance, and behavior" (NCFL, 2014). Research indicates that families that involve several generations in education increases the likelihood of students' academic success. Model programs are surfacing across the nation. One noteworthy program has arisen out of Kansas City called *Literacy Kansas City*. One key component of this program includes a family reading program that "engages adult learners in functional literacy, computer literacy, and family literacy . . . while adults are in class, their children spend time in age-appropriate literacy activities that include technology, playing, dancing, and singing" (2014). A multi-generational effort toward expanding family literacy is worthy of further exploration by Nevada educators.

Best Practices and Implementation for Community Partnerships:

A. Establishing Community Partnerships:

As stated in the Leadership and Sustainability Essential of this plan, the purpose of establishing an ECE Literacy Network across Nevada (similar to Louisiana) would be to share resources and ideals across the entire state. Within communities, however, the task of creating partnerships for the purpose of expanding the role of literacy might at first appear a bit overwhelming. Some experts across the nation have begun addressing the process, itself. One model group includes the United Way of Greater Houston (Texas). This group has taken on the goal of improving all aspects of literacy acquisition from birth through adulthood. They have accomplished this task by establishing an entire protocol for creating effective partnerships – particularly in the area of literacy. Regional experts, Najah Callander and Emily Gesing, have not only established powerful literacy partnerships in their region, they have also begun educating others as to best practices (2015).

B. American Pediatricians:

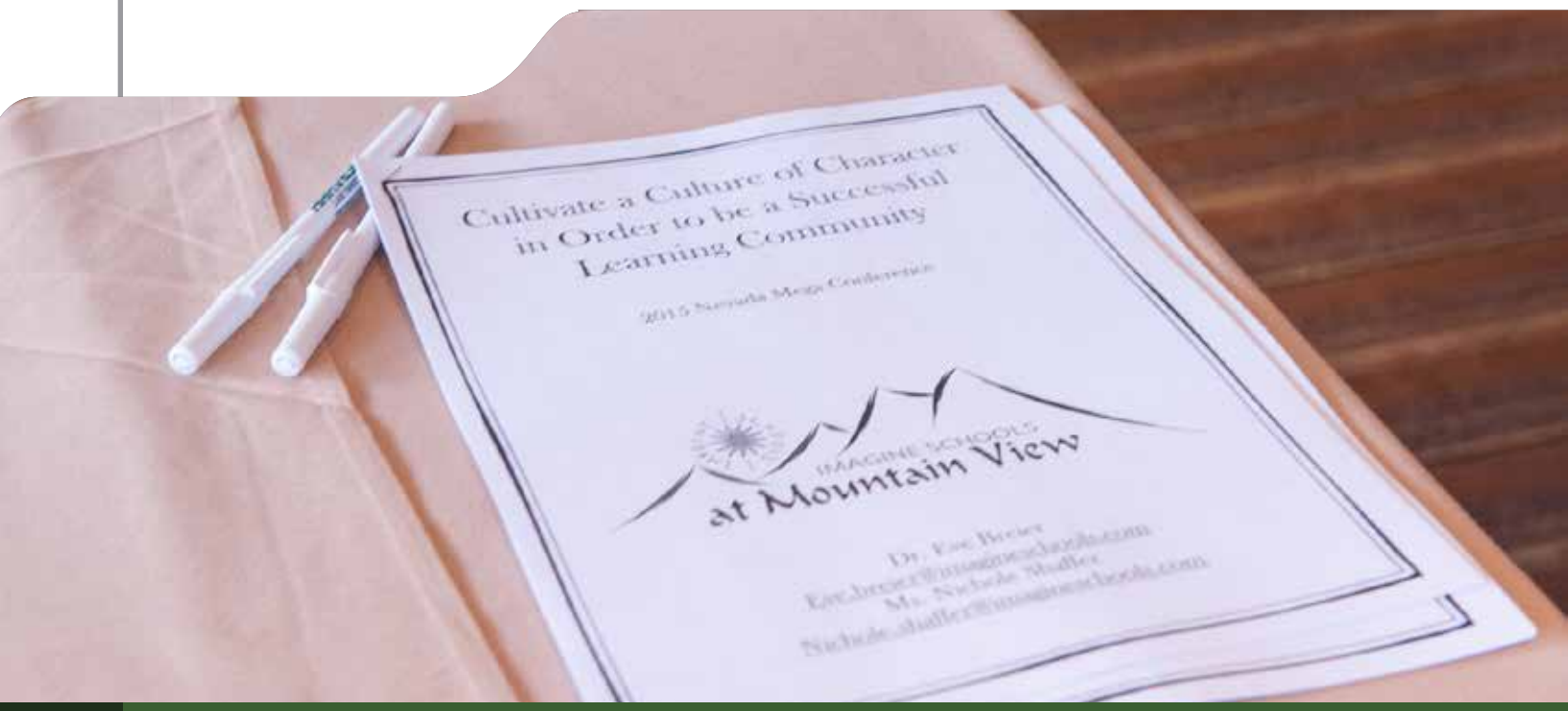
In August, 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued an historic policy statement titled *Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice*. Within this professional directive, five key behaviors are recommended for the pediatrician. They include: 1. advising parents that reading aloud plays a key role in promoting early literacy development; 2. counseling all parents about developmentally appropriate shared reading activities; 3. providing developmentally appropriate books for all high-risk, low-income children; 4. using a robust spectrum of options to promote these efforts; 5. partnering with other child advocates to influence national messaging and policies that support early shared-reading experiences. Based on this professional mandate, the role of pediatricians in expanding family literacy across Nevada has suddenly become quite significant.

C. Community Partnerships:

Community outreach can uncover support and recruit resources for literacy that might otherwise go untapped. Communicating the importance of a literate community can and being transparent about the need for improvement in literacy achievement can result in increased support and resources from a wide range of community stakeholders: colleges and universities, local residents, businesses and professional organizations, artists and cultural institutions, service, volunteer and faith-based organizations. Table 7 below details particular action steps to promote family and community engagement based on Henderson and Mapp's research (2002):

Table 7. PUTTING RESEARCH INTO ACTION – BEST PRACTICES FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
(Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

- Being culturally responsive in recognizing all parents are involved in their children's learning and want them to do well
- Design programs that will support parent and families in understanding their children's literacy development
- Develop the capacity of educators and families to work together through professional learning and collaborative partnerships
- Link family and community engagement efforts to student learning and NVACS outcomes
- Support transitions between literacy settings through communication and learning opportunities to encourage stakeholder participation and collaboration
- Build and support social connections among families and community members
- Collaborate and embrace partnerships that share power and focus on developing trusting and respectful relationships so support children's literacy development



Nevada State Literacy Plan

BIRTH – PRE-K LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Essential #5. LITERACY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS				
Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	**Level 2** Strategic Planning is in place	**Level 3** Beginning Level of Implementation	**Level 4** Expanded Level of Implementation	**Level 5** Sustained Practice
1. Birth – Pre-K instructional leaders establish and maintain parent and family partnerships that respect every element of multiculturalism including ethnicity, language, gender, socio-economic levels, exceptionalities, etc.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Birth-Pre-K instructional leaders align their efforts to the Nevada State Standards of Family-School Partnerships.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Birth-Pre-K instructional leaders create professional learning opportunities for parents and family members aimed at assisting their children with emergent literacy development. (Such opportunities are provided in the predominant languages of the local community.)				1 2 3 4 5
4. Birth-Pre-K instructional leaders have begun networking with Nevada's pediatricians aimed at ensuring a successful implementation of their own national directive for early literacy.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Birth-Pre-K instructional leaders have begun implementing multi-generational programs aimed at providing literacy experiences for several generations of families through family literacy programs.				1 2 3 4 5
6. School-based and local community libraries have become integral players in the expansion of family and community literacy education.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Birth-Pre-K community partnerships (inclusive of public and private entities) are established with a strategic focus for expanding the role of family literacy across Nevada.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Family and Community Engagement:				

Suggestions for an Effective Transition to Elementary School

The following listing was provided by Bohan-Baker and Little in their review of research regarding effective transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten in 2002. Their work is titled, *The Transition to Kindergarten: A Review of Current Research and Promising Practices to Involve Families*. It was sponsored by the Harvard Family Research Project.

Transition Activities for Schools to Initiate Students Entering Kindergarten

- Periodic contact with families of preschoolers (via telephone or face-to-face) to begin sharing information about the child, their routines, and their school setting
- Periodic contact with the children themselves to begin to develop a relationship prior to school entry
- Invitations to visit the kindergarten in the spring of the child's preschool year
- Preparation & dissemination of home-learning activities, including providing summer book lists and other literacy activities for the summer months prior to kindergarten entry
- Family meetings prior to the beginning of kindergarten to discuss teacher expectations
- Partner with local parent-teacher associations to inform parents how they can be involved in their child's kindergarten setting and connect new families with families currently enrolled in the school
- Dissemination of information to parents on the transition to kindergarten, including registration guidelines
- Home visits before and after children transition to kindergarten
- Support groups for parents as their children transition to kindergarten
- Facilitate early registration for kindergarten so that families have time to prepare children for their new setting
- In areas with a large percentage of limited English proficiency families, staff early care and education and kindergartens with bilingual teachers and aides

Appendix A: NSLP ACTION ROADMAP

LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

	Leadership and Sustainability	Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention	Literacy Assessment Systems	Professional Learning	Family and Community Engagement
Level 5 Sustained Practice	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually
Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are revisited and revised - Collaboration & shared responsibility plan is revisited & revised - Literacy training continues for instructional leaders - Literacy coach fully on board	- Educators' use of data to inform instruction is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of nationally recognized targets revisited & revised - Methods for measuring fidelity of RTI revisited & revised - Effectiveness of interventions is systematically monitored	- Adopted assessment framework is revisited and revised - Data collection system is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator DBDM Training is implemented - System used for data teams is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator training on assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers' use of data to inform practice is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of explicit literacy instruction is revisited and revised - Educators identify focus literacy goals in NEPF PGP	- Culture validates and honors parent/family diversity - Parental support Literacy training is expanded - Parents become active participants in monitoring student literacy progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Impact of literacy work with community partners revisited and revised
Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are created - Literacy goals are implemented - Culture implements collaboration & shared responsibility for literacy - Literacy training begins for instructional leaders - Literacy coach phased in	- Educators use data to inform instruction - System created for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Instruction targets nationally recognized literacy objectives - Fidelity of RTI is measured - Effectiveness of interventions is monitored	- An effective assessment framework is implemented - An effective data-collection system is implemented - Educators receive training on the DBDM process - Data teams are established - Educator training on new assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers use data to inform practice - System created for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Professional learning offered that includes explicit literacy - Educators use NEPF Growth Plan with literacy objectives	- Culture demonstrates respect for diversity - Parental support Literacy training is implemented - Parents/families are routinely contacted by educators to discuss student progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Implementation of literacy work with community
Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	- Planning for goals occurs - Planning for collaboration & shared responsibility of literacy occurs - Planning for developing leaders' knowledge base occurs - Research begins on how to add a site-based literacy coach	- Planning occurs for educator data collection & analysis - Planning occurs for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Planning begins for insuring use of nationally recognized literacy objectives - Planning occurs for insuring fidelity of RTI model - Planning occurs for measuring effectiveness of interventions	- An effective assessment framework is designed - An effective data-collection system is designed - Educator training is scheduled on the DBDM process - Planning begins for establishing data teams - Educator training is scheduled on new assessment tools and protocols	- Planning for professional learning is data-based - Planning occurs for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Explicit literacy instruction added to planning process - Planning occurs for insuring educator collaboration - NEPF Growth Plans template adds NVACS literacy objectives	- Systematic plans created for developing respect of parent & family diversity - Systematic plans created for parent/family literacy training - System designed for the communication of student progress to parent/families - Systems designed for referring adults to literacy courses - Systematic plan created for expanding literacy partners
Level 1 No planning or implementation is in place	- No data-driven measurable goals aligned to NVACS - Culture does not support collaboration or shared responsibility of literacy - Instructional leaders have no literacy knowledge base - No support of literacy coach position	- Educators not gathering or analyzing student literacy data to inform instruction - Instruction & materials not aligned to NVACS - Nationally recognized literacy objectives not targeted - RTI model not being implemented with fidelity - Interventions not assessed	- An ineffective assessment framework is in place - An ineffective data-collection system is in place - Educators receive no training - on DBDM process - No data teams have been established - Educators receive no training on new assessments	- Professional learning is designed w/o data analysis - Professional learning is notaligned to NVACS - Professional learning does not include explicit literacy instruction - Culture does not support educator collaboration in lit. - Literacy absent from PGPs	- Lack of respect for diversity of parents/families - Lack of literacy training available for parent / families - Student literacy progress not communicated to parents - No referral protocols for adult literacy education - Ineffective community partners in literacy

Appendix B: Birth–Pre-K Action Plan Framework

NSLP Strategy Form

Action Plan Framework

ESSENTIAL: _____ Current Level of Implementation (per the NSLP Action Roadmap): _____

Members of Planning Team:

District: _____ School: _____ Grade Band: _____ Date: _____

Literacy Activity (What will be done?)	Specific Action Steps (How will it be done?)	Individual(s) Responsible (Who will be doing it?)	Projected Timeline (When will it occur?)		Resources Needed	Notes
			Start Date	End Date		

Appendix C: Birth—Pre-K Professional Growth Plan Template

Adapted from Louisiana State Comprehensive Literacy Plan's Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Template, with permission

Name ..... Position .....

This sample template is provided to assist you as a Nevada Birth-Pre-K School educator, as you work to design your own individualized Professional Growth Plans as outlined in the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). As an NSLP instrument, this template embeds professional goals and objectives that are deliberately aligned to literacy improvement. The educator is encouraged to design his/her professional growth plan with a strategic focus on literacy.

Part 1: Possible Goals:

When thinking about possible goals for your PGP, consider the following questions:

- How does my literacy knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances measure up against the NEPF?
- Where do I need to grow professionally in order to optimize my effectiveness in impacting student literacy performance (i.e. outcomes and achievement levels).
- What areas for professional growth will have the greatest potential to improve the quality of literacy teaching and learning in my program?

Brainstorm of my Possible Goals (3-5):

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: NSLP/District/School/Program Connections:

When aligning your professional goals with the known needs of the NSLP, your district, school, or program, consider the following questions:

- Which of my professional goals are most directly related to implementing elements of Nevada's Birth-Pre-K Literacy Plan aimed at improving student outcomes?
- For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?
- How will these goals be complementary to my colleagues PGPs and/or other component of my Birth-Pre-K program?

My goals relate to NSLP/district/school/program improvement needs in the following ways:

_____

_____

_____

_____

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Part 3: Identified Goals (inclusive of literacy) and their intended student outcomes (3-4):

Professional Educator Goals	Student Outcomes

Part 4: Outline of My Plan:

When outlining your specific PGP, consider the following questions:

- What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
- What are the initial steps in my plan?
- What activities will help me to achieve my goals and objectives?
- How will I make the time to accomplish the elements of my plan?
- What NSLP/district/school/program resources will I need?
- What evidence will I collect to demonstrate the achievement of my professional learning goals and how will I organize my evidence?

A. I will engage in the following activities (inclusive of literacy strategies):

_____

_____

_____

B. I will document my progress in achieving my professional learning goal(s) with the following artifacts (e.g. anecdotal records, observation logs, lesson plans, videotapes) and outcome data (i.e. assessment data gathered as evidence of student growth and development and student products).

_____

_____

_____

C. Resources I will need for full implementation of my PGP:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: NSLP Educator Planning Guide

NSLP EDUCATOR PLANNING GUIDE

for Authentic Literacy-Based Instruction

Teacher Name: _____ Age/Grade Band(s): _____

From (Date): _____ through (Date): _____

Instruction driven by the following data point(s): _____

Nevada State Literacy Plan ~ Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention: Implementation Targets from NSLP Self-Assessment Tool (list numbers)**:**

Targeted Content Objectives	_____Standards
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Targeted Literacy Objectives	**_____Standards**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Targeted Guiding Principles	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Birth-Age 3-Guidelines, Pre-K Standards, NVACS (K-12) CCR (College & Career Readiness) Standards (Adult)

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

THE "HOW": Using Literacy Strategies as Effective Instructional Methodologies ~

Literacy Modalities / Stages of Literacy Instruction	(Receptive Literacy) AUTHENTIC READING STRATEGIES	(Expressive Literacy) AUTHENTIC WRITING STRATEGIES
I. Pre-Instruction		
II. During Instruction		
III. Post-Instruction		
Integration of Technology:		
Classroom Interventions:		
Assessment Protocol(s):		
Exit Data Point(s): (if available)		

THE "WHAT" = Outcomes:

- Acquisition of Content Knowledge
- Enhancement of Sound Literacy Skills
- Enhancement of Guided Principal Behaviors

Appendix E: Links and Resources

Links to Nevada Department of Education Resources:

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council:
http://nvecac.com

The Nevada English Mastery Advisory Council:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/English_Mastery_Council/Home/

The Nevada Family Engagement Advisory Council:
www.nevadapife.com/advisory-council

NDE Office of Early Learning and Development:
http://www.nevadaregistry.org/department-of-education-and-development/office-of-early-care-and-education.html

NDE Office of Educator Development and Support: Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF):
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Educator_Development_and_Support/Nevada_Educator_Performance_Framework(NEPF)

NDE Office of Parent Involvement and Family Engagement:
http://nevadapife.nv.gov/

Nevada Pre-K Standards and Early Learning Guidelines:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Standards_Instructional_Support/Nevada_Academic_Standards/Pre-K/

The Nevada Registry:
http://www.nevadaregistry.org/

Links to Supplementary Resources:

Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel:
http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):
http://www.naeyc.org/

National Center for Families Learning:
http://www.familieslearning.org/

Toyota Family Literacy Program (in partnership with NCFL):
http://www.toyota-global.com/sustainability/social_contribution/education/overseas/families.html

Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix:
http://familieslearning.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Verizon-Life-Span-Literacy-Matrix.pdf

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Early Language Development Standards:
https://www.wida.us/standards/EarlyYears.aspx

Doing What Works Web Site (U.S. Dept. of Education):
http://dww.ed.gov

The What Works Clearinghouse:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/praticeguides/

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NEVADA'S ELEMENTARY LITERACY PLAN

Elementary: Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe is a gorgeous lake in northern Nevada. It is home to many different species. Its unique geography is ever-changing. The colors of its waters become multiplied in the Nevada sun. The fresh clear nature of this incredible mountain lake so resembles the fresh clear nature of Nevada's elementary-aged youth.

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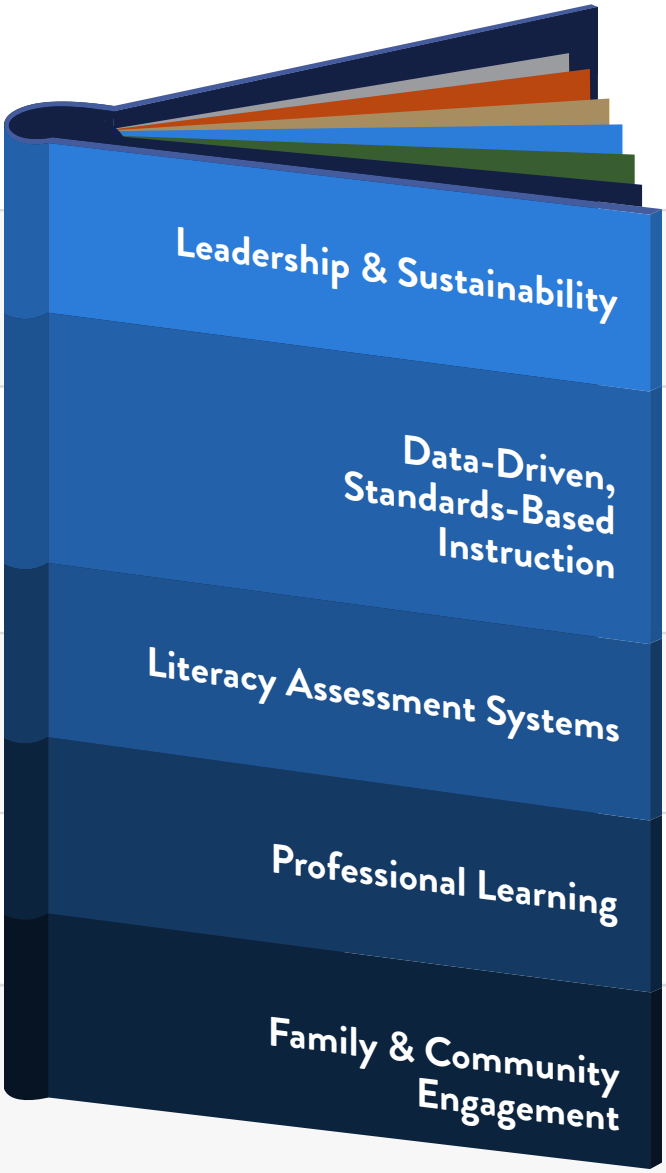
NEVADA'S ELEMENTARY LITERACY PLAN

THE FIVE NEVADA LITERACY ESSENTIALS



THE ESSENTIALS:

1. A group process aimed at strategically mobilizing others for the purpose of improving students' literacy growth. Sustainable reforms are persistent over time & circumstances.
2. All planning for literacy instruction occurs with a systematic analysis of student data. All instruction is explicitly aligned to state literacy standards. Classroom educators and interventionists use research-based strategies for delivering literacy objectives across all content areas.
3. The use of valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose students' literacy needs.
4. The development of learning opportunities, resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for all children, families, and educators.
5. A coordinated and collaborative system in which schools and other community organizations connect with families in meaningful ways to support the ongoing improvement of student, family, and community literacy.

Introduction

"For those of us teaching elementary students, one could argue that our greatest opportunity to alter our students' life prospects comes through teaching them to read, write, and communicate effectively. No single method of intervention will have as dramatic an effect on a student's future learning and success than a solid foundation in literacy" (Teach for America, 2011). This educator's powerful words truly capture how vital the role of literacy achievement from kindergarten through fifth grade is for establishing a child's entire future. The acquisition of effective early literacy skills at this level truly provides a springboard into all future learning.

A strong and convergent research base is critical when attempting to determine which instructional practices are the most effective for building the elementary students' literacy skills across the four primary domains of literacy - reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The following outlines several key documents that presently drive current literacy efforts at the elementary school level.

The National Reading Panel Report:

In 1998 a group of 14 national scholars were gathered "for the first time in history . . . by the federal government to determine what research had to say about reading" (Shanahan, 2006). The primary task of this group, "was not to put forth opinions or even strive for consensus – but was to understand the actual research findings so schools could proceed to do what was best for children" (p. 1). Thus this group conducted a meta-analytic review of current reading research. Its findings emerged in 2002 as the National Reading Panel Report which "continues to be the cornerstone of the federal literacy policy" (Shanahan, 2006). The NRP report findings identified five evidence-based components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension) as the key determinants that support the development of early literacy. Each of these elements of reading will be explored within this NSLP Elementary Literacy Plan.

NVACS and Literacy Guiding Principles:

The authors of the evidence-based and internationally benchmarked Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) went even further by identifying what elementary students need to know and be able to do in order to meet the literacy demands of the 21st Century. They identified specific competencies that not only define a literate individual but also that underpin the NVACS. Michael Kamil expanded on this listing by creating his own list of *Literacy Guiding Principles.* It is provided in the Essential 2 section of the plan. The overall gist of Kamil's principles includes a student's: demonstrating of independence and strong content knowledge, responding to the demands of audience, task, purpose and discipline, comprehending and critiquing information, utilizing evidence, identifying and crafting structure, using technology and digital media strategically, and understanding other cultures and perspectives (2014). Kamil recommends that the development of these literacy competencies should be explicitly integrated into instruction during the elementary years. All of these principles embed the four primary elements of literacy - reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The National Research Council's Report:

In order to ensure that students get off to a strong start, effective kindergarten through third grade literacy instruction is critical. The National Research Council's publication, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998) (in its review of the scientific research in early literacy development) emphasizes two primary factors that hold the key to preventing most reading difficulties in young children - quality instruction and an appropriate curriculum based on rigorous standards. However, the authors of this report go on to describe how some students may still struggle even after receiving quality instruction and rigorous curriculum content. Their findings indicate that, for this particular group of students, quality early intervention measures can and do prevent early reading difficulties from becoming serious life-long reading problems. The elementary years are the pivotal time to intervene.

Addressing the "Read by Three" Initiatives:

The critical importance of a child learning to read by the third grade is supported by several years of extensive research across the U.S. However, amidst this general understanding, some confusion has arisen where some individuals have come to incorrectly believe that a child no longer needs instruction in reading beyond the third grade. This notion has become problematic for literacy practitioners.

Therefore it cannot be understated that the process of learning to read does not simply cease to occur at the end of third grade. Beyond this grade level, a shift occurs where students are faced with written materials that include a much greater degree of text complexity. In her 2004 book *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12*, Kelly Gallagher describes this process, "When we teach students how to read deeply, we become more than information dispensers in our classrooms. We become cultivators of critical reading skills – skills of lifelong value" (p. 10). Such challenging texts demand a higher level of critical thinking by the student that includes: an understanding of text structures, the making of inferences, and a skillful analysis of content. In essence, the process of reading becomes much more strategic for the learner. This is when he/she begins to acquire a new finely tuned set of literacy skills that are essential for commanding an advanced level of language – one that appears across multiple content areas.

Literacy learning does not stop nor does it even slow down at the end of third grade. Rather, literacy learning simply becomes more specialized. The acquisition of sound comprehension skills becomes the primary vehicle for ensuring that this process is successful. "Comprehension is fundamental in reading . . . without deep understanding, complex texts are inanimate objects. It is only in the reader's mind that a book comes to life" (Fisher and Frey, 2013, p. xvii). Explicit instruction in literacy throughout the elementary years becomes the underpinning for the acquisition of any content knowledge acquired by the student across his/her entire schooling experience.

Essential 1: Leadership and Sustainability

What Works Summary

In today's elementary school setting, outcomes for student's literacy achievement are considered to be a shared responsibility. The recent work by Richard Dufour calls on leaders to engage others in the work, to engage in goal achievement, and to develop the capacity of staff through a mutual accountability or reciprocal accountability process (Dufour, 2011). His work broadens the term *leadership* even further by not only including the principal, but extending it to include teacher leaders as well. Emerging research also includes instructional/literacy coaches in a teacher-leader spectrum.

The NSLP borrows from the Dufour model by broadening the term *leadership* to include administrators, principals, instructional coaches, lead teachers, department chairpersons, and community leaders. Leadership also extends to superintendents, district directors and coordinators of professional learning, curriculum and assessment. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities in an elementary literacy plan acknowledge that literacy achievement is a shared goal. The NSLP reflects this expanded definition of "instructional leader" in its introductory *Overview* section.

Collaborations in Leadership:

In 2010 the Wallace Foundation commissioned a study to examine key elements in school leadership. The findings of this work "emphasizes the need for collaborative leadership, wherein all stakeholders, including educators, parents, students, principals, and community members can play important literacy leadership roles" (Seashore, Wahlstron, & Anderson, 2010). Table 1 below provides a synopsis of this work.

In following the lead of the work of the Wallace Foundation, experts of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers composed an extensive white paper titled *Leadership for Literacy in the 21st Century* (Lewis-Spector & Jay, 2011). Albeit a bit comprehensive, the conclusion of this document lists 18 key recommendations for sustaining literacy leadership across entire communities. The specificity of the ALER list illustrates a new vision for leadership in literacy with a very inclusive approach that extends this vision far beyond the "schoolhouse door". Examination of this list is recommended for all Nevada instructional leaders. (See Appendix E: *Links & Resources*).

Table 1. WALLACE FOUNDATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LITERACY LEADERSHIP
(Seashore, Wahlstron, & Anderson, 2010)

1. Shaping a vision and garnering support and commitment to the literacy goals of the school.
2. Creating a climate hospitable to education. In addition to the notion of safety and orderliness, the climate also includes an inclusive environment honoring all students, their languages, dialects, and cultural identities.
3. Cultivating leadership in others; sharing the responsibility and developing, mentoring and supporting professional growth in teachers, coaches and staff members.
4. Improving instruction by establishing an ongoing commitment to professional learning, coaching, job-embedded professional development and developing a school culture of learning.
5. Managing people, data and processes to manage staff, data, structures and processes for decision-making within the school.

Sustaining Leadership in Elementary Literacy at the Site Level:

A. Weaving Together Literacy and Leadership:

Regie Routman (2014) writes "I would argue that the effectiveness in literacy teaching and effectiveness in leadership are inseparable and equally significant when we are talking about whole-school achievement" in her book *Read, Write, Lead: Breakthrough Strategies for Schoolwide Literacy Success* (p. 181). Routman's words masterfully capture the relationship between literacy and leadership.

> If we look at the whole school – and I believe that we must for sustainable gains – then literacy and leadership are equal partners. That is, the quality of teachers and the quality of leaders are the two most important variables in a school. . . *Leadership and literacy must form a tight weave to ensure that achievement gains will not unravel.*

B. Expanding Knowledge Base about Literacy Research and Best Practices:

The establishment of a school culture whereby all instructional leaders continually expand their own knowledge base about literacy research and best practices becomes a key factor in sustaining true literacy leadership. The role of professional learning becomes quite critical in assuring this process. It is recommended that all Nevada instructional leaders establish a sound understanding of both the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) and the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) in order to establish a solid foundation for their own literacy learning

It is also recommended that (as a regular practice) instructional leaders begin to research all instructional, assessment, and intervention products and materials under consideration through two national resources supported by the U.S. Department of Education: the *Doing What Works Web Site* and the *What Works Clearinghouse*. (See Appendix E: *Links and Resources*). Such actions would create an effective system of informed decision-making.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

ELEMENTARY LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades K-5)

Essential #1. LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Instructional leaders have established measurable literacy goals that explicitly align to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional leaders facilitate the establishment of data teams that meet routinely to analyze student literacy data in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Instructional leaders have established a consistent scheduling system that allows for a sufficient amount of time for staff to analyze student literacy data in an efficient and meaningful manner.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders have established a culture that demonstrates and communicates a shared responsibility for all student literacy outcomes both internally and externally (across the entire local community). The establishment of an authentic print-rich literacy environment is evidence of this culture.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Instructional leaders facilitate instructional collaboration among educators within and across grade levels, content areas, and job classifications (such as literacy coaches and librarians/media specialists). These efforts are aimed at improving student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders consistently update their own professional knowledge base on all aspects of effective literacy instruction.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Instructional leaders work to establish and support the addition of a qualified literacy coach as a key employee in the elementary school setting. This role becomes an integral component in sustaining all literacy efforts.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Leadership & Sustainability:				

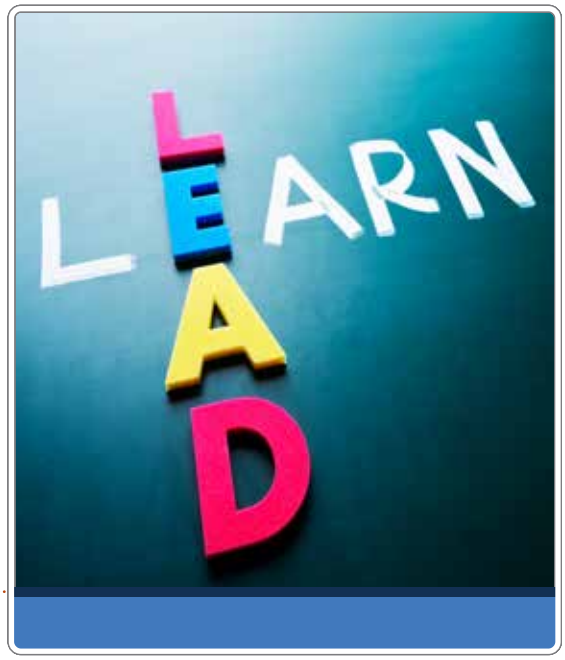
Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention

What Works Summary

Data-Driven Decision-Making:

The process of designing and implementing instruction based on relevant student data is central to developing any system of improvement. In the book, *Leverage Leadership,* data-driven instruction is defined as a "super-lever" for improving instruction (Bambrick-Santoyo & Lemov, 2012). Instructional focus is maintained particularly when using data to identify student-learning problems. It is further recommended that the decision-making process which follows includes collaborative inquiry. This is a systematic improvement process where data teams work together to construct their understanding of student-learning problems and generate and test out possible solutions through a rigorous and frequent use of data and reflective dialogue (Love, Stiles, Mundry, & DiRanna, 2008).

Current findings indicate that effective leadership teams, grade-level teams, and professional learning communities use data-driven decision-making in a continuous cycle to analyze progress toward goals, modify actions, and reflect on implementation of action steps.



Standards-Based Instruction:

For the purposes of this plan, *standards-based instruction* is defined as instruction that is aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). It includes a mastery of grade-specific standards that correspond to the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards within the NVACS. Together the grade-level and anchor standards represent the concepts and skills students should know, understand, and be able to do to be college and career ready (CCSSO, 2010).

Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework and Interventions:

A. The Framework:

"RTI integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavioral problems," (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010; Allain & Eberhardt, 2011). Tier I instruction is core, grade-level instruction designed, "to meet the needs of a range of students in a classroom by teaching a standards-based core curriculum" (Allain & Eberhardt, 2011). Tier II and Tier III refer to the additional support provided to students, depending upon the intensity of the intervention and the amount of time a student receives intervention. The NSLP recommends that all instruction and intervention (inclusive of literacy) be strategically aligned to the RTI Framework.

B. Intervention:

As there is often some confusion regarding the difference between the terms accommodation, modification, and intervention, a formal definition of the word intervention is provided by the Missouri Department of Education (dese.mo.gov):

> Academic or behavior interventions are strategies or techniques used to teach a new skill, build fluency in a skill, or encourage the application of existing skills to a new situation. Interventions should include: a targeted assessment, planning, and data collection. Interventions should be scientifically research-based or evidence-based and monitored regularly to determine student growth and to inform instructional decision-making.

The Literacy Guiding Principles:

The elementary grade levels provide the actual starting point for integrating the Literacy Guiding Principles (Kamil, 2014) with the NVACS Literacy Anchor Standards into one's actual instructional design. Such implementation would begin at the planning phase of instruction. The *NSLP Educator Planning Guide* (Appendix D) provides teachers with a planning template that incorporates both sets of these literacy components.

Table 2. LITERACY GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Kamil, June, 2014, Presentation: Las Vegas, NV.)

Literate Individuals in the 21st Century need to . . .	
DEMONSTRATE INDEPENDENCE - Comprehend and evaluate complex text across disciplines. - Construct effective arguments and convey multifaceted information.	PRIVILEGE EVIDENCE - Cite text evidence for interpretations. - Make reasoning clear. - Evaluate others' use of evidence.
BUILD STRONG CONTENT KNOWLEDGE - Build knowledge in different subjects. - Become proficient in new areas. - Read purposefully. - Refine knowledge and share it.	CARE ABOUT PRECISION - Become mindful of the impact of vocabulary. - Compare meanings of different choices. - Attend to when precision matters.
RESPOND TO DEMANDS OF AUDIENCE, TASK, AND DISCIPLINE - Consider context in reading. - Appreciate nuances. - Know that different disciplines use different evidence.	LOOK FOR AND CRAFT STRUCTURE - Attend to structure when reading. - Understand how to present information in different disciplines. - Understand how an author's craft relates to setting and plot.
COMPREHEND AND CRITIQUE - Become open-minded and skeptical readers. - Understand what authors are saying. - Question an author's assumptions. - Assess the veracity of claims.	USE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY - Employ technology thoughtfully. - Efficiently search online for information. - Integrate online and offline information. - Select best suited media for goals.
UNDERSTAND OTHER CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES - Actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures. - Communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. - Evaluate other points of view critically and constructively.	

Best Practices and Implementation:

With the onset of the new Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS), a deliberate pathway has been created that connects elementary-level reading skills to secondary reading skills. This new emphasis extends prior teaching practices by teaching early readers higher level reading skills. Thus this age group is now beginning to read more informational texts that require stronger levels of comprehension. At a technical level, from grades kindergarten through grade two, children begin to master the decoding skills outlined in the Reading Foundational Skills (K-5) of the NVACS. By the third grade, students begin to use these emerging literacy skills in order to negotiate multisyllabic words, thus increasing their fluency and confidence when reading new and unfamiliar material. Third grade is a pivotal year for students. Approximately 16 percent of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate from high school on time. This disturbing rate is four times greater than the rates demonstrated by proficient readers (Hernandez, 2012).

The following instructional recommendations encompass all four components of literacy (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). It is critical to note that all of these strategies are meant to be applied across all content areas of instruction. The inclusion of a specific set of literacy anchor standards within the NVACS demonstrates how critical literacy is for effective instruction across **every** content area. Therefore, in a perfect scenario, sound literacy methodologies become the primary means for delivering content information. The content, in turn, comes to narrow the focus of the instructor's delivery. For example, in a Social Science class, students would learn how to read elements of a law or a public regulation; in a Science Lab, students would learn how to write scientific lab reports.

A. Reading Instruction:

In order to meet the rigor of the NVACS, improve reading instruction in grades K-5, and build upon early literacy skills, standards-based instruction in elementary reading includes an emphasis on the five essential components of reading instruction based on the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (NICHD, 2000) listed below:

1. **Phonemic awareness** is the ability to detect, identify, and manipulate phonemes in spoken words. It is a strong predictor of long-term reading and spelling success and can predict literacy performance more accurately than variables such as intelligence, vocabulary knowledge, and socioeconomic status (Gillon, 2007).
2. **Phonics** is a method of instruction that teaches students the systematic relationship between the letters and letter combinations (graphemes) in written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language, and how to use these relationships to read and spell words (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2013). Instruction in phonics should be systematic and explicit (NRP, 2000). While phonics instruction is intended for beginning readers in the primary grades, it should continue for older students who are struggling to read. Additionally, explicit instruction in structural analysis (e.g., roots, affixes, and syllabication) is shown to improve students' reading skills and should be taught explicitly in grades 3-5.
3. **Fluency** is a critical component of learning to read. The goal of building fluency is to provide students with sufficient practice to create over-learning. Over-learning reduces the load on thinking and cognition in order to allow students to attend to new ideas (Hattie, 2012). For example, providing students with deliberate practice in early reading skills (e.g., letter names and sounds, blending and segmenting words) will facilitate students' ability to read text fluently by reducing the amount of attention students need to decode words. Effective fluency instruction includes opportunities for students to participate in a variety of activities such as repeated readings, assisted reading, Reader's Theater, choral reading, echo reading, phrased-cued reading, and partner reading. A strong correlation exists between reading fluency and comprehension (Honig et al, 2013).

4. **Vocabulary** is the knowledge of word and word meanings that includes not only acquiring the meaning of a word, but also how that word may be used in different contexts. Students need to develop a nuanced and flexible understanding of words in order to apply their knowledge of words to comprehend and produce language (CCSSO, 2010).Vocabulary acquisition occurs both through incidental and intentional learning. Incidental vocabulary learning occurs through rich, oral language experiences that include independent reading as well as being read to. Intentional vocabulary learning occurs through specific word instruction.
5. **Comprehension** is the process of interacting with text to construct meaning and includes the following three key elements: the reader, the text, and the activity (Rosenblatt, 1938; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). An emphasis on reading complex text at a sophisticated level is recommended. Instruction should concentrate on providing students with opportunities to closely read and discuss complex text; make logical inferences; determine central ideas or themes; and analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop throughout the text as well as across texts. Students also need to be able to analyze text structures, read widely and deeply, cite relevant evidence from the text, assess point of view, and build content knowledge. Instructional practices to support skilled, independent reading should include scaffolded instruction as well as teaching students how to use reading comprehension strategies. Explicit modeling of strategies such as visualizing, inferring, summarizing, predicting, questioning, or monitoring, should be used when appropriate, based on the clues from the text (Fisher, Frey, and Lapp, 2012).

B. Writing Instruction:

The acquisition of literacy skills is a recursive process that continually connects both reading and writing. Standards-based instruction in writing focuses on writing for a variety of text types and purposes; the production and distribution of writing; research to build and present knowledge; and providing students with opportunities to write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading, A Report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2010) recently published findings from a meta-analysis designed to identify writing practices that enhanced students' reading. These writing practices include:

1. Have students write about the texts they read (p. 13):
   - Respond to a text in writing (writing personal reactions, analyzing and interpreting text).
   - Write summaries of a text.
   - Write notes about a text.
   - Answer questions about a text in writing, or create and answer written questions about a text.
2. Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text (p. 17):
   - Teach the process of writing, text structures for writing, paragraph or sentence. construction skills (improves reading comprehension).
   - Teach spelling and sentence construction (improves reading fluency).
   - Teach spelling skills (improves word reading skills).
3. Increase how much students write [improves reading comprehension] (p.20).

Lucy Calkins, the internationally renowned writing expert, writes about the critical nature of the last finding of the Carnegie Group, "Writing needs to be taught like any other basic skill, with explicit instruction and ample opportunity for practice. Almost every day, every child in grades K-5 needs between fifty and sixty minutes for writing instruction and writing" (2000).

C. Speaking and Listening Instruction:

With the alignment of K-12 instruction to the Nevada Academic Content Standards, a heightened importance has developed for teachers to incorporate speaking and listening teaching objectives into their instructional planning. The language of the standards (NDE-NVACS), themselves, provides a succinct summary of student expectations in these two areas:

> The Speaking and Listening standards require students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills. Students must learn to work together, express and listen carefully to ideas, integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources, evaluate what they hear, use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes, and adapt speech to context and task.

Indeed, one national literacy expert, Margaret Heritage, believes that listening and speaking skills should actually be recognized as foundational skills for both reading and writing (2014). This need has become readily apparent throughout the elementary school years – particularly in the area of "academic language." As Zwiers and Crawford (2011) note, "Unfortunately, oral language is rarely taught in depth after third grade" (p. 9). They also note how "academic talk is most scarce where it is most needed – in classrooms with high numbers of linguistically and culturally diverse students." Throughout all elementary years teachers must create environments that utilize students' speaking and listening skills to enhance literacy achievement particularly through the use of academic language.

Digital and Multi-Media Tools:

Language from the original NVACS with regards to the use of digital and multi-media tools is quite specific. Because this is such a new element to the instructional design, the actual wording from the standards is provided:

> New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. Digital texts confront students with the potential for continually updated content and dynamically changing combinations of words, graphics, images, hyperlinks, and embedded video and audio (CCSS Anchor Standards, 2009).

Hamilton (2007) discusses how the use of technology connected to content-area instruction can incorporate the nine instructional strategies that have a positive effect on student learning per Marzano's model. A summary of her work is provided below:

1. **Identifying similarities and differences.** At any grade level, teachers can use technology to help children compare and contrast, classify, or link information.
2. **Writing similes and metaphors** requires students to make connections between two unlike things.
3. **Summarizing and note taking**. When students glean essential information from what they read or hear, they improve their recall of the information.
4. **Reinforcing effort and providing recognition.** Students do not always understand that effort pays off. When they set reading goals and then graph the results after a trimester, they can take pride in their accomplishments. At any grade level, students can create portfolios of their work—periodically looking back at where they started and what they've accomplished can motivate students to continue working hard.

5. **Homework and practice.** Homework is most effective when students do it without parental involvement. By third grade, students can practice keyboarding independently at home.
6. **Nonlinguistic representations**. Vocabulary words stick when students use drawings as well as definitions. Even before they can read and write, primary students can express their understanding of curricular targets through pictures.
7. **Cooperative learning.** Teachers can promote cooperative learning through assigning teams to complete short projects, such as writing dialogue in pairs, or longer assignments, such as researching an aspect of space exploration.
8. **Setting objectives and providing feedback.** Having students create their own questions for research projects encourages them to set the objectives for their study. They then can focus on the aspect of curriculum that piques their interest. The use of virtual manipulatives gives students instant feedback on math concepts, as do many other Web sites that engage students in basic skills practice.
9. **Generating and testing hypotheses.** Students can predict what will happen when they gather data for graphs, virtually build and test machines online, and solve logic problems on Web sites. Young students can place pictures in sequential order, complete a pattern, or match pictures of bird beaks with food sources.

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. Learners with Exceptional Needs:

Students identified with "exceptional needs" become eligible for modifications to their instruction under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction reports how the new standards provide an historic opportunity to improve access to rigorous academic content standards for students with disabilities. Beyond the federal mandates of IDEA (IEP, supports and services, highly qualified instructors), Wisconsin experts recommend: 1. Instructional supports for learning based on the principles of UDL, universal design for learning; 2. Instructional accommodations that do not change the standards but allow students to learn within the framework, and 3. Assistive technology devices and services to ensure access to general education" (WDPI, 2011, p. 5). These recommendations would greatly enhance literacy achievement for Nevada's learners with exceptional needs.

B. English Language Learners:

In her review of the new *2014 WIDA Essential Actions Handbook*, one Colorado educator named Kristina Robertson created an instructional table that summarizes the fifteen primary recommendations made in the WIDA handbook. Table 3 below replicates Robertson's work. It is recommended that all instructional leaders across Nevada begin to implement the WIDA essential actions into their everyday teaching.

Table 3. A SUMMARIZED LOOK INTO THE 15 KEY ACTIONS RECOMMENDED IN THE WIDA ESSENTIAL ACTIONS HANDBOOK (Robertson, 2015)

ACTION 1 Capitalize on the resources and experiences that ELLs bring to school to build and enrich their academic language.	**ACTION 2** Analyze the academic language demands involved in grade-level teaching and learning.	**ACTION 3** Apply the background knowledge of ELLs, including their language proficiency profiles, in planning differentiated language teaching.
ACTION 4 Connect language and content to make learning relevant and meaningful for ELLs.	**ACTION 5** Focus on the developmental nature of language learning within grade-level curriculum.	**ACTION 6** Reference content standards and language development standards in planning for language learning.
ACTION 7 Design language teaching and learning with attention to the sociocultural context.	**ACTION 8** Provide opportunities for all ELLs to engage in higher-order thinking.	**ACTION 9** Create language-rich classroom environments with ample time for language practice and use.
ACTION 10 Identify the language needed for functional use in teaching and learning.	**ACTION 11** Plan for language teaching and learning around discipline-specific topics.	**ACTION 12** Use instructional supports to help scaffold language learning.
ACTION 13 Integrate language domains to provide rich, authentic instruction.	**ACTION 14** Coordinate and collaborate in planning for language and content teaching and learning.	**ACTION 15** Share responsibility so that all teachers are language teachers and support one another within communities of practice.

C. Learners Living in Poverty:

In their 10-year investigation of two Philadelphia communities of very different socio-economic statuses, Susan B. Neuman and Donna C. Celano determined that the disparity between affluence and poverty is evidence of an ever-growing knowledge gap across the nation. One of their key findings was a difference in types of instruction. They note, "children of poverty are provided instruction in the 'basics' while others received instruction in higher-order skills" (2010, p. 4). These researchers also discovered huge differences in youngsters' access to print and technology. In order to effectively meet the needs of their students in poverty, these experts recommend that elementary instructional leaders address these two factors. They first recommend that instruction include higher level thinking skills for **all students**. Second, they recommend that the educational community explore creative ways to get both books and computers into the hands of impoverished students and their families.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

ELEMENTARY LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades K-5)

Essential #2. DATA-DRIVEN AND STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION				
Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	**Level 2** Strategic Planning is in place	**Level 3** Beginning Level of Implementation	**Level 4** Expanded Level of Implementation	**Level 5** Sustained Practice
1. Data that captures students' literacy outcomes are systematically gathered and analyzed by educators in order to continuously improve instruction and intervention practices.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional content and materials (across all content areas) are aligned to the NVACS literacy standards; all includes explicit instruction in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. NVACS literacy standards are strategically incorporated into educators' daily lesson planning and instructional practice with fidelity.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Elementary school literacy instruction targets: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in alignment to the NVACS.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Elementary literacy instruction focuses on: comprehension strategies, identification and use of text structures, rich discussion around text, purposeful text selection, and student engagement and motivation in alignment to the NVACS.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Tiered literacy instruction (per the RTI model) is clearly defined and implemented with fidelity. All identified tiered interventions (Tier I, II, III) implemented are evidence-based. Structures are in place that continuously monitor the effectiveness of these interventions – particularly those that are used for students with exceptional needs and English language learners.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Specific literacy interventions are provided to students by certified employees and/or highly trained staff across a variety of formats.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Data-Driven and Standards-Based Instruction and Intervention:				

Essential 3: Literacy Assessment Systems

What Works Summary

Assessment Framework:

Assessments are the activities and processes used to collect information to improve teaching and learning. Accountability in elementary education is a means of using assessment data to ensure the effectiveness of systems, programs, instruction, and interventions. Accountability in terms of the Nevada State Literacy Plan links assessment data directly to evaluating literacy instruction and monitoring all levels for continuous improvement. Data from multiple measures maintains a comprehensive framework essential to ensuring that all Nevada elementary students receive the instructional resources and support they need. In assessing literacy skills it is important to have multiple measures and data points in order to monitor and modify instruction to strategically know student needs.

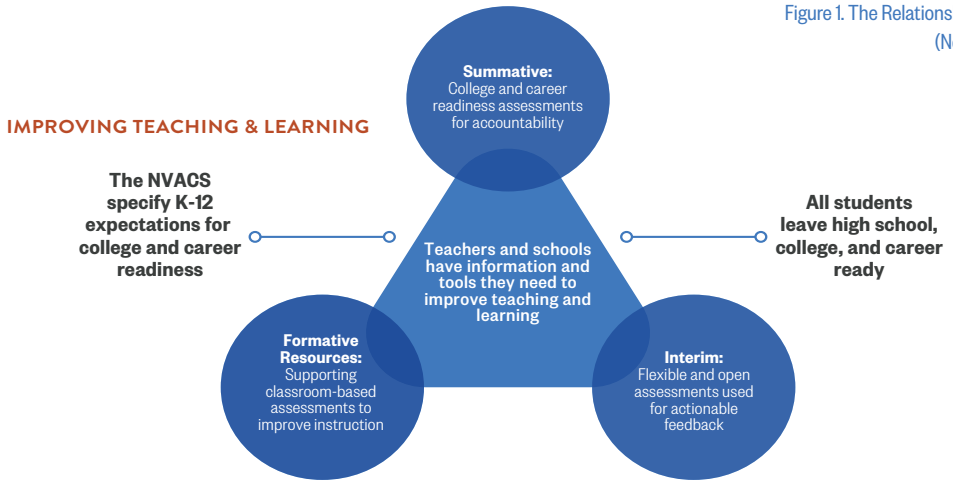
Comprehensive Assessment Systems:

State of Nevada Assessment System

A. Standards and Assessment:

Elementary literacy assessment must be aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) and their corresponding grade level indicators for achievement and mastery. The standards provide the context for what students are expected to learn and be able to do at each grade level. Teaching and learning involves understanding the desired outcomes identified by the standards and making adjustments as needed to achieve those outcomes. Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between standards and assessments that functions every day across Nevada classrooms. Please note the how this relationship operates with one common target – the improvement of teaching and learning.

Figure 1. The Relationship Between Standards & Assessment (Nevada Department of Education, 2014)



B. Nevada State Assessments:

Implementation of the Nevada state mandated assessments for 3rd through 8th grade are presently undergoing a massive change. For the past several years the state of Nevada has required that all public and charter schools administer what was known as the CRT (Criterion Referenced Test) assessment. During this 2014-2015 academic year Nevada has replaced the CRTs with the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) assessments (in both math and language arts). While the CRT was administered as an interim assessment (fall/spring), the SBAC will be administered only in the spring as a summative measure. This spring, 2015, marks the first open SBAC testing window across the state. The SBAC is aligned to Nevada's Academic Content Standards.

Nevada schools' performance data is then reported to the Nevada School Performance Framework. The NSPF is the new Nevada school, district, and state accountability system. The NSPF analyzes and reports school performance based on multiple measures of student achievement.

Best Practices and Implementation:

Methods of Common Assessment in Elementary Literacy

Some of the following content has been adapted from the Minneapolis Literacy Framework, 2011. For a more thorough national listing that specifically includes major literacy assessments, it is recommended that one consult the *2006 Verizon Life-Span Literacy Matrix* (Appendix E: *Links and Resources*).

A. Formal vs. Informal Assessments:

Formal data, like written or computer-based exams, or informal data, as in question/response sessions or observations are all measures to monitor teaching and learning progress in elementary literacy. Whether formal or informal, assessment has two functions: to provide achievement level data or to inform the actions necessary to improve teaching and learning (Chang, Heritage, Jones, & Tobiason, 2012). The following provides a brief description of each of the primary forms of assessment used to inform literacy instruction.

B. Initial Screening Assessments:

Initial screening assessments are typically administered at the beginning of the academic year and/or unit of instruction. The purpose of this type of assessment is to establish a baseline measure of students' knowledge, skills, and/or abilities. Key indicators or predictors are used to identify students' progress in literacy skills. Reading skills that are often assessed using a screening instrument include: knowledge of letter names, phonemic awareness, letter-sound connections, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. An initial screening of writing skills would primarily consist of capturing a sample of student writing and scoring it utilizing an evidence-based rubric. Reading Recovery (Clay, 2013) experts utilize the *Observational Survey* as a screening tool that captures both reading and writing skills at the primary levels (typically 1st grade). Reading and Writing Interest Inventories are often as initial screening instruments as well.

C. Diagnostic Assessments:

Diagnostic assessments provide more information about student needs. These forms of assessments are used when a more in-depth analysis of the student's abilities is needed. Diagnostic assessments are typically administered by trained Reading Specialists (with advanced degrees) and/or Speech Therapists. Most diagnostic tools are designed to identify specific skill needs. Reading skills that are often targeted include: oral language development, reading fluency, comprehension, and word knowledge. Writing skills that are often targeted include: letter formation, letter spacing, use of conventions, structure, and meaning. Informal Reading Inventories are the most often used literacy diagnostic tools.

D. Interim/Benchmark Assessments:

Benchmark assessments are reliable and valid, standards-based assessments administered to a whole group or individual students at regular intervals. Their results can be used to determine student performance relative to state-mandated forms of assessment. Some are criterion-referenced and others are norm or standards- referenced. With the implementation of the NVACS, these benchmark assessments (aligned to the NVACS) will check student progress in relation to grade-level indicators across both reading and writing.

E. Formative Assessments:

Formative assessment is a classroom teachers' primary tool. All forms of formative assessments become an integral ongoing component of an entire classroom experience. The purpose of formative assessments is to monitor teaching and learning and make adjustments to meet the needs of all students. Formative assessments become a key layer of feedback for both students and teachers. A whole array of formative assessments are used in order to capture students' reading abilities. They include: checklists, one-on-one conferences, Running Records capturing miscue analysis (Clay, 2000), student work, quizzes, tests, etc. The same forms of assessments are utilized in Writing. Typically, however, the capturing of authentic writing samples (and assessing with a valid & reliable rubric) is primarily used to inform writing instruction. Systematic observations of students typically provide teachers' additional formative measures. Formative assessments are regularly used to assist the teacher with differentiated instruction.

F. Summative Assessments:

Summative assessments serve to provide evidence of achievement or mastery of grade-level standards and are often used for accountability reports, report cards, and grades. These forms of assessments are typically administered as end of unit instruction, course exams, and standardized tests. The SBAC assessment presently being administered by the state of Nevada is a prime example of a summative assessment.

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. English Language Learners:

As Nevada is a member of the *World-Class Instructional Design Assessme*nt (WIDA) *National Consortium,* the NSLP recommends that all Elementary level educators become familiar with the actual WIDA assessment results – particularly because students receive a performance indicator for every layer of literacy – reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is further recommended that classroom teachers become familiar with the six levels of English Language Proficiency matrix that WIDA uses in order to identify English language learners' levels of ability. Lastly, educators are recommended to use teacher resources provided by the WIDA Consortium.

B. Learners with Exceptional Needs/Early Reading Screening:

Early Reading screening is typically a quickly administered assessment used to identify children who may have needs for more in-depth assessment. These tools are often brief and appear quite simple. Such tools still should be constructed according to technical standards. In addition, only trained staff should conduct screenings. This type of assessment is typically a first step toward identifying other potential learning problems. Experts recommend caution for using assessments without predictive validity. Some of the early reading screening assessments most often used include: the PALS – 1-3 (Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening – – 3rd), the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), the Gray Oral Reading Tests, 4th Edition, the Peabody Expressive Vocabulary Test, *2nd* Edition, the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, 4th Edition.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

ELEMENTARY LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades K-5)

Essential #3. LITERACY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Literacy assessment tools and protocols are aligned to the NVACS.				1 2 3 4 5
2. An assessment framework has been established that includes multiple measures and data points. Data that is gathered includes all categories of student literacy performance (diagnostic, formative, interim, summative, etc.).				1 2 3 4 5
3. A data collection system has been established that is user-friendly and accessible to all site educators. All educators have received training on the effective use of this system.				1 2 3 4 5
4. All educators have received specialized (evidence-based) training on the data-driven decision-making process.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Data teams are established that meet routinely to analyze student performance in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Literacy data discussions are structured via an evidence-based collaborative inquiry model; one that includes strategies for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Educators are provided continuous professional learning opportunities on newly adopted literacy assessment tools and protocols. Specific actions are taken to establish a commonality of language.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Literacy Assessment Systems:

Essential 4: Professional Learning

What Works Summary

International Guidelines:

Professional learning refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge, both for personal growth and career advancement. The primary purpose of professional learning is to improve educator practice and student results (Learning Forward, 2011). Helen Temperley, an internationally renowned expert in professional learning, provides a succinct list of best practices for this arena in her publication titled *Teacher Professional Learning and Development* (2008). Table 4 below illustrates the major findings of her work. Temperley reminds her reader that "these ten principles do not operate independently, rather, they are integrated to inform cycles of learning and action."

Table 4. TEMPERLEY'S TEN PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (2008)

1. Professional learning experiences that focus on the links between particular teaching activities and valued student outcomes are associated with positive impacts on those outcomes.
2. The knowledge and skills developed are those that have been established as effective in achieving valued student outcomes.
3. The integration of essential teacher knowledge and skills promotes deep teacher learning and effective changes in practice.
4. Information about what students need to know and do is used to identify what teachers need to know and do.
5. To make significant changes to their practice, teachers need multiple opportunities to learn new information and understand its implication for practice. They need to encounter these opportunities in environments that offer both trust and challenge.
6. The promotion of professional learning requires different approaches depending on whether or not new ideas are consistent with the assumptions that currently underpin practice.
7. Collegial interaction that is focused on student outcomes can help teachers integrate new learning into existing practice.
8. Expertise external to the group of participating members is necessary to challenge existing assumptions and develop the kinds of new knowledge and skills associated with positive outcomes for students.
9. Designated educational leaders have a key role in developing expectations for improved student outcomes and organizing and promoting engagement in professional learning opportunities.
10. Sustained improvement in student outcomes requires that teachers have sound theoretical knowledge, evidence-informed inquiry skills, and supportive organizational conditions.

Alignment to Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS):

It is recommended that professional learning opportunities for all elementary educators be aligned to two sets of state standards: 1. the professional standards for educators (Nevada Educator Performance Framework – NEPF) and 2. the instructional standards for students (Nevada's K-12 Academic Content Standards in – NVACS). It is further recommended that this alignment occur with a specific "educational lens" of literacy. A template for integrating all of these elements is provided at the end of this literacy plan in Appendix C: *The Elementary Professional Growth Plan Template.*

Alignment to Nevada's Educator Performance Framework (NEPF):

Nevada's Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) serves as a valuable tool for framing the design of ongoing professional learning opportunities for instructional leaders across the state. Within this framework both teachers and administrators are held responsible for meeting both instructional and professional standards that positively impact student learning. The NEPF defines a process of professional practice where educators: demonstrate a commitment to the school community, self-reflect on current practice and promote professional growth, meet and exceed professional obligations, and involve both families and students in creating a community that promotes student learning (Salazar & Fitzpatrick, 2013). The NEPF framework is designed to support differentiated professional learning opportunities for educators who possess varying degrees of expertise. All in all, the weaving together of NEPF standards, NVACS standards, and Temperley's international guidelines (with a specific eye on literacy) is recommended for an integrated approach toward professional learning.

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Professional (Learning) Literacy Communities:

In a bold move, Regie Routman has recently recommended that the abbreviation *PLC* (traditionally standing for *professional learning community*) be changed to *Professional* ***Literacy*** *Community* (2014). She states her rationale, "the work we do is always connected to literacy." She asserts how a "*Professional Literacy Community* becomes the daily culture and foundation of the highly effective school . . . that is, the PLC becomes the school's heart and soul and operating system" (p. 219-220). Routman provides step-by-step strategies for how a school might transform itself into a literacy-based environment. The NSLP strongly recommends that elementary educators across Nevada consult this groundbreaking work.

B. Characteristics of Effective Professional Development at the Elementary Level:

Professional learning that improves instructional practice is built on the following seven principles as described by Learning Forward (2011):

- Learning Communities
- Leadership
- Resources
- Data
- Learning Designs
- Implementation
- Outcomes

Professional learning nurtures ownership and shapes competence by giving educators an active role in determining the focus of professional development, builds skills through focused transfer of learning from training to classroom practice, monitors progress in order to make adjustments, and creates communities of learners to sustain efforts long term (Fullan & St. Germain, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Guskey, 2000; Borko, 2004).

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. Traditional Job-Embedded Training:

1. Meeting the Needs of Nevada's Struggling Learners:

Nevada is the fastest-growing state in total ELL population, and the third fastest growing state in terms of ELL students (NDE, 2012). Furthermore, Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 388.405 outlines requirements for ensuring students identified as English Language Learners receive high quality instruction designed to address their individual needs in order to attain English language proficiency and improve overall academic achievement. Professional learning opportunities that specifically address the needs of ELL students are one avenue for ensuring the intent of this legal mandate.

"Communicating a language purpose is important because all learning involves language. Across learning contexts, students use language to think" (Fisher and Frey, 2011, p. 12). These authors point out how this element of instruction is vital with English language learners. They recommend that teachers (across all content areas) create language purpose statements in order to drive the linguistic components of their instruction. They identify three specific categories of purpose statements: vocabulary, language structure, and language function. They describe how both content and language become key components of a purpose statement. "These two components really do go hand in hand, as learning is based in language. All of us learn content as we read, write, speak, and listen" (p. 24). Professional learning opportunities that train educators to explicitly teach the language components of a lesson would provide a powerful tool for Nevada educators who are attempting to meet the needs of their ELL students.

In addition, The National Council on Exceptional Children (2015) writes that "both general and special education teachers and administrators, and other ancillary staff must have access to state-of-the-art knowledge and documented effective practices designed for students with exceptionalities. Therefore, access to the evolving knowledge base of effective practice is essential to maintaining programs that can respond to the needs of all students with exceptionalities." Professional learning opportunities for educators that specifically focus on students with exceptional needs must be explored as well.

And, lastly, professional learning could serve to squelch statements that "children of poverty and those of color are far less likely to be taught by qualified, effective teachers than are students from more affluent families" (NEA, 2015). In order to fully understand their students of poverty, Nevada educators need to experience professional learning opportunities that specifically address the unique experiences of these youngsters who are living their daily lives under the shadow of poverty.

2. Meeting the Needs of Nevada's Site Administrators:

Professional learning plays a key role in advancing the role of the site administrator to that of an instructional leader. This is particularly so in the area of literacy achievement. ALER's (2011) white paper recognized this by noting that:

> literacy leaders need to possess strong foundational knowledge of how literacy learning occurs, demonstrate the ability to enable teachers to translate theory into sound practice, and ensure that instructional practices meet the needs of diverse learners and learning styles (p. 28).

B. Literacy Coaching at the Elementary School Level:

Literacy coaching is another form of professional learning that is on the upswing across America. Research investigations on the impact of such literacy coaching (both on teacher and student performance measures) have arisen over the past several decades. Dr. Anthony Bryk, President of Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, studied the value-added effects of a Literacy Collaborative (that included a literacy coach) on student learning and achievement in grades K-2 over a 4-year time frame in Ohio (2004). The project was designed to also study growth in teacher expertise and changes in professional communication networks in Literacy Collaborative schools. During the first year of this project the literacy coaches received one full year of extensive training by literacy experts associated with a university. The primary findings were:

- Students' average rates of learning increased by 16% in the first implementation year, 28% in the second implementation year, and 32% in the third implementation year.
- Teacher expertise increased substantially and the rate of improvement was predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received.
- Professional communication amongst teachers in the schools increased over the three years of implementation and the literacy coordinator became more central in the schools' communication networks.

Bryk's longitudinal examination of the impact of a literacy coach demonstrates how pivotal this role might be for the success of all literacy efforts.

In addition, a very extensive meta-analysis of data gathered by principals, coaches, and teachers was conducted by the National Academy of Education in 2008. Their work "provides evidence that professional development, coaching, and mentoring can improve instruction and promote the retention of highly effective teachers" (2008). Instructional leaders across Nevada should take note of these findings.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

ELEMENTARY LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades K-5)

Essential #4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Student literacy data are routinely gathered and analyzed by educators in order to determine the content of professional learning curriculums.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Professional learning opportunities are aligned to the NVACS in literacy. Ongoing training is provided to site administrators and teachers (of all content areas) that includes explicit instruction in K-5 levels of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. K-5 literacy training provides explicit instruction on comprehension strategies, identification and use of text structures, rich discussion around text, purposeful text selection, and student engagement and motivation.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders establish a culture that values and implements collaborative professional learning opportunities across and between grade levels, content areas, and job classifications (including literacy coaches and librarians/media specialists). These efforts are aimed at improving student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Professional Growth Plans for Educators (teachers and administrators) are aligned to the Nevada Teacher Performance Framework and the NVACS literacy standards.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Structures are in place for measuring the short-term and long-term impact of literacy-based professional learning on educator effectiveness and student performance.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Professional Learning:

Essential 5: Family and Community Engagement

What Works Summary

National Guidelines:

As part of her work with the National Network of Partnership Schools, Joyce Epstein identified six types of involvement to help educators develop more comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships (2009). Epstein reminds her readers that schools may use the framework as a guide but the schools must then choose local actions.

TYPE 1 – PARENTING: Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

TYPE 2 – COMMUNICATING: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

TYPE 3 – VOLUNTEERING: Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

TYPE 4 – LEARNING AT HOME: Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

TYPE 5 – DECISION MAKING: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

TYPE 6 – COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY: Coordinate resources and services *for* families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services *to* the community.

Nevada State Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

In 2011 the Nevada State Legislature passed the Assembly Bill (AB) 224. This bill established Nevada's first Advisory Council on Family Engagement and Office of Family Engagement within the Nevada Department of Education. In creating a vision for family engagement across Nevada, this group adopted a set of national research-based PTA standards for Family-School Partnerships (NDE Website). Efforts aimed at improving the literacy skills are imbedded within this state framework. It is recommended that literacy family engagement activities be aligned to Nevada's six standards. These six standards include:

1. Welcoming All Families into the School Community
2. Communicating Effectively
3. Supporting Student Success
4. Speaking Up for Every Child
5. Sharing Power
6. Collaborating with the Community

Best Practices and Implementation for Family and Community Engagement:

Community outreach can uncover support and recruit resources for literacy that might otherwise go untapped. Communicating the importance of a literate community and being transparent about the need for improvement in literacy achievement can result in increased support and resources from a wide range of community stakeholders: colleges and universities, local residents, businesses and professional organizations, artists and cultural institutions, service, volunteer and faith-based organizations. Creating a community campaign focused on literacy rallies support around a common goal in which all can see value. Including strategic outreach in an elementary school literacy plan can create a unified literacy improvement effort at the local level that coordinates school, home and community resources. Table 7 below details particular action steps to promote family and community engagement based on Henderson and Mapp's research (2002):

Table 7. PUTTING RESEARCH INTO ACTION – BEST PRACTICES FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
(Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

- Being culturally responsive in recognizing all parents are involved in their children's learning and want them to do well
- Design programs that will support parent and families in understanding their children's literacy development
- Develop the capacity of educators and families to work together through professional learning and collaborative partnerships
- Link family and community engagement efforts to student learning and NVACS outcomes
- Support transitions between literacy settings through communication and learning opportunities to encourage stakeholder participation and collaboration
- Build and support social connections among families and community members
- Collaborate and embrace partnerships that share power and focus on developing trusting and respectful relationships so support children's literacy development

Nevada State Literacy Plan

ELEMENTARY LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades K-5)

Essential #5. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Educators establish and maintain parent and family partnerships that respect every element of multiculturalism including ethnicity, language, gender, socio-economic levels, exceptionalities, etc.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Educators create professional learning opportunities for parents and family members aimed at assisting their children with literacy development (including how to effectively navigate through student data). Such opportunities are provided in both English and Spanish.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Individual student progress toward NVACS-aligned literacy outcomes is communicated to parents and families routinely (reporting should occur three times a year at a minimum).				1 2 3 4 5
4. Parents and families of students identified as at-risk in literacy acquisition and/or those receiving interventions are updated frequently on individual student progress (reporting should occur at least six times a year).				1 2 3 4 5
5. Protocols have been established for the communication and referral of adult literacy programs available to parents and family members.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders identify the critical roles of the community library and after-school youth organizations (such as the Boys and Girls Club) as key partners in expanding family literacy opportunities. Efforts are made to establish and maintain such community partnerships.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Structures are in place for welcoming, training, and monitoring literacy volunteers who can provide assistance with the elementary learner.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Family and Community Engagement:

Suggestions for an Effective Transition to Middle School

Programmatic Strategies: (Georgia Department of Education, et.al., 2004)

1. Build a sense of community
2. Respond to needs and concerns of students
3. Develop a middle school transition team with the following representation:
   - elementary and middle school instructional leaders
   - students
   - families
   - PTA/PTO members
   - Churches or faith-based organizations
   - Community leaders (city council, etc.)
   - Community agency representatives
   - Afterschool program providers
   - Local business representatives
4. Develop a middle school transition plan (activities, steps, personnel, timeline)
5. Conduct orientation activities from 4th grade on
6. Conduct surveys with families
7. Conduct career surveys/learning style inventories with students
8. Hold Transition "Nights"
9. Conduct Scavenger Hunts for new middle school students
10. Hold Transition camps during the prior summer
11. Train and implement student ambassadors to visit elementary school
12. Conduct visits between levels (by teachers and students)

Socio-Emotional Strategies for New Middle School Teachers: (Wormeli, 2011)

1. Understand students concerns about belonging
2. Empathize with students
3. Understand characteristics of age group
4. Focus on the positive
5. Build hope
6. Focus on experiential learning
7. Focus on collaborative/interactive learning

20 Transition Strategies for English Language Learners: (Wormeli, 2011)

Teachers can use the following strategies, which help English language learners transition to an English-speaking environment, to aid all new students in their transition into middle school.

1. Speak clearly.
2. Repeat important words and information several times.
3. Extend time periods for responding to prompts as necessary.
4. Avoid using idioms, colloquialisms, and shorthand references unless you're going to take the time to explain them.
5. Point to what you're referring to.
6. Label things in the classroom and hallways, such as "Computer Lab 2," "Student flash drives," "Mrs. Silver's stapler—Please return to her."
7. Provide specific models and hands-on experiences.
8. Use visuals during instruction, such as pictures, illustrations, graphs, pictographs, and real objects.
9. Demonstrate what you mean, rather than just describe it. For example, use a scientific balance when explaining equal values right and left of the equation sign in algebra. When teaching parallel sentence structure in English, write the model sentences parallel to each other on the display board.
10. Make students feel that they belong and have a role to play in classroom learning. Find something in a student's background that connects to the topic you're studying and incorporate it into the lesson. Have students take on leadership positions, and ask them to demonstrate their talents.
11. Use think alouds to model sequences of tasks.
12. Use cooperative learning groups, with more seasoned students partnering with less seasoned ones.
13. Find ways to enable new students who may be tentative about their abilities to demonstrate their intellectual skills and maintain dignity.
14. Give students quick and accurate feedback. An English language learner might say in halting English, "This correct paper?" Reply in affirmation, "Yes, that *is* the correct paper. Thank you." A middle schooler might ask, "Am I doing OK?" Respond, "Yes, you're doing well, and here's how I know. ..."
15. Spend time building background knowledge. If you're about to teach students about magnetic fields, for example, let them play with magnets, pouring iron shavings near the poles to watch their pattern of dispersal or gathering. Before teaching students about irony, orchestrate an ironic happening in the classroom and ask for comments.
16. Stay focused on how students are moving toward their own learning goals—not on how they're doing in relation to other students. We do students a disservice when we compare them with their peers or try to motivate them by parading others' success in front of them. English language learners and middle-level students desperately want to be successful.
17. Recognize the difference between conversational and academic language and understand that students need help with both. Go out of your way to explain terms like *similar, math exercise, vocabulary, compare, instead of, not only*, and so on.
18. Take the time to learn about students' interests and cultures. This engenders good will and enables you to make connections in the curriculum.
19. Teach new content through a medium or topics that students already know. In the case of English language learners, this means teaching content in or making connections to their native language whenever possible. In the case of all middle schoolers, it means building on familiar knowledge.
20. Remember that students are *individuals* worth our time and energy. Labels such as *English language learner*, *gifted and talented*, *hearing impaired*, *gamer*, *Goth*, and *gang member* blind us to the individual underneath.

Appendix A: NSLP ACTION ROADMAP

LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

	Leadership and Sustainability	Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention	Literacy Assessment Systems	Professional Learning	Family and Community Engagement
Level 5 Sustained Practice	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually
Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are revisited and revised - Collaboration & shared responsibility plan is revisited & revised - Literacy training continues for instructional leaders - Literacy coach fully on board	- Educators' use of data to inform instruction is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of nationally recognized targets revisited & revised - Methods for measuring fidelity of RTI revisited & revised - Effectiveness of interventions is systematically monitored	- Adopted assessment framework is revisited and revised - Data collection system is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator DBDM Training is implemented - System used for data teams is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator training on assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers' use of data to inform practice is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of explicit literacy instruction is revisited and revised - Educators identify focus literacy goals in NEPF PGP	- Culture validates and honors parent/family diversity - Parental support Literacy training is expanded - Parents become active participants in monitoring student literacy progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Impact of literacy work with community partners revisited and revised
Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are created - Literacy goals are implemented - Culture implements collaboration & shared responsibility for literacy - Literacy training begins for instructional leaders - Literacy coach phased in	- Educators use data to inform instruction - System created for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Instruction targets nationally recognized literacy objectives - Fidelity of RTI is measured - Effectiveness of interventions is monitored	- An effective assessment framework is implemented - An effective data-collection system is implemented - Educators receive training on the DBDM process - Data teams are established - Educator training on new assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers use data to inform practice - System created for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Professional learning offered that includes explicit literacy - Educators use NEPF Growth Plan with literacy objectives	- Culture demonstrates respect for diversity - Parental support Literacy training is implemented - Parents/families are routinely contacted by educators to discuss student progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Implementation of literacy work with community
Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	- Planning for goals occurs - Planning for collaboration & shared responsibility of literacy occurs - Planning for developing leaders' knowledge base occurs - Research begins on how to add a site-based literacy coach	- Planning occurs for educator data collection & analysis - Planning occurs for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Planning begins for insuring use of nationally recognized literacy objectives - Planning occurs for insuring fidelity of RTI model - Planning occurs for measuring effectiveness of interventions	- An effective assessment framework is designed - An effective data-collection system is designed - Educator training is scheduled on the DBDM process - Planning begins for establishing data teams - Educator training is scheduled on new assessment tools and protocols	- Planning for professional learning is data-based - Planning occurs for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Explicit literacy instruction added to planning process - Planning occurs for insuring educator collaboration - NEPF Growth Plans template adds NVACS literacy objectives	- Systematic plans created for developing respect of parent & family diversity - Systematic plans created for parent/family literacy training - System designed for the communication of student progress to parent/families - Systems designed for referring adults to literacy courses - Systematic plan created for expanding literacy partners
Level 1 No planning or implementation is in place	- No data-driven measurable goals aligned to NVACS - Culture does not support collaboration or shared responsibility of literacy - Instructional leaders have no literacy knowledge base - No support of literacy coach position	- Educators not gathering or analyzing student literacy data to inform instruction - Instruction & materials not aligned to NVACS - Nationally recognized literacy objectives not targeted - RTI model not being implemented with fidelity - Interventions not assessed	- An ineffective assessment framework is in place - An ineffective data-collection system is in place - Educators receive no training - on DBDM process - No data teams have been established - Educators receive no training on new assessments	- Professional learning is designed w/o data analysis - Professional learning is notaligned to NVACS - Professional learning does not include explicit literacy instruction - Culture does not support educator collaboration in lit. - Literacy absent from PGPs	- Lack of respect for diversity of parents/families - Lack of literacy training available for parent / families - Student literacy progress not communicated to parents - No referral protocols for adult literacy education - Ineffective community partners in literacy

Appendix B: Elementary Action Plan Framework

NSLP Strategy Form

Action Plan Framework

ESSENTIAL: _____ Current Level of Implementation (per the NSLP Action Roadmap): _____

Members of Planning Team:

District: _____ School: _____ Grade Band: _____ Date: _____

Literacy Activity (What will be done?)	Specific Action Steps (How will it be done?)	Individual(s) Responsible (Who will be doing it?)	Projected Timeline (When will it occur?)		Resources Needed	Notes
			Start Date	End Date		

Appendix C: Elementary Professional Growth Plan Template

Adapted from Louisiana State Comprehensive Literacy Plan's Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Template, with permission

Name ..... **Position** .....

This sample template is provided to assist you as a Nevada Elementary School educator, as you work to design your own individualized Professional Growth Plans as outlined in the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). As an NSLP instrument, this template embeds professional goals and objectives that are deliberately aligned to literacy improvement. The educator is encouraged to design his/her professional growth plan with a strategic focus on literacy.

Part 1: Possible Goals:

When thinking about possible goals for your PGP, consider the following questions:

- How does my literacy knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances measure up against the NEPF?
- Where do I need to grow professionally in order to optimize my effectiveness in impacting student literacy performance (i.e. outcomes and achievement levels).
- What areas for professional growth will have the greatest potential to improve the quality of literacy teaching and learning in my program?

Brainstorm of my Possible Goals (3-5):

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: NSLP/District/School/Program Connections:

When aligning your professional goals with the known needs of the NSLP, your district, school, or program, consider the following questions:

- Which of my professional goals are most directly related to implementing elements of Nevada's Elementary Literacy Plan aimed at improving student outcomes?
- For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?
- How will these goals be complementary to my colleagues PGPs and/or other component of my Elementary program?

My goals relate to NSLP/district/school/program improvement needs in the following ways:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Part 3: Identified Goals (inclusive of literacy) and their intended student outcomes (3-4):

Professional Educator Goals	Student Outcomes

Part 4: Outline of My Plan:

When outlining your specific PGP, consider the following questions:

- What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
- What are the initial steps in my plan?
- What activities will help me to achieve my goals and objectives?
- How will I make the time to accomplish the elements of my plan?
- What NSLP/district/school/program resources will I need?
- What evidence will I collect to demonstrate the achievement of my professional learning goals and how will I organize my evidence?

A. I will engage in the following activities (inclusive of literacy strategies):

_____

_____

_____

B. I will document my progress in achieving my professional learning goal(s) with the following artifacts (e.g. anecdotal records, observation logs, lesson plans, videotapes) and outcome data (i.e. assessment data gathered as evidence of student growth and development and student products).

_____

_____

_____

C. Resources I will need for full implementation of my PGP:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: NSLP Educator Planning Guide

NSLP EDUCATOR PLANNING GUIDE

for Authentic Literacy-Based Instruction

Teacher Name: _____ Age/Grade Band(s): _____

From (Date): _____ through (Date): _____

Instruction driven by the following data point(s): _____

Nevada State Literacy Plan ~ Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention: Implementation Targets from NSLP Self-Assessment Tool (list numbers)**:**		Birth-Age 3-Guidelines, Pre-K Standards, NVACS (K-12) CCR (College & Career Readiness) Standards (Adult)
Targeted Content Objectives	_____Standards	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Targeted Literacy Objectives	_____Standards	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Targeted Guiding Principles		
1.		
2.		
3.		

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THE "HOW": Using Literacy Strategies as Effective Instructional Methodologies ~

Literacy Modalities / Stages of Literacy Instruction	(Receptive Literacy) AUTHENTIC READING STRATEGIES	(Expressive Literacy) AUTHENTIC WRITING STRATEGIES
I. Pre-Instruction		
II. During Instruction		
III. Post-Instruction		
Integration of Technology:		
Classroom Interventions:		
Assessment Protocol(s):		
Exit Data Point(s): (if available)		

THE "WHAT" = Outcomes:

- Acquisition of Content Knowledge
- Enhancement of Sound Literacy Skills
- Enhancement of Guided Principal Behaviors

Appendix E: Links and Resources

Links to Nevada Department of Education Resources:

Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS):
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Standards_Instructional_Support/Nevada_Academic_Content_Standards/

The Nevada English Mastery Advisory Council:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/English_Mastery_Council/Home/

The Nevada Family Engagement Advisory Council:
www.nevadapife.com/advisory-council

NDE Office of Educator Development and Support: Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF):
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Educator_Development_and_Support/Nevada_Educator_Performance_Framework(NEPF)

NDE Office of Parent Involvement and Family Engagement:
http://nevadapife.nv.gov/

NDE Office of Student and School Support:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Office_of_Student_School_Supports/

Links to Supplementary Resources:

Denver Public Schools, Elementary Literacy Program, Web site:
http://curriculum.dpsk12.org/lang_literacy_cultural/literacy/elem_lit/index.shtml

International Literacy Association, Web site:
http://www.reading.org

Literacy in Learning Exchange, National Center for Literacy Education, Web site:
http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/

National Center for Families Learning:
http://www.familieslearning.org/

National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) Middle School Web site:
http://www.ncte.org/middle

Toyota Family Literacy Program (in partnership with NCFL):
http://www.toyota-global.com/sustainability/social_contribution/education/overseas/families.html

Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix:
http://familieslearning.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Verizon-Life-Span-Literacy-Matrix.pdf

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Proficiency Standards Web site:
https://www.wida.us/standards/ELP_StandardLookup.aspx

Doing What Works Web Site (U.S. Dept. of Education):
http://dww.ed.gov

The What Works Clearinghouse:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/praticeguides/

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NEVADA'S MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY PLAN

Middle School: The Great Basin

The Great Basin formed the landscape of modern day Nevada. This was during the Cambrian period - a period of Earth in which it experienced an explosion of life, and, transformation. Middle School is a period in which youth experience a similar transformation.

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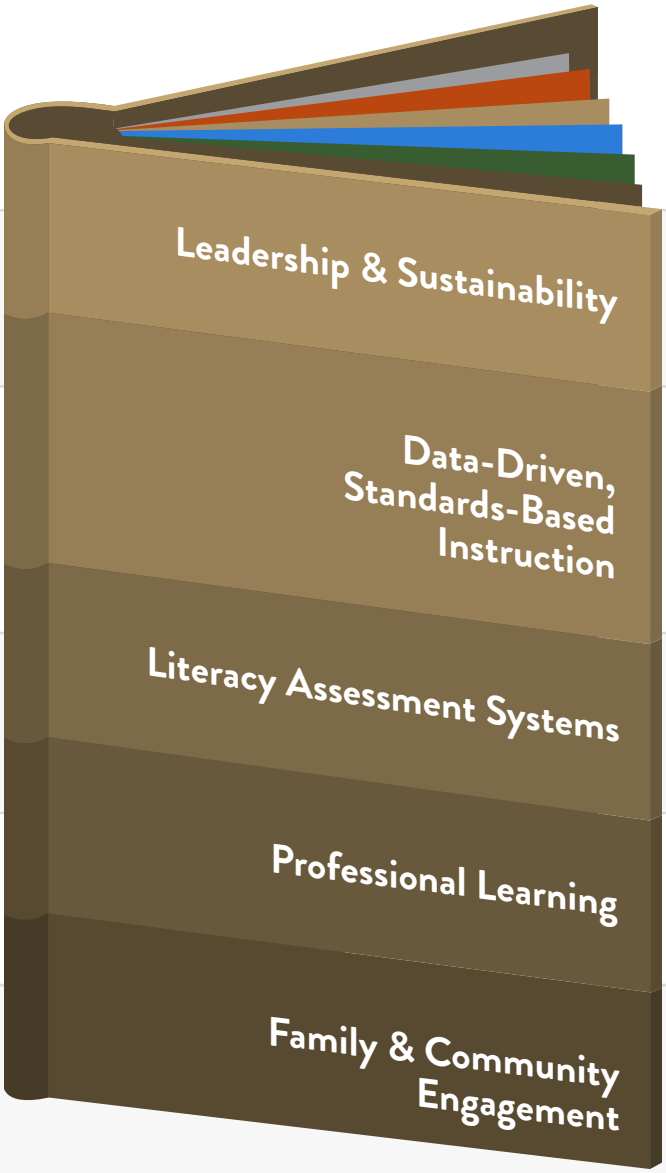
NEVADA'S MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY PLAN

THE FIVE NEVADA LITERACY ESSENTIALS



THE ESSENTIALS:

1. A group process aimed at strategically mobilizing others for the purpose of improving students' literacy growth. Sustainable reforms are persistent over time & circumstances.
2. All planning for literacy instruction occurs with a systematic analysis of student data. All instruction is explicitly aligned to state literacy standards. Classroom educators and interventionists use research-based strategies for delivering literacy objectives across all content areas.
3. The use of valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose students' literacy needs.
4. The development of learning opportunities, resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for all children, families, and educators.
5. A coordinated and collaborative system in which schools and other community organizations connect with families in meaningful ways to support the ongoing improvement of student, family, and community literacy.

Introduction

The Middle School Student:

The transition from elementary school to middle school marks a huge adjustment in every young adolescent's life. In the midst of this unsettling academic transition, middle school educators need to recognize that this unique stage of adolescent development is a time when 10-15 year-olds begin to experience dramatic physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes (Caskey & Anfara, 2014). A huge transformation in physical development occurs during this time. These physical changes, in turn, often have a profound impact on students' emotional, psychological and social development. This process becomes even more complicated when examining adolescent cognition. Middle school years mark the developmental stage where the prefrontal cortex of the brain is attempting to manage more complicated cognitive tasks such as planning, reasoning, anticipating consequences, sustaining attention, and making decisions (Caskey & Anfara, 2014). All in all, it becomes quite clear that the middle school years present a huge complexity of change into the daily lives of young adolescents.

Approaches to Learning:

Middle school students also exhibit academic preferences. They are still eager to learn, but not always in a traditional setting that includes desks in a row and a lecturing teacher. They prefer an active and stimulating environment. They strive to learn about topics that are relevant and interesting to them. They are also quite willing to demonstrate new and innovative ideas. Real-life experiences and authentic learning opportunities are a natural avenue for middle school learning. In addition, middle school learners prefer active rather than passive participation when acquiring new literacy knowledge and skills (Caskey & Anfara, 2014). Middle school educators need to offer a variety of educational approaches in order to reach the diverse needs of this age group (Caskey & Anfara, 2014). They must also recognize their role in being the primary adults who are introducing these young adolescents into a more rigorous and independent academic environment.

Relationships:

Relationships become very critical for this age group. Because of this factor, young adolescents need to experience an environment that provides both validation and safety. Thus the role of adult mentors becomes a critical role for equipping these young people with the interpersonal skills needed to face the many obstacles and challenges of the early teen years. Parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and other significant adults in the students' lives are charged with acting as these mentors. Research indicates that positive student-teacher relationships have a tremendous influence on student motivation and academic performance (Reddy, R., Rhodes, J. E., & Mulhall, P., 2003). Adults who form such relationships with middle school students ultimately provide these youngsters with a sense of grounding, thus enabling them with the ability to discover their inner-selves as well as their academic strengths and weaknesses (Reddy, R., Rhodes, J. E., & Mulhall, P., 2003).

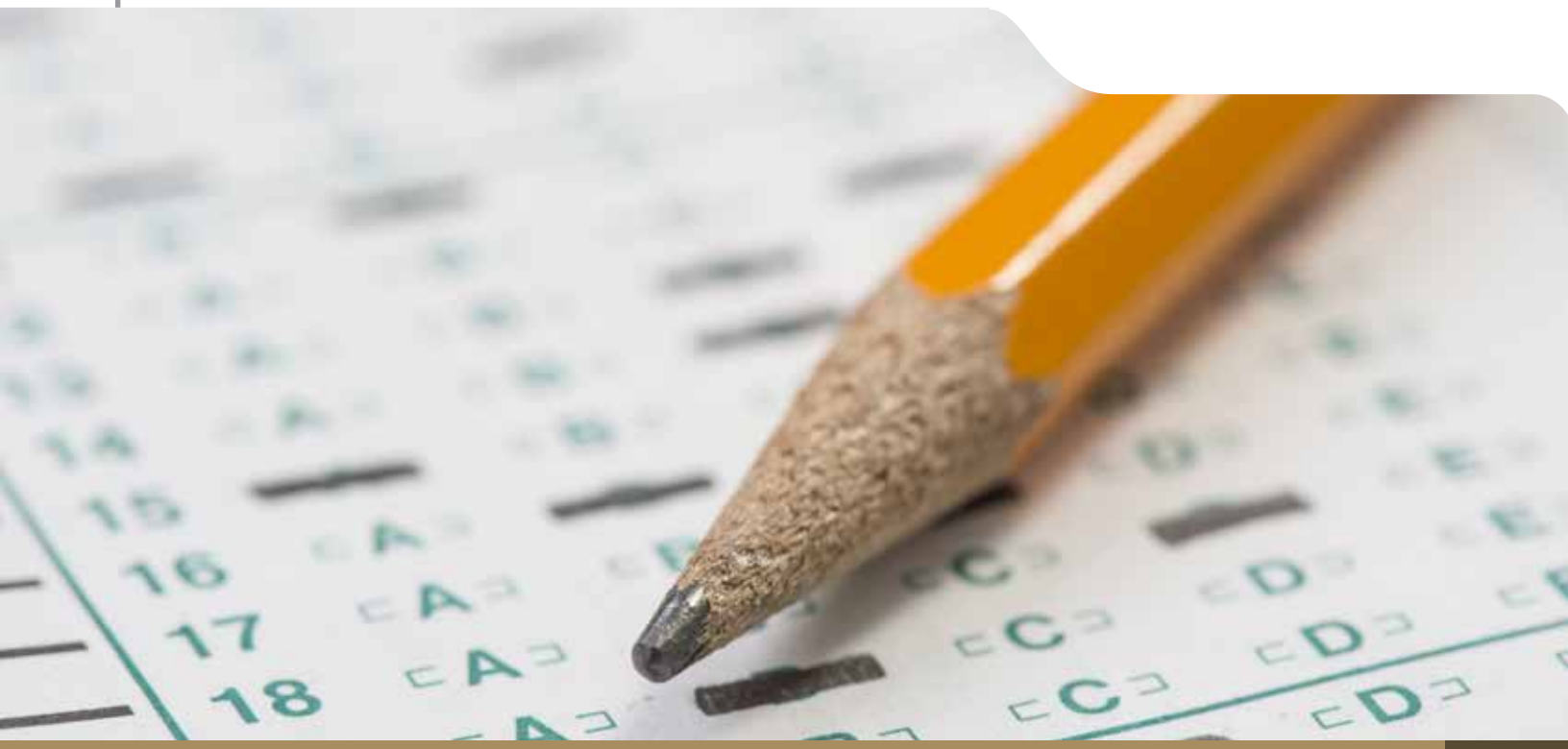
Literacy and the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS):

Effective literacy instruction at the middle school level should be consistent, systematic, and strategic regardless of the subject matter being taught (Reddy, R., Rhodes, J. E., & Mulhall, P., 2003). In middle school, academic literacy demands dramatically. Some of the primary demands facing these students include sentence and structural complexity increase dramatically, and texts begin to vary widely across content areas (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). The Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) present "a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, know and be able to do in English Language Arts and other content areas in order for students to become college and career ready" (Nevada Department of Education, 2013). The standards do not dictate how or what teachers teach; instead, they provide benchmarks for learning. Examination of the NVACS provides a clear picture of the literacy demands of the 21st Century that require a new vision of teaching and learning. In order to effectively meet the needs of this unique age band of students, this new vision of teaching and learning must be student-centered. It also must strategically support the development of the middle school learner intended to support the development of students in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, and critical thinking (NVACS).

Literacy and Technology:

The *Nevada Ready 21 Plan* calls for all middle school students to have digital devices in their hands and to "ensure teachers will have the necessary training for this new type of environment" (Sandoval, *State of the State Address,* 2015). Until full implementation of this plan for technology occurs, it is recommended that educators begin offering lessons that integrate the use of technological tools with literacy learning. Such an effective integration of technology and literacy in the classroom is only possible through systematic planning.

Once this integration occurs, instruction often shifts into a more student-centered approach. It's important to note that an interactive engaged learning process does not stop at the classroom door for the 21st Century learner. In today's world, these adolescents are actively engaged in technology almost every day of their lives through cell phones, social media, video games, blogging, websites, Instagram, Snapchat, and many more technological activities. As a result, if schools want to engage and motivate today's students to learn, there needs to be a shift in how curriculum and instruction are implemented. This requires the use of interactive strategies and activities that retain students' interest in learning through technology. Therefore, professional development opportunities for the middle school educator that include the integration of technology into literacy instruction become a very high priority.



Essential 1: Leadership and Sustainability

What Works Summary

Effective leadership at the middle school level involves the adults who come in contact with students on a regular basis. It also includes leaders who inspire others, become positive role models, establish effective communication, and help to ensure the beliefs, expectations, and goals of a school's culture, among many other characteristics (Dufour, R., & Marzano, R., 2011).

Therefore, building trust among colleagues and students becomes essential for accomplishing the visions and goals that have been established by the staff and the community. Effective leaders must have character to face the difficulties that arise each day or the courage to stand strong through change or struggles. Effective leaders must also be competent in their roles, such as such as knowing how to handle to handle different situations, understanding when others need support, and consistently improving themselves within their leadership role. Other characteristics of effective leaders include the monitoring of one's own reactions and addressing concerns that arise (Combs, Harris, & Edmonson, 2015).

Effective leadership within sustainable systems in middle schools is also crucial for the development of students' academic literacy achievements. Because not one person alone can make the needed changes of an educational setting, leadership is considered to be a shared responsibility and includes, but is not limited to, central office administrators, principals, assistant principals, deans, literacy coaches, department chairs, teachers, school librarians, and parents. The following provides an overview of some of the key roles that are critical to the establishment of an effective literacy team at a middle school site.

Collaborations in Leadership:

A. Site Administrators:

As noted above, the definition of "instructional leader" has been expanded beyond the role of site administrators (principals, vice principals, deans, etc.). While it is true that the role of all site-level instructional leaders is to ensure that their students receive high quality instruction, it is the site administrator, alone, who is typically charged with providing the necessary leadership to make sure that this occurs. Middle school administrators, particularly principals, still provide a guiding role in instructional leadership. Their charge is to communicate clear instructional literacy expectations and practices for their faculty members who teach across all content areas. The NVACS state that literacy instruction is a shared responsibility within the school setting (NVACS, 2010). All instructional leaders need to ensure that this also occurs.

Site leaders hold the responsibility of establishing a culture of collective responsibility where all educators of the school community continue to learn and improve their instructional practices. Finally, systems and policies must be in place in order for leadership to be able to effectively manage the talent of every educator at his/her school site (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, & Fenton, 2014). Throughout this process, effective management and support from central office instructional leaders becomes essential.

B. Literacy Coaches:

Research indicates that literacy coaches provide additional instructional leadership support to middle school educator. The International Reading Association's *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* states that "current practice suggests a promising avenue for intervention that includes qualifying literacy experts to coach content area teachers in the upper grades . . . to teach reading strategies to students particular to their disciplines (2006, p. 2). Literacy coaches support the school's literacy program by "promoting instructional reform, improving staff's capacity to use data and provide coaching systems that include goal-setting, demonstrations, modeling, observations, follow-ups, and small-group learning" (*IRA,Standards for Middle and High School Students,* 2006, p. 2). Effective literacy coaches become a support system and part of the embedded professional development system, not part of the evaluation system. There are several additional resources for the implementation of literacy coaches located in Appendix E, *Links and Resources*.

C. Middle School Literacy Leadership:

The selection of a literacy leadership team is necessary in order to successfully implement effective literacy strategies and practices into instruction. A literacy leadership team helps in establishing buy-in from all teachers and staff members. The literacy team might assume a range of responsibilities depending on the needs of the school. These responsibilities vary depending on the needs of the school site, but they can include conducting classroom walkthroughs, leading PLCs, helping in the data analysis process, and communicating best practices for literacy achievement. It is recommended that staff members who serve on a site-level literacy leadership team include instructional leaders who:

- Have knowledge of evidence-based best practices for academic literacy instruction
- Are highly competent in their management and skills in the classroom
- Are willing to share resources and guide other staff members
- Possess strong communication skills
- Are flexible and respect the opinions of others
- Maintain a positive attitude and inspire other to do the same
- Demonstrate the enthusiasm and skills for coaching and supporting others

(Adapted from the Montana Comprehensive Literacy Plan, 2012)

Sustaining Leadership in Middle School Literacy:

A. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Current research also recommends that professional learning communities be established by instructional leaders in order for teachers to participate in a collaborative culture where they can learn, discuss, and reflect on literacy achievement (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). PLCs provide a professional structure for all faculty members to work interdependently work interdependently to achieve the common goals that are linked to literacy achievement for every student. With a focus on student assessment data, data from walkthroughs, and instructional planning based on the NVACS, the work of professional learning communities often becomes more efficient. It is recommended that site administrators structure time for grade level and/or department teachers to engage in data analysis and instructional planning.

Dufour and Marzano (2011) have identified four key questions for guiding the work of PLC meetings:

- What specifically do we expect all students to learn?
- How will we know when each student has improved?
- How will we respond when students are having difficulty learning?
- How will we respond when students demonstrate that they have learned?

B. Alignment to the Nevada Educator Professional Framework (NEPF).

It is recommended that middle school educators develop an understanding of focused, coherent, rigorous standards-based instruction and best practices in literacy instruction in order to implement and guide a sustainable system that raises student achievement levels in literacy. In order to support such a vision and focus, they will need to be able to effectively observe literacy instruction in order to provide meaningful feedback to all content area instructors. A sound vehicle for providing this feedback can be found in the new Nevada Educator Professional Framework (NEPF). Using the NEPF, leaders can consistently review the needs within and across his/her school site in order to determine the ongoing supports necessary for establishing an effective and sustainable system of literacy instruction.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 6-8)

Essential #1. LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Instructional leaders have established measurable literacy goals that explicitly align to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional leaders facilitate the establishment of data teams that meet routinely to analyze student literacy data in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Instructional leaders have established a consistent scheduling system that allows for a sufficient amount of time for faculty members to analyze student literacy data in an efficient and meaningful manner.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders have established a culture that demonstrates and communicates a shared responsibility for all student literacy outcomes both internally and externally (across the entire local community). The establishment of an authentic print-rich literacy environment is evidence of this culture.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Instructional leaders facilitate instructional collaboration among educators within and across grade levels, content areas, and job classifications (such as literacy coaches and librarians/media specialists). These efforts are aimed at improving student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders consistently update their own professional knowledge base on current research-based findings on sustaining effective literacy instructional practices at the middle school level.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Instructional leaders work to establish and support the addition of a qualified literacy coach as a key employee in the middle school setting. This role becomes an integral component in sustaining all literacy efforts.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Leadership & Sustainability:

Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention

What Works Summary

Data-Driven Decision-Making:

Data-driven standards-based instruction and intervention is a process of analyzing multiple sources of student data for the purpose of adjusting instruction with the intent of improving student achievement and/or implementing the necessary intervention strategies that benefits the students (Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J., 2009). In middle school, standards based instruction must be geared toward the specific literacy, learning, and developmental needs of young adolescents across all content areas as they work toward mastery of the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).

This process should be implemented by all stakeholders, such as state and district leaders, school administrators, literacy coaches, and classroom teachers. Data guides all stakeholders "to assess what students are learning and the extent to which students are making progress towards goals" (Hamilton et al., p. 5). In an effort to improve student achievement, analyzing student achievement data helps educators take charge of the following:

- Prioritizing instructional time
- Targeting individual instruction for students who are struggling with particular topics
- More easily identifying individual students' strengths and instructional interventions that can help students continue to progress
- Gauging the instructional effectiveness of classroom lessons
- Refining instructional methods
- Examining school-wide data to consider whether and how to adapt the curriculum based on information about students' strengths and weaknesses

(Hamilton et al., p. 5)

Effective educators use data as part of a continuous cycle aimed at improving student achievement. This quantitative information thus enables them to make informed and intentional decisions on the most appropriate literacy strategies to implement in the classroom. For additional information on this topic, please refer to Appendix E: *Links and Resources*.

Standards-Based Instruction:

Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Critical Thinking

A. Understanding the Standards:

The Nevada Academic Content Standards have been organized into specific grade level benchmarks for the middle school grades. Together the grade-level and anchor standards identify the concepts and skills students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each grade level (NVACS). The Nevada middle school standards also provide clear expectations for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. By defining what all students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do, the standards provide educators with foundational guidelines for instruction (Kamil, 2014).

B. Unpacking the Standards:

Unpacking or deconstructing the standards in order to understand their vertical and horizontal alignment across and between the different grades levels (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) becomes a high priority. Once educators have a sense of how the standards build upon one another, they can then begin the process of creating and/or choosing an appropriate curriculum. This curriculum will guide students to eventually master the standards. The curriculum must remain vertically and horizontally aligned in all content areas for students to increase their achievement levels and continue on the path of becoming college and career ready (Ainsworth, 2010).

C. Planning for Literacy:

This type of planning calls for transformational teachers who are dynamic and innovative. Such teachers embed student relevancy and motivation directly into their planning. They then artfully align these elements of planning to the appropriate NVACS. It is recommended that middle school teachers in all content areas consult the research from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices: A Practice Guide*, (Kamil, M., et al., 2008). IES outlines the "specific strategies available for classroom teachers and specialists [for addressing] the literacy needs of all adolescent learners" (Kamil, M., et al., 2008). These strategies are listed in the table on the next page.

Table 1. ADDRESSING ADOLESCENTS' LITERACY NEEDS (Kamil et al., 2008)	
Recommendation 1	Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
Recommendation 2	Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
Recommendation 3	Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
Recommendation 4	Increase student motivation. and engagement in literacy learning
Recommendation 5	Make available intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by qualified specialists.

The Guiding Principles:

Kamil provides additional recommendations with his Literacy Guiding Principles noted in the table presented below. Effective literacy instruction at the middle school level integrates Kamil's principals with the appropriate grade-level instructional benchmarks that are indicated in the NVACS. The NSLP Educator Planning Guide (*Appendix D*) provides teachers teachers with a planning guide for aligning literacy standards within the NVACS in concert with Kamil's Literacy Guiding Principles.

Table 2. LITERACY GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Kamil, June, 2014, Presentation: Las Vegas, NV.)

Literate Individuals in the 21st Century need to . . .	
DEMONSTRATE INDEPENDENCE - Comprehend and evaluate complex text across disciplines. - Construct effective arguments and convey multifaceted information.	PRIVILEGE EVIDENCE - Cite text evidence for interpretations. - Make reasoning clear. - Evaluate others' use of evidence.
BUILD STRONG CONTENT KNOWLEDGE - Build knowledge in different subjects. - Become proficient in new areas. - Read purposefully. - Refine knowledge and share it.	CARE ABOUT PRECISION - Become mindful of the impact of vocabulary. - Compare meanings of different choices. - Attend to when precision matters.
RESPOND TO DEMANDS OF AUDIENCE, TASK, AND DISCIPLINE - Consider context in reading. - Appreciate nuances. - Know that different disciplines use different evidence.	LOOK FOR AND CRAFT STRUCTURE - Attend to structure when reading. - Understand how to present information in different disciplines. - Understand how an author's craft relates to setting and plot.
COMPREHEND AND CRITIQUE - Become open-minded and skeptical readers. - Understand what authors are saying. - Question an author's assumptions. - Assess the veracity of claims.	USE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY - Employ technology thoughtfully. - Efficiently search online for information. - Integrate online and offline information. - Select best suited media for goals.
UNDERSTAND OTHER CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES - Actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures. - Communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. - Evaluate other points of view critically and constructively.	

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Integrating Reading and Writing:

Each middle school content area must focus on integrating literacy strategies for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills. Reading and writing are essential skills for students to practice on a daily basis. This means that NVACS middle school educators must allocate additional reading time in all content areas through strategic planning and scheduling. Such actions will enable students to perform at higher levels. The middle school reading standards require students to apply a range of reading skills that includes: citing textual evidence, determining main ideas and word meanings, analyzing text, examining point of view, comparing and contrasting texts, among other rigorous reading activities. It is recommended that all middle school content area instructors demonstrate each of these literacy tasks through effective modeling. Once they have effectively scaffolded their students to comprehend complex texts, they will then be ready to extend student learning into strategic writing activities.

B. Writing Instruction:

Authentic writing activities are essential to improving comprehension. The IES Practice Guide, *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices* (Kamil et. al., 2008) suggests the following primary strategies for all content areas: summarizing, asking and answering questions, paraphrasing, word learning, and finding the main idea. Table 3 below summarizes additional recommendations for effective writing instruction from two r evidence-based studies. (Please refer to Appendix F: *References* for more detailed information).

Table 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE ACADEMIC WRITING OF ADOLESCENTS

Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading (Graham & Hebert, 2010)	Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools (Graham & Perin, 2007)
1. Have students write about the texts they read. Students' comprehension of science, social studies, and language arts texts is improved when they write about what they read.	Elements of effective writing instruction: 1. Writing strategies for planning, revising, editing 2. Summarization 3. Collaborative Writing 4. Specific Product Goals 5. Word Processing 6. Sentence Combining 7. Prewriting 8. Inquiry Activities 9. Process Writing Approach 10. Study of Models 11. Writing for Content Learning
2. Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text. Students' reading skills and comprehension are improved by learning the skills and processes that go into creating text.	
3. Increase how much students write. Students' reading comprehension is improved by having them increase how often they produce their own texts	

C. Speaking and Listening:

Speaking and listening standards have now become an integral component of reading and writing instruction. Instruction should include time for students to process or learn how significant speaking and listening strategies become during the learning process. Jim Burke (2013) offers several examples for 6-12 students and teachers to incorporate these standards during the lessons. They are listed below:

- Model for students how to participate in specific conversations that will be used in different classroom activities.
- Provide students with sentence templates that provide them with the language needed to enter the discussion (e.g. I agree with what Maria said about ____, but disagree that ____).
- Review the conventions, rules, roles, or responsibilities that apply to a specialized discussion strategy (Literature Circles, Socratic Dialogue, Book Discussions, etc.)
- Create the culture of respect for other views and ideas within the class that is necessary for students to collaborate with others (norms)
- Assign students different roles prior to a discussion
- Use various strategies that require students to work with different people in various contexts to solve problems, develop ideas, or improve another's work.
- Train students to look and listen for information presented through discussions, formal presentations, and online forms
- Play a recorded presentation twice, the first time to get the gist and the second time to take notes for specific items
- Demonstrate for students how to evaluate information as they are listening
- Help students to determine the tone of a speaker by providing them with specific words that have been taken from actual speeches.

(adapted from Burke, 2013)

D. Classroom Practices:

In addition to literacy best practices, Zemelman et al. (2012) have identified similar indicators that apply to general classroom practices at the middle school level. Table 4 below captures their findings.

Table 4. INDICATORS OF BEST PRACTICES (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde, 2012)

Classroom Setup	- Student-centered arrangement (tables) - Varied learning spaces for whole group, small group, and independent work - Balanced print-rich environment of anchor charts and student work - Varied resources for instructional and student use: textbooks, handouts, magazines, documents, artifacts, manipulatives, video clips, fiction and nonfiction resources, technology, etc.
Classroom Climate	- Order maintained by engagement, community, and consistency - Students help set and enforce norms and routines - Students are responsive, active, purposeful, autonomous - Flexible grouping based on tasks and choice - Predictable but flexible time usage based on activities - Students assume responsibility, take roles in decision making, help run classroom life - Purposeful noise and conversations
Activities and Assignments	- Balance of guided instruction, small and whole group work and activities, independent activities and assignments - Curriculum related topics to high school students' needs and regions - Deep study of selected topics with multistep and multiday activities and projects - Focus on application of knowledge and problem solving - Elaborated discussions; student-teacher talk, student-student talk, plus teacher conferring with student - Students read, write, and talk every day in their subject areas - Complex responses, writing, performances - Differentiated curriculum for all styles of learning - Relevant and engaging activities and assignments that serve a meaningful purpose - Formative, Summative, and Common assignments and assessments in all content areas

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

A. Description of Differentiated Instruction:

The Louisiana State Literacy Plan (2011) includes a thorough description of differentiated instruction. It notes how:

> Differentiated instruction means to meet the needs of these individual students by providing a variety of texts, using collaborative groups, and offering student choices in accessing curriculum. Some differentiated instruction includes demonstrating learning. Differentiated instruction does not change what is taught-the essential skills and content remain steady; teachers are still responsible for helping students reach proficiency standards in the adopted curriculum. Instead, differentiated instruction changes how the curriculum is presented to and accessed by students. Differentiation does not mean that the teacher creates daily lesson plans for each student; it means that alternatives and supports are provided, so that barriers are reduced to meet the challenges of diverse learners" (p. 22).

B. English Language Learners:

Effective instructional practices designed specifically for English Language Learners are summarized below. They have been derived from two different research efforts.

Table 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE ACADEMIC LITERACY OF ADOLESCENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

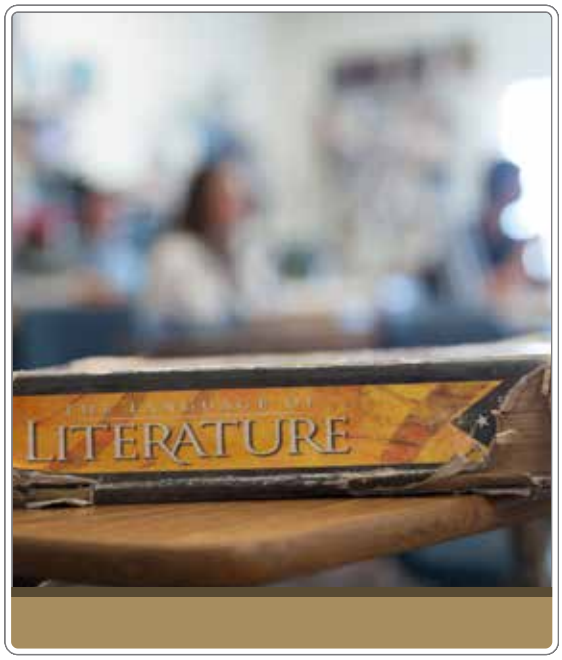
Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners (Short & Fitzsimmins, 2007)	Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (Baker et al.,2014)
1. Integrate all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) into instruction from the start. 2. Teach the components and processes of reading and writing. 3. Teach reading comprehension strategies. 4. Focus on vocabulary development. 5. Build and activate background knowledge. 6. Teach language through content and themes. 7. Use native language strategically. 8. Pair technology with existing interventions. 9. Motivate ELLs through choice.	1. Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities. 2. Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching. 3. Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills. 4. Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in the areas of literacy and English language development.

C. Additional Recommendations for English Language Learners:

The following recommendations are meant as a starting point or reference for planning instruction and academic interventions for ELLs:

1. ELLs need early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics in order to build decoding skills.
2. K-12 classrooms across the nation must increase opportunities for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge.
3. Reading instruction in K-12 classrooms must equip ELLs with strategies and knowledge to comprehend and analyze challenging narrative and expository texts.
4. Instruction and intervention to promote ELLs' reading fluency must focus on vocabulary and increased exposure to print.
5. In all K-12 classrooms across the U.S., ELLs need significant opportunities to engage in structured, academic talk.
6. Independent reading is only beneficial when it is structured and purposeful, and there is a good reader-text match.

(Francis et al., 2006)



Educators who work closely with ELL students should also refer to the WIDA standards provided in Appendix E: *Links and Resources*.

D. Gifted and Talented Students:

The National Association for Gifted Children is a resource Nevada educators should refer to when designing curriculum and instruction that strategically meets the needs of their gifted learners. Educators should use both formative and summative assessments to identify students who demonstrate "outstanding academic skills or aptitudes that the person cannot progress effectively in a regular school program and therefore needs special instruction or special services" (NRS 388.440). These students can be further characterized by their level of "aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains (NACG, 2014). It is further recommended that educators identify gifted learners who are able to perform at advanced levels regardless of their ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Educators should also refer to the NACG Gifted and Talented Standards. These standards state how important it is to estblish an "important direction and focus to designing and developing options for gifted learners at the local level" (National Association for Gifted Children). The six Gifted Education Programming Standards include:

1. Learning and Development
2. Assessment
3. Curriculum and Instruction
4. Learning Environments
5. Programming
6. Professional Development

(Please see *Appendix E: Links and Resources* for more information regarding these standards).

Response to Intervention Framework and Interventions:

Even with the implementation of the NVACS, Nevada educators still understand that not all students learn at the same rate or in the same manner as their peers. Differentiation of instruction is the primary method for insuring that all students' needs are addressed. This process is guided through the Response to Intervention Framework. At the middle school level, RTI is a multi-tiered intervention approach that is used to help those adolescent students who are struggling in different content areas. The table below presents a brief overview of the RTI three-tiered approach that is used across the middle school layer of education:

Table 6. THE RTI FRAMEWORK

Tier 1	All students are provided with: - Meaningful and effective core instruction - Standards-based instruction, differentiating as needed, - Evidence-based best practices that supports literacy development for adolescent students in all content areas - Periodic monitoring to identify struggling learners quickly
Tier 2	Students identified as needing intervention receive: - Targeted, intensive, short-term interventions - Small-group instruction, lab or reading course, before or after school tutoring, homeroom or advisory tutoring, remedial course, or a special elective course - Screening to monitor progress
Tier 3	Students identified as continually struggling with minimal progress receive: - Intensive individualized intervention for a longer period of time - Intensive individualized intervention targeting specific skills the student is struggling with - Focuses on remediation of skills - Frequent monitoring and screening

(Adapted from the RTI Action Network website)

(Please see Appendix E: *Links and Resources* for additional information on the RTI process).

Nevada State Literacy Plan

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 6-8)

Essential #2. DATA-DRIVEN AND STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Data that captures students' literacy outcomes are systematically gathered and analyzed by educators in order to continuously improve instruction and intervention practices.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional content and materials (across all content areas) are aligned to the NVACS; all include explicit instruction in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. NVACS literacy standards are strategically incorporated into educators' daily lesson planning and instructional practice with fidelity.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Middle school literacy instruction supports the development of students who: - demonstrate independence - value evidence - build strong content knowledge - use technology and digital - can respond to the demands of media strategically and audiences, tasks, purposes and capably disciplines - understand other perspectives - comprehend and critique and cultures - care about precision - look for and craft structure (Kamil, 2014)				1 2 3 4 5
5. Tiered literacy instruction (per the RTI model) is clearly defined and implemented with fidelity. All identified tiered interventions (Tier I, II, III) implemented are evidence-based. Structures are in place for the continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of these interventions – particularly those that are used for students with exceptional needs and English language learners.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Specific literacy interventions are provided to students by certified employees and/or highly trained staff.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Data-Driven and Standards-Based Instruction and Intervention:

Essential 3: Literacy Assessment Systems

What Works Summary

Richard Stiggins defines assessment as, "the process of gathering evidence of student learning to inform instructional decisions" (Stiggins, 2002). According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), assessments should measure a student's ability at a deeper level of learning, while also fostering classroom learning (2011). Assessments are the activities and processes used to collect information to improve teaching and learning. This assessment essential focuses on continuing the practice of utilizing formative and summative data to support the growth and achievement of literacy in our middle schools. The focus of improving literacy instruction must be placed on quality data and effective school improvement teams to enhance, improve, and increase effective literacy instruction.

Assessment Framework:

Middle schools need a comprehensive assessment system that provides a framework for teaching and learning. A framework should provide an outline of assessments, such as the purpose, when to administer, to whom they should be administered, how to interpret results and how to use the information (Montana Comprehensive Literacy Plan, 2012). *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* also suggests using a framework that includes "a data system that incorporates data from various sources, a data team in schools to encourage the use and interpretation of data, collaborative discussion sessions among teachers about data use and student achievement, and instruction for students about how to use their own achievement data to set and monitor [their personal] educational goals," (Hamilton, L., et. al., 2009, p. 7).

Comprehensive Assessment System:

At the State Level

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF)

The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) (Nevada Department of Education, 2014) is Nevada's school accountability system that assigns a star rating to each school based on multiple measures of student achievement. The NSPF ratings are based, in part, on the state summative assessments administered to Nevada public school students in grades three through eight and high school. In addition to student proficiency on assessments, schools are measured on student growth and the reduction of achievement gaps for special population groups. Nevada's middle school educators should be aware of this system as they are part of the process of preparing students to enter high schools that are also measured on college and career readiness and graduation. Schools receive a star rating based on points achieved for these and other indicators. A five-star rating represents high performance across all indicators and a one-star rating represents low performance across all indicators. A key component of NSPF is that it aligns the classifications of schools to the delivery of appropriate supports and rewards. Greater degrees of autonomy are provided to five-star schools and under-performing schools receive focused support in the school performance planning process.

At the Site Level

In order to implement a comprehensive assessment system, users need to understand the purpose and use of assessment information. A comprehensive literacy assessment system enables educators to identify students' stages of development, determine students' strengths and instructional needs, monitor students' progress, and assess overall achievement. In a comprehensive assessment system, it is important to understand all types of assessments so the results can be interpreted responsibly. In assessing literacy readiness and skills in *all content areas*, it is important to have multiple measures and data points to monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs. The standards provide the context for what students are expected to learn and be able to do at each grade level. Teaching and learning involves understanding the desired outcomes identified by the standards and making adjustments as needed to achieve those outcomes. To achieve these goals and have an effective curriculum program, it is useful to consider an assessment system that comprises at least three categories of assessment: formative assessment, interim/benchmark, and summative assessments.

Best Practices/Implementation:

It is recommended that a consistent application of systematic data collection and collaboration be implemented in every Nevada middle school. For effective literacy practices to be implemented, teachers and school sites need to actively collect quality data as a foundation *to reflect* and *to inform* changes in instructional practices. This information should lead to an evaluation of how literacy practices are being implemented within a school and classroom. The National Middle School Association states that a "balance of summative and formative classroom assessment practices and information gathering about student learning" will aid educators to identify the learning achievements or gaps among their students (Garrison, C., & Ehringhaus, M., Ph.D., n.d.).

A. Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment refers to assessments "used while students are learning" (Marzano, 2005). Dylan William (2011) states a more precise understanding of "formative assessment as encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (p.37). Formative assessments are usually seen as quizzes or quick activities that will take a snapshot of what a student has learned. The goal of formative assessment is to deepen and improve learning, and for educators to assess student learning in such a way that students can receive specific feedback about their strengths and opportunities for improvement (William, D., 2011).

Formative assessment at the middle school level can easily be incorporated into instruction and lessons across content areas "to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening" (National Middle School Association, n.d.). Students should be a part of formative assessments, so they can assess their own learning. Research shows that if students are involved in their learning, they take ownership of their work and their motivation levels increase (National Middle School Association, n.d.). Formative assessments should also be seen as "practice" and not necessarily part of a grading system (although it is understandable if some formative assessments need to be recorded). Just as a sports team practices every day for the game, students should also practice before a grade is applied. Some examples of formative assessment practices that can be incorporated into include: entrance/exit tickets, asking questions, graphic organizers, think-pair-shares, and the 3-2-1 strategy, thumbs up/down, or red/yellow/green cards.

B. Interim/Benchmark Assessment:

This type of assessment is strategically implemented throughout the year (typically three or four times a year) and used to monitor students' progress toward meeting the standards at a particular grade level (Templeton & Gehsmann, 2014). Nevada uses a criterion referenced test for grades six, seven, and eight as part of their interim/benchmark assessment system. The Nevada Department of Education has provided information about these tests and can be accessed at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Assessments/. At the middle school level, a reading assessment could also be administered to monitor students' reading comprehension levels throughout the year. These types of assessments can help educators identify students in need of additional diagnostic assessment and intervention.

C. Summative Assessment:

Summative assessment refers to an assessment that takes place at the end of a learning experience (Marzano, 2007). The National Middle School Association (NMSA) explains that summative assessments are given periodically to determine what students know and do not know based on the standards. These assessments are usually used as an accountability measure and can be a part of the grading process such as end-of-unit or chapter tests and end-of-term or semester exams. Summative assessments are tools to help determine if students are learning the content standards, and "to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, or student placement in specific programs" (National Middle School Association, n.d.).

Nevada is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and will provide a summative assessment to students in grades 6, 7, and 8 using a computer adaptive test to measure how students are progressing or mastering the Nevada Academic Content Standards. Students in eighth grade will take an additional science test. For additional information about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBABC) (*Appendix E: Links and Resources*)

Additional Recommendations for Differentiating Best Practices:

Literacy Assessment for English Language Learners

In order to make a comprehensive assessment program more equitable and effective for English learners, specific accommodations should be considered. It is recommended that test materials be examined for cultural bias. English learners may need additional time to complete reading and writing tasks and it is sometimes necessary to break longer assessments into smaller chunks over time. If permitted, teachers should provide linguistic modification using pictures, icons, models and gestures to support students' understanding of directions.

As Nevada is a member of the *World-Class Instructional Design Assessme*nt (WIDA) *National Consortium,* the NSLP recommends that all middle school level educators become familiar with the actual WIDA assessment results – particularly because students receive a performance indicator for every layer of literacy – reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is further recommended that classroom teachers become familiar with the six levels of English Language Proficiency matrix that WIDA uses in order to identify English language learners' levels of ability. Lastly, educators are recommended to use teacher resources provided by the WIDA Consortium to measure assess the English language proficiency for K-12 students.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 6-8)

Essential #3. LITERACY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice	
1. Comprehensive assessment system includes both formative and summative assessments.					1 2 3 4 5
2. An assessment framework has been established that includes multiple measures and data points. Data that is gathered includes all categories of student literacy performance (diagnostic, formative, interim, summative, etc.).					1 2 3 4 5
3. A data collection system has been established that is user-friendly and accessible to all site educators. All educators have received training on the effective use of this system.					1 2 3 4 5
4. All educators have received specialized (evidence-based) training on the data-driven decision-making process.					1 2 3 4 5
5. Data teams are established that meet routinely to analyze student performance in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.					1 2 3 4 5
6. Literacy data discussions are structured via an evidence-based collaborative inquiry model; one that includes strategies for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.					1 2 3 4 5
7. Educators are provided continuous professional learning opportunities on newly adopted assessment tools and protocols. Specific actions are taken to establish a commonality of language.					1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL					1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Literacy Assessment Systems:

Essential 4: Professional Learning

What Works Summary

Professional learning as it is referred to here is defined as a "comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving educator effectiveness and raising student achievement" (Learning Forward, 2013). Professional learning that improves instructional practice is built on the following seven principles as described by Learning Forward: Learning Communities, Leadership, Resources, Data, Learning Designs, Implementation, and Outcomes. It is based on understanding the principles and practices of effective professional learning.

Research and the Alignment to Standards:

Research shows that professional learning is most effective when it is relevant, ongoing, frequent, and job-embedded (Reed, 2009). Through continuous high-quality professional learning, the middle school educator will gain the knowledge and skills needed to support Nevada's children in becoming successful high school students, and eventually college and career ready. Some of the specific training available to educators includes in-service sessions, courses, workshops, online and blended learning opportunities, technical assistance, conferences, seminars, webinars, on-site coaching/mentoring, peer observation, reading professional literature. Through these professional learning avenues middle school teachers can acquire the knowledge needed to help students gain literacy skills for understanding and producing academic texts.

Effective professional learning aligns with the Nevada professional teaching standards and the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Literacy instruction is no longer the sole responsibility of the English Language Arts (ELA) teacher but rather a shared responsibility among all instructional staff of the school. Each content area teacher should receive professional learning for how to unwrap or deconstruct the content's standards. By understanding the literacy targets of the standards, educators will be more effective in aligning units and lessons to achieve the literacy goals and skills of the content area.

Alignment to Nevada's Educator Performance Framework (NEPF):

In supporting middle school students' academic literacy needs, professional learning should be differentiated for teachers with varying degrees of expertise. Just as students display an array of literacy strengths and weaknesses in their literacy learning, so do educators demonstrate various strengths and weaknesses in their literacy teaching. The *Nevada Educator Performance Framework Evaluation Model* provides a vehicle for educator performance processes designed to improve teaching and learning. The Performance Framework can help all educators build a common understanding and language regarding what effective instruction looks like. The processes outlined in the framework for formative and summative performance reviews include a teacher's self-assessment, a pre-evaluation conference that includes analysis of data, goal setting and plan development, and observation and feedback focused on continuous improvement of instructional practice. The use of multiple measures of performance e.g. student performance data and teacher performance data e.g. observation, surveys, and other evidenced-based measures can provide professional learning plans that are individualized for each teacher based on data.

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Professional Learning Communities:

The development of a collective capacity of educators to function as members of a professional learning community (PLC) is a best practice for improving student learning (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Such learning communities share collective responsibility for the learning of all students within the school. PLCs that establish shared norms increase the potential of teachers' success. Effective PLCs apply a cycle of continuous improvement to engage in inquiry, action research, data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation (Learning Forward, 2011). Professional learning nurtures ownership and shapes competence by giving educators an active role in determining the focus of professional development, builds skills through focused transfer of learning from training to classroom practice, monitors progress in order to make adjustments, and creates communities of learners to sustain efforts long term (Fullan & St. Germain, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Guskey, 2000; Borko, 2004)

PLC structures also need to be in place for teachers to communicate, collaborate and plan together. Coordination and collaboration among teachers is important at the middle school level so that there is coherence and consistency across disciplines in literacy instruction. Establishing time within the school day, week and yearly calendars sends a message to teachers that administrators recognize the value of job-embedded professional learning and collaboration. When teachers are allowed the time to plan and work together (not only in grade level or department teams) but also in cross-discipline teams, a collaborative support for integrated literacy instruction occurs.

B. Literacy Learning for all Middle School Educators:

Professional learning for literacy in middle schools needs to go beyond the English language Arts teachers. In a middle school setting, all teachers are responsible to address literacy within their discipline. Addressing the literacy needs in all content areas is especially significant at the middle school level. This is because middle school marks the first experience when students physically move from one teacher to another for different subject areas. Consistent literacy strategies in all areas are critical at the middle school level. The NVACS include reading, writing, speaking and listening standards specific to each disciplines (Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, Fine Arts, etc.). By unwrapping or deconstructing the NVACS, middle school content teaches will be able to weave their content and literacy together.

In order to establish a sound support system for middle school learners', literacy development requires both teachers and administrators to be learners themselves. Unfortunately the time necessary for additional quality training becomes problematic when examining their day-to-day responsibilities. Some of these include: understanding the middle school learner and adolescent development, knowing and translating current research to practice, using a variety of instructional methods, and determining the professional learning needs of all content instructors. These individuals also need to engage in effective instructional planning and adjustment based on evidence of student learning, using assessment and assessment data effectively, providing real-time formative assessment practices, identifying and addressing the needs of struggling middle school students through intervention, and supporting learners to manage their own learning. The breadth of their role is incredibly challenging.

C. Literacy Coaches:

In order to support continuous improvement, teachers need embedded and sustained professional development. The likelihood of transferring new learning from professional development into practice increases substantially with coaching (Knight, 2007). Literacy coaches form partnerships with teachers to help them implement the most current research-based effective practices. Coaching cycles provide teachers with one-on-one collaboration and job-embedded professional development to help increase effective instruction and student learning. Four helpful resources for understanding the concept of literacy coaches are: *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches, Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction, Student-Centered Coaching: A Guide for K-8 Coaches and Principals, and Student-Centered coaching at the Secondary Level.*

Nevada State Literacy Plan

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 6-8)

Essential #4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING				
Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	**Level 2** Strategic Planning is in place	**Level 3** Beginning Level of Implementation	**Level 4** Expanded Level of Implementation	**Level 5** Sustained Practice
1. Student literacy data are routinely gathered and analyzed by educators in order to determine the content of professional learning curriculums.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Professional learning opportunities are aligned to the NVACS in literacy. Ongoing training is provided to site administrators and teachers (of all content areas) that includes explicit instruction in Middle School levels of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Middle School literacy training supports the development of students who: - demonstrate independence - value evidence - build strong content knowledge - use technology and digital - can respond to the demands of media strategically and audiences, tasks, purposes and capably disciplines - understand other perspectives - comprehend and critique and cultures - care about precision - look for and craft structure (Kamil, 2014)				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders establish a culture that values and implements collaborative professional learning opportunities (across and between grade levels, content areas, and job classifications – including literacy coaches and librarians/media specialists). These efforts are aimed at improving student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Professional Growth Plans for Educators (teachers and administrators) are aligned to the Nevada Teacher Performance Framework and the NVACS literacy standards.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Structures are in place for measuring the short-term and long-term impact of literacy-based professional learning on educator effectiveness and student performance.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Professional Learning:				

Essential 5: Family and Community Engagement

What Works Summary

National Guidelines:

With high literacy demands of the 21st century, it is imperative that all stakeholders in the lives of adolescents unite and guide them throughout their middle school years. Family and community involvement remains an important factor in academic outcomes for adolescents at the middle school level. For example, family engagement is directly related to a range of benefits for secondary students including higher grades, higher test scores, improved social skills, increased likelihood of high school graduation, and increased aspiration to attend college (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). Strong family and community engagement need to continue to encompass authentic relationships and experiences during the middle school years that center on student academics and student learning outcomes.

Nevada State Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

In 2011 the Nevada State Legislature passed the Assembly Bill (AB) 224. This bill established Nevada's first Advisory Council on Family Engagement and Office of Family Engagement within the Nevada Department of Education. In creating a vision for family engagement across Nevada, this group adopted a set of national research-based PTA standards for Family-School Partnerships (NDE Website). These six standards include:

1. Welcoming All Families into the School Community
2. Communicating Effectively
3. Supporting Student Success
4. Speaking Up for Every Child
5. Sharing Power
6. Collaborating with the Community

It is recommended that literacy family engagement activities be aligned to Nevada's six standards.

Family and Community Engagement Goals:

In order to achieve successful authentic parent and community engagement, a synthesis of family and students educational goals are needed. This includes informing parents of the importance of their involvement, allowing them multiple learning opportunities, creating bridges between home, school, and community, and collaborating among all stakeholders. Research indicates that having parents and students participate in the planning and implementation of family engagement efforts increases the likelihood that schools and communities will develop strong relationships and that families will become meaningfully engaged in student success (Taveras, B., Douwes, C., & Johnston, K., 2010). To truly have an impact on middle school success, family engagement efforts need to focus on student outcomes and become a core part of school and community efforts promoting middle school successes that lead to college and career readiness (Weiss, H., Lopez M. E., Rosenburg, H., Brosi, E., & Lee, D. 2010).

Best Practices & Implementation:

Through effective communication practices parents are able to become active partners in their middle school students' learning. The Harvard Family Research Project offers practical suggestions to foster home-school relationships during the middle school years. Family involvement can be approached in a number of ways to strengthen the connections between the family and the school. (When possible, information should be offered in both English and Spanish or the home language of the families.)

- Assist parents in understanding the purpose of standards, assessment results, and literacy information.
- Establish a homework support program to ensure families know about and are able to access academic assistance for their children.
- Encourage a culturally specific knowledge base related to family involvement and include literacy volunteers into the school setting.
- Host meetings at community sites that offer nonthreatening environments for families to gain information.
- Notify parents routinely about their child's literacy progress throughout the middle school years.
- Provide parenting programs that can help foster supportive parent-adolescent relationships.
- Facilitate parents' ability to monitor their child's progress toward NVACS-aligned literacy outcomes.
- Provide parents with information regarding adult literacy and community outreach programs that will foster their own personal literacy goals.
- Involve parents in the selection of their child's courses and programs of study so students can get on track for high school graduation and college and career opportunities.

For further ideas on family and community involvement partnerships, refer to *The Family Involvement Network of Educators* (FINE) website at http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/fine-family-involvement-network-of-educators.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 6-8)

Essential #5. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Educators establish and maintain parent and family partnerships that respect every element of multiculturalism including ethnicity, language, gender, socio-economic levels, exceptionalities, etc.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Educators create professional learning opportunities for parents and family members aimed at assisting their children with literacy development (including how to effectively navigate through student data). Such opportunities are provided in both English and Spanish.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Individual student progress toward NVACS-aligned literacy outcomes is communicated to parents and families routinely (reporting should occur three times a year at a minimum).				1 2 3 4 5
4. Parents and families of students identified as at-risk in literacy acquisition and/or those receiving interventions are updated frequently on individual student progress (reporting should occur at least six times a year).				1 2 3 4 5
5. Protocols have been established for the communication and referral of adult literacy programs available to parents and family members.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders identify the roles of the community library and after-school youth organizations (such as the Boys and Girls Club) as key partners in expanding family literacy opportunities. Efforts are made to establish and maintain such community partnerships.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Structures are in place for welcoming, training, and monitoring literacy volunteers.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Family and Community Engagement:

Suggestions for an Effective Transition to High School

An evidence-based briefing paper from the Texas Comprehensive Center (2010) provides a list of strategies needed for an effective transition from middle school to high school. Within their work they first identify initial & collective (between both the middle and high school educators) action steps to take in order to design an effective transition program. They then provide an additional list of recommendations. Both are noted below.

Initial Action Steps for a Transition Program:

In order for schools to develop strategies that prepare students for high school, this study suggests that the following three initial actions need to occur.

- **Organize a transition team.**
  The transition process starts during the eighth-grade year and continues throughout the entire ninth-grade year. A multi-level transition team composed of representatives from the middle and high school levels should consider this entire time period while planning supports and interventions.
- **Develop a counseling team.**
  In most high schools, the number of students assigned to a counselor often limits the time anyone counselor can work with an individual student. The purpose of developing a counseling team, referred to as transition counselors, is to increase the amount of individual time each student receives. Transition counselors could include student peers, teachers, and other district and school staff, as well as parents and community volunteers.
- **Create special programs and initiatives to prepare students and their families for the transition to high school.**
  Ongoing, specially designed programs offer greater support for sustained intervention; however, there is also value in providing single events.

Implementing a Transition Plan:

In addition to the three initial action steps listed above, the following eight factors need to be considered when implementing a transition plan.

- Involve parents and families in the transition process.
- Promote collaboration among middle and high school staff to support the transition process.
- Increase awareness of academic programs offered at the high school level.
- Increase comfort and reduce anxiety through orientation activities.
- Provide resources designed to make the transition easier.
- Design activities for the first weeks of ninth grade.
- Continue the use of counseling teams to maintain support throughout the ninth grade year.
- Develop special interventions to support ninth graders who may be struggling academically or socially.

Appendix A: NSLP ACTION ROADMAP

LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

	Leadership and Sustainability	Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention	Literacy Assessment Systems	Professional Learning	Family and Community Engagement
Level 5 Sustained Practice	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually
Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are revisited and revised - Collaboration & shared responsibility plan is revisited & revised - Literacy training continues for instructional leaders - Literacy coach fully on board	- Educators' use of data to inform instruction is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of nationally recognized targets revisited & revised - Methods for measuring fidelity of RTI revisited & revised - Effectiveness of interventions is systematically monitored	- Adopted assessment framework is revisited and revised - Data collection system is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator DBDM Training is implemented - System used for data teams is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator training on assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers' use of data to inform practice is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of explicit literacy instruction is revisited and revised - Educators identify focus literacy goals in NEPF PGP	- Culture validates and honors parent/family diversity - Parental support Literacy training is expanded - Parents become active participants in monitoring student literacy progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Impact of literacy work with community partners revisited and revised
Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are created - Literacy goals are implemented - Culture implements collaboration & shared responsibility for literacy - Literacy training begins for instructional leaders - Literacy coach phased in	- Educators use data to inform instruction - System created for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Instruction targets nationally recognized literacy objectives - Fidelity of RTI is measured - Effectiveness of interventions is monitored	- An effective assessment framework is implemented - An effective data-collection system is implemented - Educators receive training on the DBDM process - Data teams are established - Educator training on new assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers use data to inform practice - System created for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Professional learning offered that includes explicit literacy - Educators use NEPF Growth Plan with literacy objectives	- Culture demonstrates respect for diversity - Parental support Literacy training is implemented - Parents/families are routinely contacted by educators to discuss student progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Implementation of literacy work with community
Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	- Planning for goals occurs - Planning for collaboration & shared responsibility of literacy occurs - Planning for developing leaders' knowledge base occurs - Research begins on how to add a site-based literacy coach	- Planning occurs for educator data collection & analysis - Planning occurs for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Planning begins for insuring use of nationally recognized literacy objectives - Planning occurs for insuring fidelity of RTI model - Planning occurs for measuring effectiveness of interventions	- An effective assessment framework is designed - An effective data-collection system is designed - Educator training is scheduled on the DBDM process - Planning begins for establishing data teams - Educator training is scheduled on new assessment tools and protocols	- Planning for professional learning is data-based - Planning occurs for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Explicit literacy instruction added to planning process - Planning occurs for insuring educator collaboration - NEPF Growth Plans template adds NVACS literacy objectives	- Systematic plans created for developing respect of parent & family diversity - Systematic plans created for parent/family literacy training - System designed for the communication of student progress to parent/families - Systems designed for referring adults to literacy courses - Systematic plan created for expanding literacy partners
Level 1 No planning or implementation is in place	- No data-driven measurable goals aligned to NVACS - Culture does not support collaboration or shared responsibility of literacy - Instructional leaders have no literacy knowledge base - No support of literacy coach position	- Educators not gathering or analyzing student literacy data to inform instruction - Instruction & materials not aligned to NVACS - Nationally recognized literacy objectives not targeted - RTI model not being implemented with fidelity - Interventions not assessed	- An ineffective assessment framework is in place - An ineffective data-collection system is in place - Educators receive no training - on DBDM process - No data teams have been established - Educators receive no training on new assessments	- Professional learning is designed w/o data analysis - Professional learning is notaligned to NVACS - Professional learning does not include explicit literacy instruction - Culture does not support educator collaboration in lit. - Literacy absent from PGPs	- Lack of respect for diversity of parents/families - Lack of literacy training available for parent / families - Student literacy progress not communicated to parents - No referral protocols for adult literacy education - Ineffective community partners in literacy

Appendix B: Middle School Action Plan Framework

NSLP Strategy Form

Action Plan Framework

ESSENTIAL: _____ Current Level of Implementation (per the NSLP Action Roadmap): _____

Members of Planning Team:

District: _____ School: _____ Grade Band: _____ Date: _____

Literacy Activity (What will be done?)	Specific Action Steps (How will it be done?)	Individual(s) Responsible (Who will be doing it?)	Projected Timeline (When will it occur?)		Resources Needed	Notes
			Start Date	End Date		

Appendix C: Middle School Professional Growth Plan Template

Adapted from Louisiana State Comprehensive Literacy Plan's Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Template, with permission

Name ..... **Position** .....

This sample template is provided to assist you as a Nevada Elementary School educator, as you work to design your own individualized Professional Growth Plans as outlined in the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). As an NSLP instrument, this template embeds professional goals and objectives that are deliberately aligned to literacy improvement. The educator is encouraged to design his/her professional growth plan with a strategic focus on literacy.

Part 1: Possible Goals:

When thinking about possible goals for your PGP, consider the following questions:

- How does my literacy knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances measure up against the NEPF?
- Where do I need to grow professionally in order to optimize my effectiveness in impacting student literacy performance (i.e. outcomes and achievement levels).
- What areas for professional growth will have the greatest potential to improve the quality of literacy teaching and learning in my program?

Brainstorm of my Possible Goals (3-5):

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: NSLP/District/School/Program Connections:

When aligning your professional goals with the known needs of the NSLP, your district, school, or program, consider the following questions:

- Which of my professional goals are most directly related to implementing elements of Nevada's Elementary Literacy Plan aimed at improving student outcomes?
- For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?
- How will these goals be complementary to my colleagues PGPs and/or other component of my Elementary program?

My goals relate to NSLP/district/school/program improvement needs in the following ways:

_____

_____

_____

_____

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Part 3: Identified Goals (inclusive of literacy) and their intended student outcomes (3-4):

Professional Educator Goals	Student Outcomes

Part 4: Outline of My Plan:

When outlining your specific PGP, consider the following questions:

- What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
- What are the initial steps in my plan?
- What activities will help me to achieve my goals and objectives?
- How will I make the time to accomplish the elements of my plan?
- What NSLP/district/school/program resources will I need?
- What evidence will I collect to demonstrate the achievement of my professional learning goals and how will I organize my evidence?

A. I will engage in the following activities (inclusive of literacy strategies):

_____

_____

_____

B. I will document my progress in achieving my professional learning goal(s) with the following artifacts (e.g. anecdotal records, observation logs, lesson plans, videotapes) and outcome data (i.e. assessment data gathered as evidence of student growth and development and student products).

_____

_____

_____

C. Resources I will need for full implementation of my PGP:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: NSLP Educator Planning Guide

NSLP EDUCATOR PLANNING GUIDE

for Authentic Literacy-Based Instruction

Teacher Name: _____ Age/Grade Band(s): _____

From (Date): _____ through (Date): _____

Instruction driven by the following data point(s): _____

Nevada State Literacy Plan ~ Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention: Implementation Targets from NSLP Self-Assessment Tool (list numbers)**:**		Birth-Age 3-Guidelines, Pre-K Standards, NVACS (K-12) CCR (College & Career Readiness) Standards (Adult)
Targeted Content Objectives	_____Standards	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Targeted Literacy Objectives	_____Standards	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Targeted Guiding Principles		
1.		
2.		
3.		

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

THE "HOW": Using Literacy Strategies as Effective Instructional Methodologies ~

Literacy Modalities / Stages of Literacy Instruction	(Receptive Literacy) AUTHENTIC READING STRATEGIES	(Expressive Literacy) AUTHENTIC WRITING STRATEGIES
I. Pre-Instruction		
II. During Instruction		
III. Post-Instruction		
Integration of Technology:		
Classroom Interventions:		
Assessment Protocol(s):		
Exit Data Point(s): (if available)		

THE "WHAT" = Outcomes:

- Acquisition of Content Knowledge
- Enhancement of Sound Literacy Skills
- Enhancement of Guided Principal Behaviors

Appendix E: Links and Resources

Links to Nevada Department of Education Resources:

Governor Sandoval's State of the State Address (2015):
http://gov.nv.gov/About/Photos/Speeches/

Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) (2010):
http://nevadaready.gov/Standards/NV_Academic_Content_Standards/

Nevada Department of Education Assessments:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Assessments/

Nevada's School Performance Framework (NSPF). (n.d.). Retrieved from:
http://nspf.doe.nv.gov/

Links to Supplementary Resources:

Alliance for Excellence Education:
http://all4ed.org/

Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE):
http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/fine-family-involvement-network-of-educators

Institute of Education Sciences (What Works Clearinghouse):
http://ies.ed.gov/

International Literacy Association:
http://www.reading.org/

Learning Forward:
http://learningforward.org/

The National Association for Gifted Children
http://www.nagc.org/

The National Middle School Association:
www.nmsa.org

Response to Intervention Network:
http://www.rtinetwork.org/

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium:
http://www.smarterbalanced.org/

Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix:
http://familieslearning.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Verizon-Life-Span-Literacy-Matrix.pdf

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Early Language Development Standards:
https://www.wida.us/standards/EarlyYears.aspx

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NEVADA'S HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY PLAN

High School: Mojave

Being one of Nevada's deserts with the most personality, the 200-million-year-old Mojave Desert strongly symbolizes high school culture within Nevada's school system. Home to many unique species and a well-rounded landscape, the Mojave Desert is like our high schools.

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NEVADA'S HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY PLAN

THE FIVE NEVADA LITERACY ESSENTIALS

THE ESSENTIALS:

1. A group process aimed at strategically mobilizing others for the purpose of improving students' literacy growth. Sustainable reforms are persistent over time & circumstances.
2. All planning for literacy instruction occurs with a systematic analysis of student data. All instruction is explicitly aligned to state literacy standards. Classroom educators and interventionists use research-based strategies for delivering literacy objectives across all content areas.
3. The use of valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose students' literacy needs.
4. The development of learning opportunities, resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for all children, families, and educators.
5. A coordinated and collaborative system in which schools and other community organizations connect with families in meaningful ways to support the ongoing improvement of student, family, and community literacy.

Introduction

Adolescent Literacy Across America – A Call for Action:

"Now, more than ever, we need to become active proponents of educational growth—growth that recognizes the importance of high levels of literacy in order for adolescents to achieve their potentials, reach their personal goals, and build a better society"(International Reading Association, 2012, p. 13). Many secondary literacy experts from across the nation have begun to sound a "call for action" with regards to the literacy needs of American adolescents. Several have even come to describe the state of adolescent literacy in the U.S. as a national "crisis" (Salinger, 2010, p. 2). Certainly an alarming picture emerges when examining the role of literacy achievement for American adolescents – particularly at the high school level. The statistics tell the story. In *Reading Next*, it is noted by Biancarosa & Snow (2006, pp. 7-8) that:

> Recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading results indicate that efforts to improve K–3 literacy are paying off at the 4th-grade level, but these improvements do not necessarily translate into better achievement among adolescents… Comparing the most recent NAEP results for all three grade levels (i.e., 4, 8, and 12) to those from 1992, the percentage of students scoring proficient has significantly improved among 4th graders, but not among 8th and 12th graders.

Salinger (2010) expands upon these disconcerting NAEP statistics by describing the lifelong impact that this present crisis holds for American adolescents. He describes how, "At the most fundamental level, the gist of the crisis is that the literacy skills of many students in grades 4 to 12 are so alarmingly low that the students have difficulty meeting the academic challenges of high school and are ill prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce" (p. 1). The dismal state of secondary level of literacy achievement across America has unfortunately become a fairly silent academic epidemic.

In addition to such bleak statistical vignettes, other researchers have begun to explore the national policy and expenditure front as well. They describe a definite historical pattern where a greater emphasis has been placed on the Pre-Kindergarten through elementary education levels of literacy instruction in America. Indeed, former IRA President Carol Minnick Santa (1999) boldly stated that, "Adolescents are being short-changed" (p. 1).

The fortunate news is that Santa's words were not spoken in vain. During the past decade much of the modern literacy limelight has been squarely directed onto the past misplaced priority of secondary literacy. This phenomenon has been even more accentuated by the adoption of the Common Core State Standards across many American states. This high school section of the Nevada State Literacy Plan is designed to provide Nevada's secondary educators with current evidence-based recommendations across five key essentials of literacy acquisition: leadership and sustainability, data-driven standards-based instruction and intervention, literacy assessment systems, professional learning, and family and community engagement. Before exploring these essentials, it is critical to first identify what, in actuality, the American adolescent learner deserves as part of his/her educational experience.

The Literacy Rights of the Adolescent Learner:

In 2012, the International Literacy Association established a "bill of rights" for the adolescent learner. Because the high school age band emerges as a critical developmental bridge from childhood to adulthood, the NSLP recognizes the importance of recognizing their unique role in the literacy learning process. The IRA prefaces these rights with the phrase, "What do adolescents deserve?"

1. Adolescents deserve content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline.
2. Adolescents deserve a culture of literacy in their schools with a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement for all.
3. Adolescents deserve access to and instruction with multimodal, multiple texts.
4. Adolescents deserve differentiated literacy instruction specific to their individual needs.
5. Adolescents deserve opportunities to participate in oral communication when they engage in literacy activities.
6. Adolescents deserve opportunities to use literacy in the pursuit of civic engagement.
7. Adolescents deserve assessments that highlight their strengths and challenges.
8. Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of print and non-print materials.

A Shift in Practice:

The 21st Century high school classroom presents itself with a whole new array of exciting possibilities. With the current adoption of the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS), high school educators (across every content area) have begun to shift their instructional practices. Many are realizing that the 21st Century learner no longer responds to the timeworn "sage on stage" method of classroom teaching. In addition, the NVACS demand that secondary educators now integrate specific literacy objectives right into their content objectives. These standards also demand that secondary educators transform their curriculum and pedagogy by shifting from passive traditional learning environments into active modern-day learning environments (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2002). Gone are the "draconian teaching styles" (Rosebrough & Leverett, 2011, p. 71) of the past century. Gone are such practices once immersed with rote memory, teacher-driven lectures, and low-level cognitive activities.Today's high school classrooms require a whole new set of foundational practices that include: instructional relevancy, student-engaged active learning, balanced reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills, and high quality coursework. It becomes readily apparent that a critical paradigm shift is occurring within this arena. It is actively shifting from traditional teacher-directed instruction to student-engaged learning.

Today's American high school classroom must also embed the global mandate that hovers over this new generation of students. In this effort, they must begin to offer "life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, information, media, and technology skills, and core subjects [based on] 21st Century themes such as global awareness, civic literacy, and financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy" (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2002, p. 15).

Essential 1: Leadership and Sustainability

What Works Summary

Regie Routman (2014) masterfully captures the relationship between literacy and leadership in today's school settings when she writes, "literacy teaching and effectiveness in leading are inseparable and equally significant when we are talking about whole-school achievement" (p. 181). Routman's premise is expanded even further by Lewis-Spector and Jay (2011) in their creation of eighteen specific recommendations for establishing an effective system of literacy leadership within American school settings. Interestingly enough, the recommendations that these two experts make in their white paper titled *Leadership for Literacy in the 21st Century* go far beyond the schoolhouse door. Their vision for establishing true leadership for literacy expands to include the students, the parents of the students, their family members, and all key community stakeholders. For example, one recommendation offered by these experts states that, "A broad perspective of literacy leadership needs to be realized beyond the school, including community stakeholders and university literacy leaders" (p.29). As Nevada's high school educators work to establish effective site-level cultures of literacy, it is strongly recommended that they make reference to both of the above-stated resources.

Collaborations in Leadership:

The traditional organizational structure of an American high school setting often presents incredible barriers to an effective actualization of school improvement efforts. With a top-down structure that breaks academia down into compartmentalized content areas, the notion of establishing a school-wide literacy culture appears daunting to many. The key premise from which to take action, however, has been clearly stated by Irvin et al. (2010), "Our premise is simple – and is borne out by numerous examples: a systemic literacy improvement effort can be a powerful lever for school improvement" (p. 3). Current research indicates that multiple layers of collaboration need to develop within American high schools in order to accomplish whole-school literacy achievement. Such layers of collaboration established between site-level staff and faculty would act to bridge educators across different content areas, grade levels, professional roles, and even out to other community organizations. These actions would mark just the beginning for sustaining literacy leadership across the entire school site. Irvin et al. (2010) recommend the following actions for establishing a sound literacy culture at the secondary level:

- The development and communication of a compelling vision
- Ongoing collaboration between administrators and teachers
- Unflinching, data-based assessment
- The setting of clear measurable goals that address important issues related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school culture
- The development of a quality literacy action plan
- Active implementation of this plan
- Monitoring of progress toward stated goals

Sustaining Leadership in High School Literacy

Effective leadership within a high school setting has become the key factor for establishing sustainable systems for literacy achievement. The active presence of strong leadership within a high school setting has been proven to be a very powerful force for improving secondary students' literacy achievements. Effective leadership is also considered to be a shared responsibility. This responsibility is held by (but not limited to) the following individuals: central office administrators, principals, assistant principals, deans, counselors, literacy coaches, department chairs, teachers, school librarians, parents and family members.

Furthermore, when effective interpersonal skills are demonstrated by these leaders, efforts toward school improvement advance. This is particularly evident when these adults interact positively with all of the students on a regular basis. Oftentimes these are the leaders who: inspire others, become positive role models, establish effective communication, and strive to ensure the beliefs, expectations, and goals of a school's culture (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

A. The Role of the Site Administrator:

Despite the expansion of the role of "instructional leader" to include many roles across a high school site, the role of the site administrator continues to be a major driving force for literacy advancement. The National Association for Secondary School Principals (2005) presents several powerful metaphors for understanding the nature of this role:

> The literacy leader is like a football coach or a conductor. Many elements must come together within the school to support literacy for every student. Individually, these elements may not seem difficult to achieve, but in isolation there is no success. Like a coach or conductor, the principal must skillfully pull the elements together in order to accomplish the ultimate goal - increased student achievement through improved literacy opportunities.

It is also recommended that systems and policies be in place in order for leadership to be able to effectively manage the talent of every educator at his/her school site (Ikemoto et al., 2014).

B. How to Select a Literacy Leadership Team:

The establishment of a literacy leadership team is key to establishing site-level buy-in for any school-wide literacy effort. Some of the responsibilities that are often required by members of this team include: the conducting of classroom walk-throughs, the leading of PLC meetings, participation in the data-based decision-making process, a consistent monitoring of the school-wide plan, and taking on a leading role for expanding literacy communications. The Montana State Literacy Plan (2012) recommends that the selection of individuals for a literacy leadership team be based on the following professional criteria. Ideal members of a site level literacy team:

- Have knowledge of evidence-based best practices for academic literacy instruction
- Are highly competent in their management and skills in the classroom
- Are willing to share resources and guide other staff members
- Possess strong communication skills
- Are flexible and respect the opinions of others
- Maintain a positive attitude and inspire other to do the same
- Demonstrate the enthusiasm and skills for coaching and supporting others

C. The Role of the High School Literacy Coach:

While fairly new to the secondary domain, the role of the literacy coach at the high school level is gradually gaining momentum across the country. But it has been a very challenging journey as Scott Joftus reported in 2002 (p. 9):

Research shows...that students who receive intensive, focused literacy instruction and tutoring will graduate from high school and attend college in significantly greater numbers than those not receiving such attention. Despite these findings, few middle or high schools have a comprehensive approach to teaching literacy across the curriculum....Students require teachers who are knowledgeable in the subject they teach and can convey the subject matter effectively.

The credibility of this role has increased dramatically over the last decade. Additional research has emerged that has captured the unique characteristics of the high school literacy coach. With the organizational complexity of the high school structure, the IRA points out that in order for an individual to become a highly effective literacy coach at this level, he/she must do so over the course of several years. They note how "Expanding this role to the middle and high school grades adds another dimension, as secondary coaches must assume the additional responsibility of working with colleagues across content areas" (p. 5). This international literacy organization has defined a set of overarching standards for an effective secondary literacy coach. They include:

I. Leadership Standards:

STANDARD 1: SKILLFUL COLLABORATORS

Content area literacy coaches are skilled collaborators who function effectively in middle school and/or high school settings.

STANDARD 2: SKILLFUL JOB-EMBEDDED COACHES

Content area literacy coaches are skilled instructional coaches for secondary teachers in the core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

STANDARD 3: SKILLFUL EVALUATORS OF LITERACY NEEDS

Content area literacy coaches are skilled evaluators of literacy needs within various subject areas and are able to collaborate with secondary school leadership teams and teachers to interpret and use assessment data to inform instruction.

II. Content Area Standard:

STANDARD 4: SKILLFUL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGISTS

Content area literacy coaches are accomplished middle and high school teachers who are skilled in developing and implementing instructional strategies to improve academic literacy in the specific content area.

D. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):

Professional learning communities provide another vehicle for high school educators in which to learn, discuss, and reflect on their students' literacy achievement (DuFour et al., 2006). PLCs help all staff members work interdependently to achieve common goals. PLCs provide an intimate venue for high school educators to collaborate together on every element of student achievement. In today's world many PLCS have ardently taken on the task of functioning as a data-based decision-making team. This means that much of their work now revolves around student assessment data, professional recommendations gleaned from walkthroughs, instructional planning, and intervention monitoring (Dufour, & Marzano, 2011).

Nevada State Literacy Plan

HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 9-12)

Essential #1. LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Instructional leaders have established measurable literacy goals that explicitly align to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional leaders facilitate the establishment of data teams that meet routinely to analyze student literacy data in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Instructional leaders have established a consistent scheduling system that allows for a sufficient amount of time for staff to analyze student literacy data in an efficient and meaningful manner.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders have established a culture that demonstrates and communicates a shared responsibility for all student literacy outcomes both internally and externally (across the entire local community). The establishment of an authentic print-rich literacy environment is evidence of this culture.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Instructional leaders facilitate instructional collaboration among educators (within and across grade levels, content areas, and job classifications - such as literacy coaches and librarians/media specialists). These efforts are aimed at improving student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders consistently update their own professional knowledge base on all aspects of effective literacy instruction.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Instructional leaders work to establish and support the addition of a qualified literacy coach as a key employee in the high school setting. This role becomes an integral component in sustaining all literacy efforts.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Leadership & Sustainability:

Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention

What Works Summary

Data-driven standards-based instruction and intervention is a process of analyzing multiple sources of student data for the purpose of adjusting instruction with the intent of improving student achievement and/or implementing the necessary intervention strategies for students. (Hamilton et al., 2009). At the high school level standards-based instruction must be geared toward the specific literacy, learning, and developmental needs of young adolescents across all content areas. Indeed this integration of literacy and content is also clearly identified within the NVACS.

Data-driven Decision-making:

Research recommends that the data-based decision-making process be utilized by all educational stakeholders including state and district leaders, school administrators, literacy coaches, and classroom teachers. Hamilton et al. (2009) describe how data guides all stakeholders "to assess what students are learning and the extent to which students are making progress towards goals" (p.5). Through the process of gathering and analyzing relevant student data, the work of secondary educators can be benefited in multiple ways. The following listing of some of these benefits is noted below (Hamilton, et al., 2009):

- Prioritizing instructional time
- Targeting individual instruction for students who are struggling with particular topics
- More easily identifying individual students' strengths and instructional interventions that can help students continue to progress
- Gaging the instructional effectiveness of classroom lessons
- Refining instructional methods
- Examining school-wide data to consider whether and how to adapt the curriculum based on information about students' strengths and weaknesses

Standards-Based Instruction:

A. The Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS):

Nevada's high school NVACS includes specific literacy benchmarks in English Language Arts and History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Additional literacy standards are provided for the remaining content areas such as Mathematics, Health, Art, Foreign Language, etc. The NVACS also include ten overarching college and career readiness (CCR) Literacy Anchor Standards that apply to all of the grade levels. The CCR Anchor Standards include specific standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. The standards are meant to complement a "content-rich curriculum . . . articulate the fundamentals . . . and provide clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students" (NVACS, p. 6).

B. The Literacy Guiding Principles:

Kamil's (2014) Literacy Guiding Principles are provided in the table below. It is recommended that all high school educators work to incorporate these principles into his/her planning, curriculum, and instruction. The NSLP Educator Planning Guide that is provided in Appendix D offers Nevada teachers a very teacher-friendly planning template that integrates literacy objectives from both the NVACS and the Guiding Principles right into an instructor's content objectives.

Table 1. LITERACY GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Kamil, June, 2014, Presentation: Las Vegas, NV.)

Literate Individuals in the 21st Century need to . . .	
DEMONSTRATE INDEPENDENCE - Comprehend and evaluate complex text across disciplines. - Construct effective arguments and convey multifaceted information.	PRIVILEGE EVIDENCE - Cite text evidence for interpretations. - Make reasoning clear. - Evaluate others' use of evidence.
BUILD STRONG CONTENT KNOWLEDGE - Build knowledge in different subjects. - Become proficient in new areas. - Read purposefully. - Refine knowledge and share it.	CARE ABOUT PRECISION - Become mindful of the impact of vocabulary. - Compare meanings of different choices. - Attend to when precision matters.
RESPOND TO DEMANDS OF AUDIENCE, TASK, AND DISCIPLINE - Consider context in reading. - Appreciate nuances. - Know that different disciplines use different evidence.	LOOK FOR AND CRAFT STRUCTURE - Attend to structure when reading. - Understand how to present information in different disciplines. - Understand how an author's craft relates to setting and plot.
COMPREHEND AND CRITIQUE - Become open-minded and skeptical readers. - Understand what authors are saying. - Question an author's assumptions. - Assess the veracity of claims.	USE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY - Employ technology thoughtfully. - Efficiently search online for information. - Integrate online and offline information. - Select best suited media for goals.
UNDERSTAND OTHER CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES - Actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures. - Communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. - Evaluate other points of view critically and constructively.	

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Reading:

In order to implement the most effective instructional practices, high school educators (from all content areas) should consult the most current research from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices: A Practice Guide*, (Kamil et al., 2008). IES outlines the "specific strategies available for classroom teachers and specialists [for addressing] the literacy needs of all adolescent learners". This work specifically addresses the issues that arise when high school students are faced with an increased amount of required reading for multiple subject areas. These critical strategies are provided in the table below.

Table 2. ADDRESSING ADOLESCENTS' LITERACY NEEDS (Kamil, et al., 2008)

Recommendation 1	Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
Recommendation 2	Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
Recommendation 3	Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
Recommendation 4	Increase student motivation. and engagement in literacy learning
Recommendation 5	Make available intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by qualified specialists.

B. Writing:

Authentic writing activities are essential to improving comprehension for the high school student. The IES Practice Guide, *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices* (Kamil, et. al., 2008) suggests the following writing strategies for all content area instructors: summarizing, asking and answering questions, paraphrasing, word learning, and finding the main idea. As a means for supplementing Kamil's writing recommendations, Table 3 provides a listing of additional recommendations that were derived from two separate research efforts (as noted below).

Table 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE ACADEMIC WRITING OF ADOLESCENTS

Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading (Graham, S., and Hebert, M. A. (2010). p. 5)	Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools (Graham & Perin, 2007)
1. Have students write about the texts they read. Students' comprehension of science, social studies, and language arts texts is improved when they write about what they read.	Elements of effective writing instruction: 1. Writing strategies for planning, revising, editing 2. Summarization 3. Collaborative Writing 4. Specific Product Goals 5. Word Processing 6. Sentence Combining 7. Prewriting 8. Inquiry Activities 9. Process Writing Approach 10. Study of Models 11. Writing for Content Learning
2. Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text. Students' reading skills and comprehension are improved by learning the skills and processes that go into creating text.	
3. Increase how much students write. Students' reading comprehension is improved by having them increase how often they produce their own texts	

C. Speaking and Listening:

Speaking and listening standards have now become an integrated part of reading and writing at the secondary level. Instruction should include time for students to process or learn how significant speaking and listening strategies become during the learning process. Jim Burke (2013) offers several examples for 6-12 teachers to incorporate their content area lessons. Some are listed below.

- Model for students how to participate in the specific conversations that will be utilized in the classroom.
- Provide students with sentence templates that provide them with the language needed to enter the discussion (e.g. I agree with what Maria said about _____, but disagree that ____).
- Review the conventions, rules, roles, or responsibilities that apply to a specialized discussion strategy (Literature Circles, Socratic Dialogue, Book Discussions, etc.).
- Create a culture of respect for other views and ideas within the class that is necessary for students to collaborate with others (norms).
- Assign students different roles prior to a discussion.
- Use various strategies that require students to work with different people in various contexts to solve problems, develop ideas, or improve another's work.
- Train students to look and listen for information presented through discussions, formal presentations, and online forums.
- Play a recorded presentation twice, the first time to get the gist and the second time to take notes for specific items.
- Demonstrate for students how to evaluate information as they are listening.
- Help students determine the tone of a speaker by providing them with specific words taken from exemplary speeches.

D. General Classroom Practice:

In addition to specific literacy best practices, Zemelman et al. (2012) have identified several research-based recommendations for general classroom practices for the secondary educator. An effective use of best practices in establishing an effective classroom environment is a critical factor to the success of all student learning. Table 4 below captures these findings:

Table 4. INDICATORS OF BEST PRACTICES (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde, 2012)

Classroom Setup	- Student-centered arrangement (tables) - Varied learning spaces for whole group, small group, and independent work - Balanced print-rich environment of anchor charts and student work - Varied resources for instructional and student use: textbooks, handouts, magazines, documents, artifacts, manipulatives, video clips, fiction and nonfiction resources, technology, etc.
Classroom Climate	- Order maintained by engagement, community, and consistency - Students help set and enforce norms and routines - Students are responsive, active, purposeful, autonomous - Flexible grouping based on tasks and choice - Predictable but flexible time usage based on activities - Students assume responsibility, take roles in decision making, help run classroom life - Purposeful noise and conversations
Activities and Assignments	- Balance of guided instruction, small and whole group work and activities, independent activities and assignments - Curriculum related topics to high school students' needs and regions - Deep study of selected topics with multistep and multiday activities and projects - Focus on application of knowledge and problem solving - Elaborated discussions; student-teacher talk, student-student talk, plus teacher conferring with student - Students read, write, and talk every day in their subject areas - Complex responses, writing, performances - Differentiated curriculum for all styles of learning - Relevant and engaging activities and assignments that serve a meaningful purpose - Formative, Summative, and Common assignments and assessments in all content areas

Literacy and Technology:

Students today are growing up in an interactive world where information is available at their fingertips. This type of interactive learning must accompany American youth as they enter into the schoolhouse doors. Since today's students are actively engaged in technology almost every day of their lives through cell phones, social media, video-games, blogging, websites, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., the educational community must quickly follow suit. It is essential that all high school graduates acquire at least basic technology skills during their high school experience. When high school educators begin to extend their instructional practices by integrating interactive strategies and activities that explicitly connect their students with the technological relevancy of their worlds, students' levels of motivation and interest would surely increase. With the demands of modern-day technology, high school educators must begin to integrate technology and multi-media digital forms of communication into their instruction.

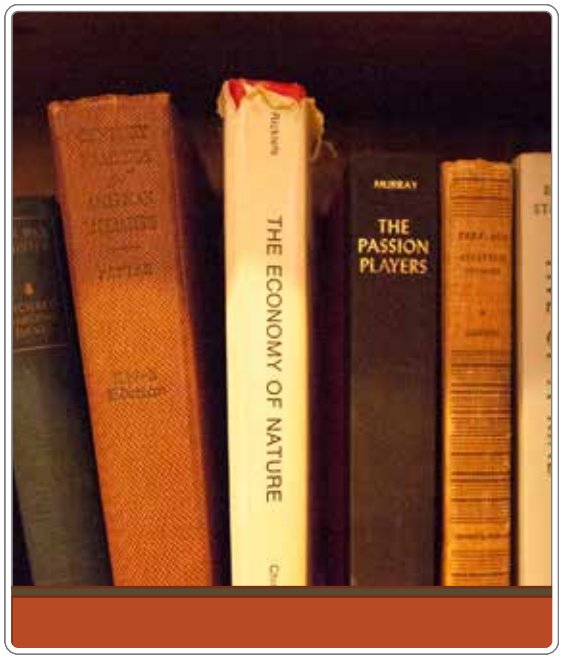
The *Nevada Ready 21 Plan* (Nevada Department of Education) calls for placing a digital device into the hands of every middle school student. Certainly this objective will ultimately extend into the realm of Nevada's high school students. Nevada educators must begin to take actions in order to prepare their infrastructure, their knowledge base, and their practice in order to best prepare these youngsters for their modern world. Obviously an effective integration of technology integration into the classroom becomes possible only through precise planning and effort. Once accomplished, however, Nevada high school classroom will quickly shift from being heavily teacher-centered settings to being much more student-centered.

Recommendations for Differentiating Instruction:

A. What is "Differentiated Instruction?

The Louisiana State Literacy Plan (2011) includes a thorough definition of differentiated instruction. The practice of differentiation is critical for meeting the literacy needs of all students. The Louisiana definition is noted below:

> Differentiated instruction means to meet the needs of these individual students by providing a variety of texts, using collaborative groups, and offering student choices in accessing curriculum. Some differentiated instruction includes demonstrating learning. Differentiated instruction does not change what is taught-the essential skills and content remain steady; teachers are still responsible for helping students reach proficiency standards in the adopted curriculum. Instead, differentiated instruction changes how the curriculum is presented to and accessed by students. Differentiation does not mean that the teacher creates daily lesson plans for each student; it means that alternatives and supports are provided, so that barriers are reduced to meet the challenges of diverse learners" (p.22).



B. Meeting the Needs of the English Language Learner:

With the ever-changing demographics of the American landscape, the realm of literacy education acknowledges the need for many secondary educators to become solidly equipped to meet the academic needs of their English language learners. Effective strategies gleaned from several research efforts are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE ACADEMIC LITERACY OF ADOLESCENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners (Short, D. J. & Fitzsimmins, S., 2007)	Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School (Baker, S., et. al, 2014)
1. Integrate all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) into instruction from the start. 2. Teach the components and processes of reading and writing. 3. Teach reading comprehension strategies. 4. Focus on vocabulary development. 5. Build and activate background knowledge. 6. Teach language through content and themes. 7. Use native language strategically. 8. Pair technology with existing interventions. 9. Motivate ELLs through choice.	1. Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities. 2. Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching. 3. Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills. 4. Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in the areas of literacy and English language development.

C. Additional Recommendations for Meeting the Needs of the English Language Learner:

The following recommendations are meant as a starting point or reference for planning literacy instruction and interventions for the English language learner (Francis et al., 2006).

- ELLs need early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics in order to build decoding skills.
- K-12 classrooms across the nation must increase opportunities for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge.
- Reading instruction in K-12 classrooms must equip ELLs with strategies and knowledge to comprehend and analyze challenging narrative and expository texts.
- Instruction and intervention to promote ELLs' reading fluency must focus on vocabulary and increased exposure to print.
- In all K-12 classrooms across the U.S., ELLs need significant opportunities to engage in structured, academic talk.
- Independent reading is only beneficial when it is structured and purposeful, and there is a good reader-text match.

It is also recommended that educators who work closely with English language learners should become well-versed in the WIDA standards as Nevada has aligned its work to this evidence-based set of guidelines (see Appendix E*: Links and Resources*).

D. Meeting the Needs of the Gifted and Talented Learner:

The National Association for Gifted Children is a powerful resource for Nevada educators who are striving to meet the needs of their gifted and talented students. The *NACG Gifted and Talented Standards* are a solid resource for educators, these research-based guidelines should be accessed when planning curriculum and reflecting upon instruction of one's gifted learners. NACG writes how these standards mark an "important direction and focus to designing and developing options for gifted learners at the local level" (National Association for Gifted Children). The six Gifted Education Programming Standards include:

1. Learning and Development
2. Assessment
3. Curriculum and Instruction
4. Learning Environments
5. Programming
6. Professional Development

(Please see Appendix E*: Links and Resources* for additional information)

Response to Intervention Framework and Interventions:

Even with the implementation of aligned standards, Nevada educators understand that not all students learn at the same rate or in the same manner as their peers. Differentiation is a tool or method that can be utilized within the classroom and/or within a whole-school setting. All differentiation efforts must be aligned to the Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework. This framework functions as a multi-tiered intervention approach that is designed to assist adolescent students who are struggling in different literacy content areas. Table 6 presents a brief overview of this nationally defined RTI three-tiered approach:

Table 6. THE RTI FRAMEWORK

Tier 1	All students are provided with: - Meaningful and effective core instruction - Standards-based instruction, differentiating as needed, - Evidence-based best practices that supports literacy development for adolescent students in all content areas - Periodic monitoring to identify struggling learners quickly
Tier 2	Students identified as needing intervention receive: - Targeted, intensive, short-term interventions - Small-group instruction, lab or reading course, before or after school tutoring, homeroom or advisory tutoring, remedial course, or a special elective course - Screening to monitor progress
Tier 3	Students identified as continually struggling with minimal progress receive: - Intensive individualized intervention for a longer period of time - Intensive individualized intervention targeting specific skills the student is struggling with - Focuses on remediation of skills - Frequent monitoring and screening

(Adapted from the RTI Action Network website)

Nevada State Literacy Plan

HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 9-12)

Essential #2. DATA-DRIVEN AND STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Data that captures students' literacy outcomes are systematically gathered and analyzed by educators in order to continuously improve instruction and intervention practices.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional content and materials (across all content areas) are aligned to the NVACS literacy standards; all include explicit instruction in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. NVACS literacy standards are strategically incorporated into educators' daily lesson planning and instructional practice with fidelity.				1 2 3 4 5
4. High School literacy instruction supports the development of students who: - demonstrate independence - value evidence - build strong content knowledge - use technology and digital - can respond to the demands of media strategically and audiences, tasks, purposes and capably disciplines - understand other perspectives - comprehend and critique and cultures - care about precision - look for and craft structure (Kamil, 2014)				1 2 3 4 5
5. Tiered literacy instruction (per the RTI model) is clearly defined and implemented with fidelity. All identified tiered interventions (Tier I, II, III) implemented are evidence-based. Structures are in place for the continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of these interventions – particularly those that are used for students with exceptionalities and English language learners.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Specific literacy interventions are provided to students by certified employees and/or highly trained staff across a variety of formats.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Data-Driven and Standards-Based Instruction and Intervention:

Essential 3: Literacy Assessment Systems

What Works Summary

In 2005 The National Association of Secondary School Principals presented a very practical and research-based literacy guide for the nation's secondary principals titled *Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals* (2005). This work is highly recommended for Nevada's secondary educators. Within this guide, the authors provide a very succinct summary of the role that literacy assessment plays at the secondary level. They write:

> "The goal of a school's assessment efforts should be to provide a clear picture of student strengths and weaknesses, teacher professional development needs, and the school's capacity to support a school literacy program. To meet this goal, the school will need to develop a balanced assessment program that uses both formal and informal measures of achievement in gathering data to determine the success of the program" (p. 2).

The following will examine the components required for the development of an effective assessment system. It will also examine the primary methods of literacy assessment presently being utilized with the secondary learner.

Assessment Frameworks:

A key element in designing a school-based literacy assessment system is the establishment of a robust assessment framework. The responsibility for creating such a framework lies in the hands of all instructional leaders. "Timelines for conducting and analyzing formative and summative assessments provide a framework that keeps everyone on target so that assessment becomes a tool for improvement. The principal should work with the leadership team and faculty to schedule data- or progress-monitoring meetings throughout the school year (Oregon Department of Education, 2013, p. 25). It is also recommended that secondary teams take the time to consult data systems that are readily available by the Nevada Department of Education.

The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF):

The Nevada School Performance Framework (NDE, 2014) is Nevada's school accountability system that assigns a star rating to each school based on multiple measures of student achievement. The NSPF ratings are based, in part, on the state summative assessments administered to Nevada public school students in grades three through eight and high school. In addition to student proficiency on assessments, schools are measured on student growth and the reduction of achievement gaps for special population groups.

High schools are also measured on college and career readiness and rates of graduation. Schools receive a star rating based on points achieved for these and other indicators. A five-star rating represents high performance across all indicators and a one-star rating represents low performance across all indicators. A key component of NSPF is that it aligns the classifications of schools to the delivery of appropriate supports and rewards. Greater degrees of autonomy are provided to five-star schools and under-performing schools receive focused support in the school performance planning process.

Best Practices & Implementation:

The realm of literacy assessment includes a whole plethora of formal and informal assessment instruments. The NASSP (2005) listing (while not exhaustive) includes many of the tools that are typically used. For a more thorough listing, however, the Verizon Lifespan Literacy Matrix is recommended (see Appendix E: *Links and Resources*).

Table 7. INFORMAL AND FORMAL ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Informal Assessments	Formal Assessments
Content Area Literacy Assessments Teacher Observations Qualitative Reading Inventory III Informal Literacy Inventories Scholastic Teacher Developed Diagnostic Interview Preparation for Reading Silent Reading Oral Reading Retelling	Stanford Achievement Test California Achievement Test Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) Test of Reading Comprehension (TORC-3) Gray Oral Reading Tests-Diagnostic (GORT-D) Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test 4 Woodcock-Johnson Reading Mastery Stanford Achievement Test California Achievement Test

The following will investigate each of the primary methods of assessment in a more detailed fashion.

A. Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment refers to assessments "used while students are learning" (Marzano, 2005). Dylan William (2011) describes formative assessment as "encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (p.37). Formative assessments include quizzes or quick activities where the instructor stops to take a "snapshot" look into his/her students' learning. The primary goal of formative assessment is to improve student learning. Formative assessment is also used by educators to assess student learning in such a way that students can receive specific feedback about their strengths and areas of improvement (William, 2011).

Formative assessment at the high school level can easily be incorporated into instruction across all content areas. It is recommended that high school teachers use formative assessments "to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening" (NMSA, 2012). Tim Rasinski's (2014) classroom-level reading assessment tool provides secondary teachers with a very practical and quick way to capture individual student's reading levels. Such information is vital for the planning of all classroom reading. When considering the incredible range of student ability that enters the door of every high school classroom, Rasinski's tool becomes a valuable roadmap for every secondary educators' selection of text.

It is important that high school students, themselves, also become involved in the formative assessment process. Research shows that if students are involved in their learning, the feedback or reflection can assist them to comprehend, engage, or develop effective strategies to process the information and take ownership of their work (Hattie, 2009). Formative assessments should also be seen as "practice" and not necessarily part of a grading system. Just as a sports team practices every day for a game, students in the classroom should also practice before a grade is applied.

B. Initial Screening/Diagnostic Assessments:

A critical step for capturing students' specific literacy needs is to begin by using an evidence-based screening/diagnostic tool. Screening tools at the high school level are typically used to assess students' reading abilities. Key indicators or predictors are used to identify student's progress. This type of assessment is often used to guide educators in identifying students in need of additional diagnostics and intervention. Screening tools are also used to capture student writing abilities – more often than not teachers gather samples of students' "cold" writing that is assessed with either a local or standardized writing rubric. In order to capture a more in-depth look into a student's reading/writing levels, an Individual Reading Inventory might also be administered (IRI). However, this specialized protocol must be administered by a trained specialist. Lastly, in order to capture students' levels of interest and/or motivation, secondary educators often use Informal Reading and Writing Inventories.

C. Interim/Benchmark Assessment:

This type of assessment is strategically implemented throughout the year (typically three or four times a year). It is used to monitor student progress toward meeting the standards of a particular grade level (Templeton & Gehsmann, 2014). At the high school level, a reading assessment is often administered to monitor students' reading comprehension levels periodically throughout the school year. At this time, The Nevada Department of Education does not have a specific benchmark assessment for high school students. However, most Nevada school districts are presently using them at the local level.

D. Summative Assessment:

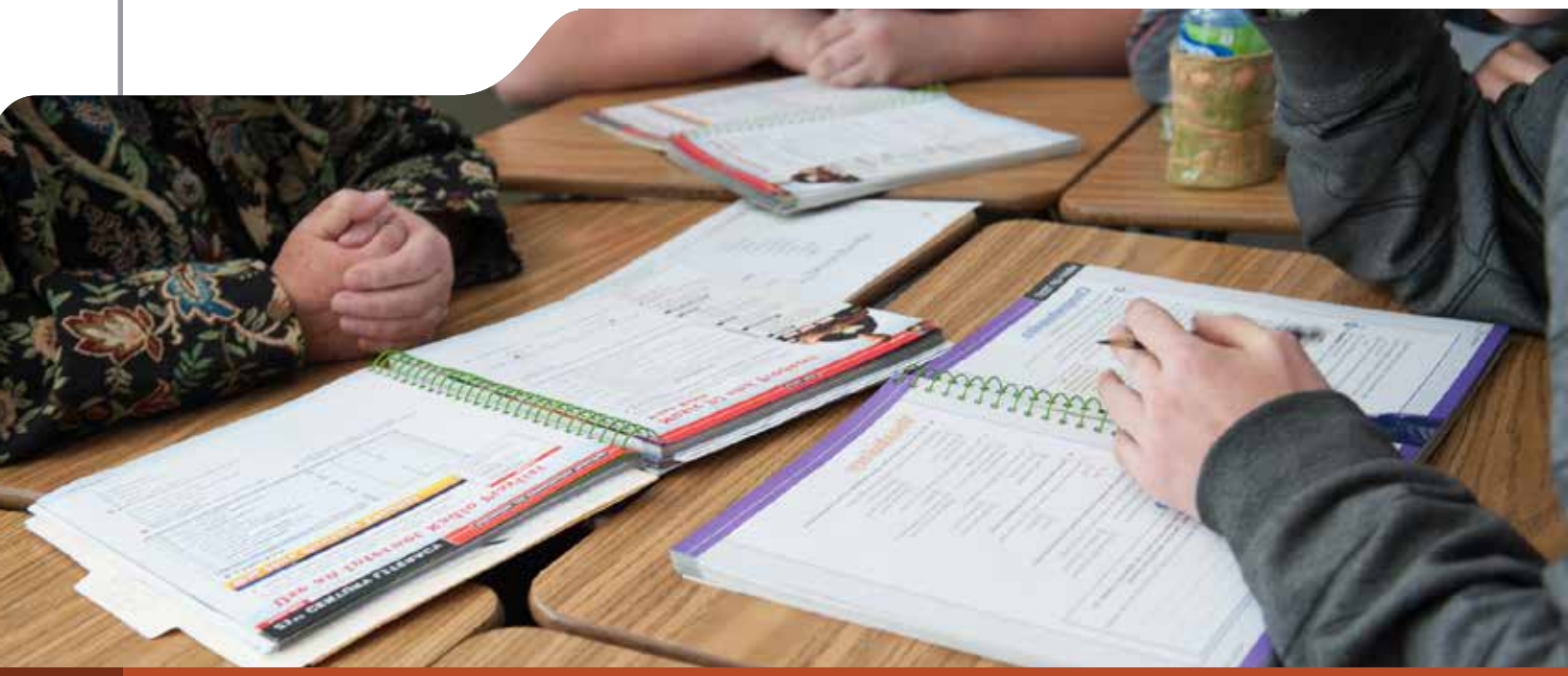
Summative assessment refers to an assessment that takes place at the end of a learning experience (Marzano, 2007). Summative assessments are given periodically to determine what students know and do not know. These assessments are usually used as an accountability measure and can be a part of the grading process, such as end-of-unit or chapter tests, larger projects, final lab reports or activities, or end-of-term or semester exams. Summative assessments at the secondary level are tools to help determine if students are learning the content standards, and "to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, or student placement in specific programs" (National Middle School Association, 2012).

Beginning in the Spring of 2015, Nevada's high school students will take the End of Course exams (EOCs) for Math I (Algebra), Math II (Geometry), ELA I (Reading), and ELA II (Writing). The EOCs are aligned to the 9-10 grade-band of the NVACS. Starting with the class of 2019, students will be required to pass the course subject and the EOC test as part of their graduation requirements. High school juniors (11th grade) will also take the ACT test which is an indicator of a student's college and career readiness abilities, not a pass/fail test. (Students with significant cognitive disabilities will not be required take the ACT test).

E. Literacy Assessment for the English Language Learner:

In order to make a comprehensive assessment program more equitable and effective for English language learners, specific accommodations must be considered (Templeton & Gehsmann, 2014). Test materials should be examined for cultural bias. When possible, educators should allow students to take assessments in their native language. English language learners might also need additional time to complete reading and writing tasks. Sometimes it is necessary to break longer assessments into smaller chunks over different time segments. If permitted, teachers should provide linguistic modifications such as pictures, icons, models and or gestures in order to support students' understanding of directions.

As Nevada is a member of the *World-Class Instructional Design Assessme*nt (WIDA) *National Consortium,* the NSLP recommends that all high school educators become familiar with the actual WIDA assessment results – particularly because students receive a performance indicator for every layer of literacy – reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is further recommended that classroom teachers become familiar with the six levels of English Language Proficiency matrix that WIDA uses in order to identify their English language learners' different levels of ability. Lastly, educators are recommended to use teacher resources provided by the WIDA Consortium.



Nevada State Literacy Plan

HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 9-12)

Essential #3. LITERACY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Literacy assessment tools and protocols are aligned to the NVACS.				1 2 3 4 5
2. An assessment framework has been established that includes multiple measures and data points. Data that is gathered includes all categories of student literacy performance (diagnostic, formative, interim, summative, etc.).				1 2 3 4 5
3. A data collection system has been established that is user-friendly and accessible to all site educators. All educators have received training on the effective use of this system.				1 2 3 4 5
4. All educators have received specialized (evidence-based) training on the data-driven decision-making process.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Data teams are established that meet routinely to analyze student performance in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Literacy data discussions are structured via an evidence-based collaborative inquiry model; one that includes strategies for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Educators are provided continuous professional learning opportunities on newly adopted assessment tools and protocols. Specific actions are taken to establish a commonality of language.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Literacy Assessment Systems:

Essential 4: Professional Learning

What Works Summary

Professional learning refers to coordinated and aligned activities that are designed to increase the effectiveness of educators. These opportunities might include teachers, principals, school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and other school staff (United States Department of Education, 2014). Professional learning opportunities demonstrate the importance of educators taking an active role in their continuous improvement (Learning Forward, 2011). Professional learning that improves instructional practice is built on the following seven principles (Learning Forward, 2011): Learning Communities, Leadership, Resources, Data, Learning Designs, Implementation, and Outcomes. Professional learning includes improving literacy instruction for all content area teachers because it is no longer becomes the sole responsibility of the English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, but rather, it becomes a shared responsibility by all members of the school faculty.

Research shows that professional learning is a key component of fostering educator change (Wei et al., 2009). A single training or workshop cannot serve to enact long-term educational change. Instead, professional learning opportunties at the secondary level must be school-wide, intentional, ongoing, and systematic (National High School Center, 2006; Gusky, 2000). Research also demonstrates how professional learning is most effective when it is relevant, ongoing, frequent, and job-embedded (National High School Center, 2006; Reed, 2009).

Through continuous high-quality professional learning, the high school educator will gain the knowledge and skills needed to support Nevada's adolescents in becoming successful high school students. Some of the specific training available to educators includes in-service sessions, courses, workshops, online and blended learning opportunities, technical assistance, conferences, seminars, webinars, on-site coaching/mentoring, peer observation, and reading professional literature. Through these professional learning avenues high school teachers can acquire the knowledge needed to help students gain literacy skills for understanding more complex academic texts.

Alignment to the NVACS:

It is recommended that all professional learning opportunities be aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Particularly since literacy instruction is no longer the sole responsibility of the English Language Arts (ELA) teacher. Literacy instruction has become a shared responsibility by all instructional staff of the school. Each content area teacher should receive professional learning for how to unwrap or deconstruct his/her content standards. And then, by understanding the literacy targets of these standards, educators will be more effective in aligning units and lessons to literacy in order for students to acquire their content knowledge.

Collaborative Professional Learning:

Structures need to be in place in order for teachers to communicate, collaborate and plan together. Coordination and collaboration among teachers must become a priority at the high school level. This would establish a coherent and consistent system of literacy instruction across all disciplines. In addition, the scheduling of sufficient time within the school day, week and yearly calendars sends a message to teachers that administrators recognize the value of job-embedded professional learning and collaboration (National High School Center, 2006).

Collaboration starts with the district providing training around *all* content area standards for both administrators and teachers. This includes training in the use of data systems as an analysis tool to determine if the standards are being met. Teachers then collaborate "to develop common course outlines" that will provide effective literacy and instructional strategies that benefit the academic achievement of the students (National High School Center, 2006). Additional collaborative professional learning should also be implemented according to district and site needs.

Alignment to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF):

Like classroom teaching, professional learning should also be differentiated for teachers who possess varying degrees of expertise. Just as students display an array of literacy strengths and weaknesses in their literacy learning, so do educators demonstrate various strengths and weaknesses in their literacy teaching. The *Nevada Educator Performance Framework Evaluation Model* provides a vehicle for educator performance processes designed to improve teaching and learning. The new Nevada Educator Performance Framework is designed to assist Nevada educators in building a common understanding and language around best practices.

Additional Practices:

Two additional professional learning practices within the realm of secondary literacy include the use of professional learning communities (PLCs) and secondary literacy coaches. Both of these avenues have been thoroughly discussed in the previous Leadership and Sustainability section of this Essential. Please refer to that section of this plan for additional information.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 9-12)

Essential #4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING				
Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	**Level 2** Strategic Planning is in place	**Level 3** Beginning Level of Implementation	**Level 4** Expanded Level of Implementation	**Level 5** Sustained Practice
1. Student literacy data are routinely gathered and analyzed by educators in order to determine the content of professional learning curriculums.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Professional learning opportunities are aligned to the NVACS in literacy. Ongoing training is provided to site administrators and teachers (of all content areas) that includes explicit instruction in Middle School levels of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. High School literacy training supports the development of students who: - demonstrate independence - value evidence - build strong content knowledge - use technology and digital - can respond to the demands of media strategically and audiences, tasks, purposes and capably disciplines - understand other perspectives - comprehend and critique and cultures - care about precision - look for and craft structure (Kamil, 2014)				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders establish a culture that values and implements collaborative professional learning opportunities (across and between grade levels, content areas, and job classifications – including literacy coaches and librarians/media specialists). These efforts are aimed at improving student growth and educator effectiveness across all literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Professional Growth Plans for Educators (teachers and administrators) are aligned to the Nevada Teacher Performance Framework and the NVACS literacy standards.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Structures are in place for measuring the short-term and long-term impact of literacy-based professional learning on educator effectiveness and student performance.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Professional Learning:				

Essential 5: Family and Community Engagement

What Works Summary

> "My vision for family engagement is ambitious... I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in their schools. I want all parents to be real partners in education with their children's teachers, from cradle to career. In this partnership, students and parents should feel connected—and teachers should feel supported. When parents demand change and better options for their children, they become the real accountability backstop for the educational system."
>
> –Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, May 3, 2010

With high school students on the road to becoming productive citizens of the community, it is imperative for schools to promote family and community engagement activities at the secondary level. These provide adolescents with a view into some very real and positive outcomes inherent within our society. Family engagement is directly related to a range of benefits for secondary students, including higher grades, higher test scores, improved social skills, increased likelihood of high school graduation, and increased aspiration to attend college (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). Strong family and community engagement needs to continue to encompass authentic relationships and experiences during the high school years that center on student academics and preparation for "real life" beyond the walls of the high school setting.

Nevada State Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

In order to achieve successful authentic parent and community engagement, a synthesis of family and students educational goals are needed. This includes informing parents of the importance of their involvement, allowing them multiple learning opportunities, creating bridges between home, school, and community, and collaborating among all stakeholders. Research indicates that having parents and students participate in the planning and implementation of family engagement efforts increases the likelihood that schools and communities will develop strong relationships and that families will become meaningfully engaged in student success (Taveras et al., 2010). To truly have an impact on high school success, family engagement efforts need to focus on student outcomes and become a core part of school and community efforts promoting high school successes that lead to college and career readiness (Weiss, et al, 2010).

In 2011, the Nevada State Legislature passed the Assembly Bill (AB) 224. This bill established Nevada's first Advisory Council on Family Engagement and Office of Family Engagement within the Nevada Department of Education. In creating a vision for family engagement across Nevada, this group adopted a set of national research-based PTA standards for Family-School Partnerships (NDE Website). These six standards include:

1. Welcoming All Families into the School Community
2. Communicating Effectively
3. Supporting Student Success
4. Speaking Up for Every Child
5. Sharing Power
6. Collaborating with the Community

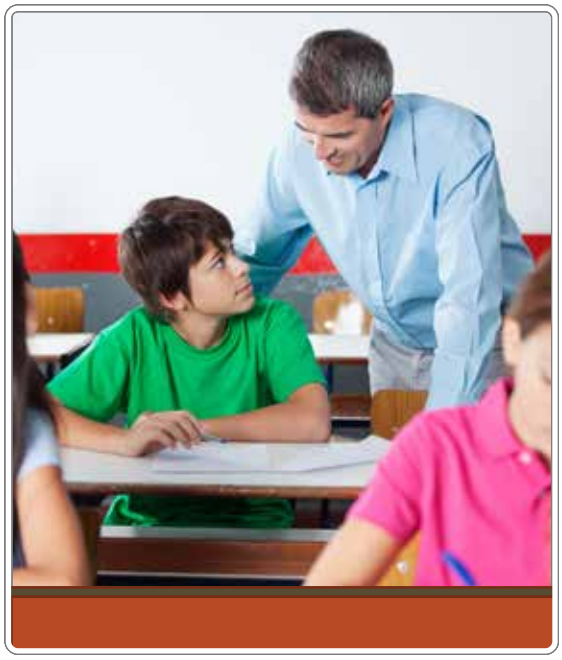
Efforts aimed at improving the literacy skills are imbedded within this state framework. It is recommended that literacy family engagement activities be aligned to Nevada's six standards.

Best Practices & Implementation for Family Literacy:

With strong communication, parents can become active partners in their high school students' learning. The Harvard Family Research Project offers practical suggestions to foster home-school relationships during the middle school years. Family involvement can be approached in a number of ways to strengthen the connections between the family and the school. (When possible, information should be offered in both English and Spanish or the home language of the families.)

1. Establish a homework support program to ensure families know about and are able to access academic assistance for their children.
2. Encourage a culturally specific knowledge base related to family involvement and include literacy volunteers into the school setting.
3. Host meetings at community sites that offer nonthreatening environments for families to gain information.
4. Notify parents routinely about their child's literacy progress throughout the middle school years.
5. Provide parenting programs that can help foster supportive parent-adolescent relationships.
6. Facilitate parents' ability to monitor their child's progress toward NVACS-aligned literacy outcomes.
7. Provide parents with information regarding adult literacy and community outreach programs that will foster their own personal literacy goals.
8. Involve parents in the selection of their child's courses and programs of study so students can get on track for high school graduation and college and career opportunities.
9. Assist parents in understanding assessment results and literacy information.

Community Partnerships:



High school staff and families need to build important relationships and networks in an effort to build or strengthen social capital through strong, cross-cultural networks that are built on trust and respect and that should include family-teacher relationships, parent-parent relationships, and connections with community agencies and services. (Kuttner & Mapp, 2013). Community outreach can uncover support and recruit resources for literacy that might otherwise go untapped. Communicating the importance of a literate community and being transparent about the need for improvement in literacy achievement can result in increased support and resources from a wide range of community stakeholders: colleges and universities, local residents, businesses and professional organizations, artists and cultural institutions, service, volunteer and faith-based organizations. Creating a community campaign focused on literacy rallies support around a common goal in which all can see value. Including strategic outreach in a high school literacy plan can create a unified literacy improvement effort at the local level that coordinates school, home and community resources.

Promoting the positive aspects of school literacy programs will encourage community members to provide support in various ways. One of the best means to promote a school is through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, or creating a user-friendly school web site that is continually kept current. Another means of positive promotions is to use the local television stations or newspapers.

The National High School Center also offers several community partnership ideas:

- Involve the schools with community stakeholders to leverage their interests, skills, and resources for—and create a sense of ownership of—high school improvement strategies and initiatives.
- Partnerships with stakeholders are fostered to enhance teaching and learning opportunities.
- Stakeholders are involved during critical planning and decision-making activities to foster buy-in and ownership for high school improvement strategies and initiatives.
- Multiple communication strategies are implemented that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and support engaged communication and conversation with all stakeholders.

Additional suggestions for promoting the positive aspects of a high school are borrowed from The National Middle School Association. These items can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a high school setting:

Table 8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENT-COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
(To be adapted from the National Middle School Association)
(Murther, 2012)

Parents	Ask parents for their ideas on strengthening community partnerships
Business Leaders	Involve them in your schools as speakers, volunteers, or activity sponsors
Senior Citizens	Maintain connections through service projects, hold performances at senior centers, and asking them for suggestions for community partnership ideas
Alumni	Locate alumni and ask them to speak about how school helped them with their career paths
Develop a Slogan	3-5 overarching themes that express pride in your school:
Establish Points of Pride	One that will help everyone know what your school stands for (such as Expect Great Things)

A second table is provided below summarizes action steps for continuing to promote family and community engagement. It is based on the work of two renowned experts in this area.

Table 9. PUTTING RESEARCH INTO ACTION – BEST PRACTICES FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
(Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

- Being culturally responsive in recognizing all parents are involved in their children's learning and want them to do well
- Design programs that will support parent and families in understanding their children's literacy development
- Develop the capacity of educators and families to work together through professional learning and collaborative partnerships
- Link family and community engagement efforts to student learning and NVACS outcomes
- Support transitions between literacy settings through communication and learning opportunities to encourage stakeholder participation and collaboration
- Build and support social connections among families and community members
- Collaborate and embrace partnerships that share power and focus on developing trusting and respectful relationships so support children's literacy development

Nevada State Literacy Plan

HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (Grades 9-12)

Essential #5. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Educators establish and maintain parent and family partnerships that respect every element of multiculturalism including ethnicity, language, gender, socio-economic levels, exceptionalities, etc.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Educators create professional learning opportunities for parents and family members aimed at assisting their children with literacy development (including how to effectively navigate through student data). Such opportunities are provided in both English and Spanish.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Individual student progress toward NVACS-aligned literacy outcomes is communicated to parents and families routinely (reporting should occur three times a year at a minimum).				1 2 3 4 5
4. Parents and families of students identified as at-risk in literacy acquisition and/or those receiving interventions are updated frequently on individual student progress (reporting should occur at least six times a year).				1 2 3 4 5
5. Protocols have been established for the communication and referral of adult literacy programs available to parents and family members.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders identify the roles of the community library and extracurricular literacy programs (such as tutoring) as key partners in expanding student and family literacy opportunities. Efforts are made to establish and maintain these partnerships.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Structures are in place for welcoming, training, and monitoring literacy volunteers.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Family and Community Engagement:

Suggestions for an Effective Transition to College

In 2009 a collaborative team of California educators (including researchers, faculty, and administrators from the Center for Student Success, The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, and The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges) created a publication that examined key practices for establishing an effective transition from high school to college. Within their work, they provide a concise listing of their findings. It is provided below:

Effective Practices for Promoting the Transition of High School Students to College

Rigor: While in high school, students take and complete a rigorous curriculum of college-preparatory courses.

Relevance: High school course content and delivery are made relevant to students' lives, with clear applications for how high school work is connected to postsecondary education and career opportunities.

Alignment: High school exit standards and skills align with college-level entry requirements.

Realistic expectations: Accurate and timely information is communicated to students and families regarding expected knowledge, performance standards, attitudes, and behaviors that students will need in order to be successful in college.

Support for transitions: Secondary and postsecondary partners create bridge programs and activities that provide both academic and non-academic support during the transition period.

Articulated pathways: Secondary and postsecondary partners collaborate to provide integrated and articulated programs to facilitate student transitions.

Suggestions for an Effective Transition to the Workforce

The enGauge report (2003) was based on a thorough investigation of workplace skills needed for the 21st Century. Albeit a bit outdated, these skills are certainly relevant today. This work was based on a meta-analytic review of multiple research sources. In examining this list, please note the critical role that literacy plays (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) across every major category.

21st Century Workforce Skills:

A. Digital-age Literacies:

- **Basic literacy:** This is defined as the ability to read, write, listen and speak as well as to compute numbers and solve problems.
- **Scientific literacy:** This is defined as a general knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes.
- **Economic literacy:** This includes an understanding of basic economic concepts, personal finance, the roles of small and large businesses, and how economic issues affect them as consumers and citizens.
- **Technological literacy:** This includes an understanding about technology and how it can be used to achieve a specific purpose or goal.
- **Visual literacy:** This includes good visualization skills and the ability to understand, use, and create images and video using both conventional and new media.
- **Information literacy:** This includes the ability to find, access, and use information as well as the ability to evaluate the credibility of the information.
- **Cultural literacy:** This includes the ability to value diversity, to exhibit sensitivity to cultural issues, and to interact and communicate with diverse cultural groups.
- **Global awareness:** This is an understanding of how nations, individuals, groups, and economies are interconnected and how they relate to each other.

B. Inventive Thinking:

- **Adaptability and managing complexity:** This is the ability to recognize and understand that change is a constant, and to deal with change positively by «modifying one›s thinking, attitude or behavior» to accommodate and handle this new environment.
- **Self-direction:** This is the ability to work independently, whether developing goals or plans, managing one›s time and work, or evaluating one›s knowledge or learning process.
- **Curiosity:** This is the desire to learn more about something and is an essential component of lifelong learning.
- **Creativity:** This is the means of producing something new or original that is either personally or culturally significant
- **Risk taking:** This is a willingness to think about a problem or challenge, to share that thinking with others, and to listen to feedback. It is a willingness to go beyond a safety zone, to make mistakes, to creatively tackle challenges or problems with the ultimate goal of enhancing personal accomplishment and growth.
- **Higher-order thinking and sound reasoning:** The higher-level thinking processes include the ability to analyze, compare, infer, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize. Sound reasoning applies common sense and acquired knowledge and skills to ensure good problem solving and decision making.

C. Effective Communication:

- **Teaming and collaboration:** Teaming is a situation in which individuals share a common goal, bring unique capabilities to the job of achieving, work in a structured environment, and exhibit trust and respect towards one another. Collaboration is the cooperative interaction between the members of the team as they work together to achieve their goal.
- **Interpersonal skills:** This is the ability to manage one›s behavior, emotions, and motivations to foster positive interactions with other individuals and groups. The ability to effectively manage conflict is also an important interpersonal skill necessary for success in the 21st Century workplace. These skills are exhibited both in one-on-one situations and in emails, conference calls, and videoconferences.
- **Personal responsibility:** Personal responsibility in the 21st Century workplace requires one to understand the legal and ethical issues related to technology and to manage and use technology in a responsible manner.
- **Social and civic responsibility:** This requires that individuals use and manage technology to promote the public good and to protect society and the environment.
- **Interactive communication:** This requires that individuals learn to communicate using a wide range of media and technology. They must select the most effective method of communication for the intended audience and use it responsibly and effectively to enhance the dissemination of information.

D. High Productivity:

- **Prioritizing, planning, and managing for results:** These organizational skills help an individual achieve the goals that have been set through efficient management of time and resources, effective problem solving, and strong leadership skills.
- **Effective use of real-world tools:** This requires that individuals master current and new technology to communicate and collaborate with others, to effectively problem solve, and to accomplish tasks. They must learn how to select the appropriate tools for the task at hand and to apply these tools efficiently and effectively to achieve results.
- **Ability to produce relevant, high-quality products:** This is the «ability to produce intellectual, informational, or material products that serve authentic purposes and occur as a result of students using real-world tools to solve or communicate about real-world problems» (enGauge, 2003, p. 59).

Appendix A: NSLP ACTION ROADMAP

LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

	Leadership and Sustainability	Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention	Literacy Assessment Systems	Professional Learning	Family and Community Engagement
Level 5 Sustained Practice	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually
Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are revisited and revised - Collaboration & shared responsibility plan is revisited & revised - Literacy training continues for instructional leaders - Literacy coach fully on board	- Educators' use of data to inform instruction is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of nationally recognized targets revisited & revised - Methods for measuring fidelity of RTI revisited & revised - Effectiveness of interventions is systematically monitored	- Adopted assessment framework is revisited and revised - Data collection system is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator DBDM Training is implemented - System used for data teams is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator training on assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers' use of data to inform practice is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of explicit literacy instruction is revisited and revised - Educators identify focus literacy goals in NEPF PGP	- Culture validates and honors parent/family diversity - Parental support Literacy training is expanded - Parents become active participants in monitoring student literacy progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Impact of literacy work with community partners revisited and revised
Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are created - Literacy goals are implemented - Culture implements collaboration & shared responsibility for literacy - Literacy training begins for instructional leaders - Literacy coach phased in	- Educators use data to inform instruction - System created for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Instruction targets nationally recognized literacy objectives - Fidelity of RTI is measured - Effectiveness of interventions is monitored	- An effective assessment framework is implemented - An effective data-collection system is implemented - Educators receive training on the DBDM process - Data teams are established - Educator training on new assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers use data to inform practice - System created for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Professional learning offered that includes explicit literacy - Educators use NEPF Growth Plan with literacy objectives	- Culture demonstrates respect for diversity - Parental support Literacy training is implemented - Parents/families are routinely contacted by educators to discuss student progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Implementation of literacy work with community
Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	- Planning for goals occurs - Planning for collaboration & shared responsibility of literacy occurs - Planning for developing leaders' knowledge base occurs - Research begins on how to add a site-based literacy coach	- Planning occurs for educator data collection & analysis - Planning occurs for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Planning begins for insuring use of nationally recognized literacy objectives - Planning occurs for insuring fidelity of RTI model - Planning occurs for measuring effectiveness of interventions	- An effective assessment framework is designed - An effective data-collection system is designed - Educator training is scheduled on the DBDM process - Planning begins for establishing data teams - Educator training is scheduled on new assessment tools and protocols	- Planning for professional learning is data-based - Planning occurs for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Explicit literacy instruction added to planning process - Planning occurs for insuring educator collaboration - NEPF Growth Plans template adds NVACS literacy objectives	- Systematic plans created for developing respect of parent & family diversity - Systematic plans created for parent/family literacy training - System designed for the communication of student progress to parent/families - Systems designed for referring adults to literacy courses - Systematic plan created for expanding literacy partners
Level 1 No planning or implementation is in place	- No data-driven measurable goals aligned to NVACS - Culture does not support collaboration or shared responsibility of literacy - Instructional leaders have no literacy knowledge base - No support of literacy coach position	- Educators not gathering or analyzing student literacy data to inform instruction - Instruction & materials not aligned to NVACS - Nationally recognized literacy objectives not targeted - RTI model not being implemented with fidelity - Interventions not assessed	- An ineffective assessment framework is in place - An ineffective data-collection system is in place - Educators receive no training - on DBDM process - No data teams have been established - Educators receive no training on new assessments	- Professional learning is designed w/o data analysis - Professional learning is notaligned to NVACS - Professional learning does not include explicit literacy instruction - Culture does not support educator collaboration in lit. - Literacy absent from PGPs	- Lack of respect for diversity of parents/families - Lack of literacy training available for parent / families - Student literacy progress not communicated to parents - No referral protocols for adult literacy education - Ineffective community partners in literacy

Appendix B: High School Action Plan Framework

NSLP Strategy Form

Action Plan Framework

ESSENTIAL: _____ _____Current Level of Implementation (per the NSLP Action Roadmap): _____

Members of Planning Team:

District: _____ School: _____ Grade Band: _____ Date: _____

Literacy Activity (What will be done?)	Specific Action Steps (How will it be done?)	Individual(s) Responsible (Who will be doing it?)	Projected Timeline (When will it occur?)		Resources Needed	Notes
			Start Date	End Date		

Appendix C: High School Professional Growth Plan Template

Adapted from Louisiana State Comprehensive Literacy Plan's Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Template, with permission

Name ..... **Position** .....

This sample template is provided to assist you as a Nevada Elementary School educator, as you work to design your own individualized Professional Growth Plans as outlined in the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). As an NSLP instrument, this template embeds professional goals and objectives that are deliberately aligned to literacy improvement. The educator is encouraged to design his/her professional growth plan with a strategic focus on literacy.

Part 1: Possible Goals:

When thinking about possible goals for your PGP, consider the following questions:

- How does my literacy knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances measure up against the NEPF?
- Where do I need to grow professionally in order to optimize my effectiveness in impacting student literacy performance (i.e. outcomes and achievement levels).
- What areas for professional growth will have the greatest potential to improve the quality of literacy teaching and learning in my program?

Brainstorm of my Possible Goals (3-5):

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: NSLP/District/School/Program Connections:

When aligning your professional goals with the known needs of the NSLP, your district, school, or program, consider the following questions:

- Which of my professional goals are most directly related to implementing elements of Nevada's Elementary Literacy Plan aimed at improving student outcomes?
- For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?
- How will these goals be complementary to my colleagues PGPs and/or other component of my Elementary program?

My goals relate to NSLP/district/school/program improvement needs in the following ways:

_____

_____

_____

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Part 3: Identified Goals (inclusive of literacy) and their intended student outcomes (3-4):

Professional Educator Goals	Student Outcomes

Part 4: Outline of My Plan:

When outlining your specific PGP, consider the following questions:

- What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
- What are the initial steps in my plan?
- What activities will help me to achieve my goals and objectives?
- How will I make the time to accomplish the elements of my plan?
- What NSLP/district/school/program resources will I need?
- What evidence will I collect to demonstrate the achievement of my professional learning goals and how will I organize my evidence?

A. I will engage in the following activities (inclusive of literacy strategies):

_____

_____

_____

B. I will document my progress in achieving my professional learning goal(s) with the following artifacts (e.g. anecdotal records, observation logs, lesson plans, videotapes) and outcome data (i.e. assessment data gathered as evidence of student growth and development and student products).

_____

_____

_____

C. Resources I will need for full implementation of my PGP:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: NSLP Educator Planning Guide

NSLP EDUCATOR PLANNING GUIDE

for Authentic Literacy-Based Instruction

Teacher Name: _____ Age/Grade Band(s): _____

From (Date): _____ through (Date): _____

Instruction driven by the following data point(s): _____

Nevada State Literacy Plan ~ Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention: Implementation Targets from NSLP Self-Assessment Tool (list numbers)**:**

Targeted Content Objectives	_____Standards
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Targeted Literacy Objectives	**_____Standards**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Targeted Guiding Principles	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Birth-Age 3-Guidelines, Pre-K Standards, NVACS (K-12) CCR (College & Career Readiness) Standards (Adult)

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

THE "HOW": Using Literacy Strategies as Effective Instructional Methodologies ~

Literacy Modalities / Stages of Literacy Instruction	(Receptive Literacy) AUTHENTIC READING STRATEGIES	(Expressive Literacy) AUTHENTIC WRITING STRATEGIES
I. Pre-Instruction		
II. During Instruction		
III. Post-Instruction		
Integration of Technology:		
Classroom Interventions:		
Assessment Protocol(s):		
Exit Data Point(s): (if available)		

THE "WHAT" = Outcomes:

- Acquisition of Content Knowledge
- Enhancement of Sound Literacy Skills
- Enhancement of Guided Principal Behaviors

Appendix E: Links and Resources

Links to Nevada Department of Education Resources:

Governor Sandoval's State of the State Address (2015):
http://gov.nv.gov/About/Photos/Speeches/

Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) (2010):
http://nevadaready.gov/Standards/NV_Academic_Content_Standards/

Nevada Department of Education Assessments:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Assessments/

Nevada's School Performance Framework (NSPF). (n.d.). Retrieved from:
http://nspf.doe.nv.gov/

Links to Supplementary Resources:

Alliance for Excellence Education.
http://all4ed.org/

Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE).
http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/fine-family-involvement-network-of-educators

Institute of Education Sciences (What Works Clearinghouse).
http://ies.ed.gov/

International Literacy Association.
http://www.reading.org/

Learning Forward.
http://learningforward.org/

The National Association for Gifted Children.
http://www.nagc.org/

Response to Intervention Network.
http://www.rtinetwork.org/

Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix.
http://familieslearning.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Verizon-Life-Span-Literacy-Matrix.pdf

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Early Language Development Standards.
https://www.wida.us/standards/EarlyYears.aspx

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NEVADA'S ADULT LITERACY PLAN

Adult: Sierra Nevadas

The Sierra Nevada mountains are about 400 million years old and a unique mountain range to our State. The Nevada State Literacy Plan is one of the first to introduce an adult literacy plan, and the uniqueness and beauty of this range fits well with the adult Demographic.

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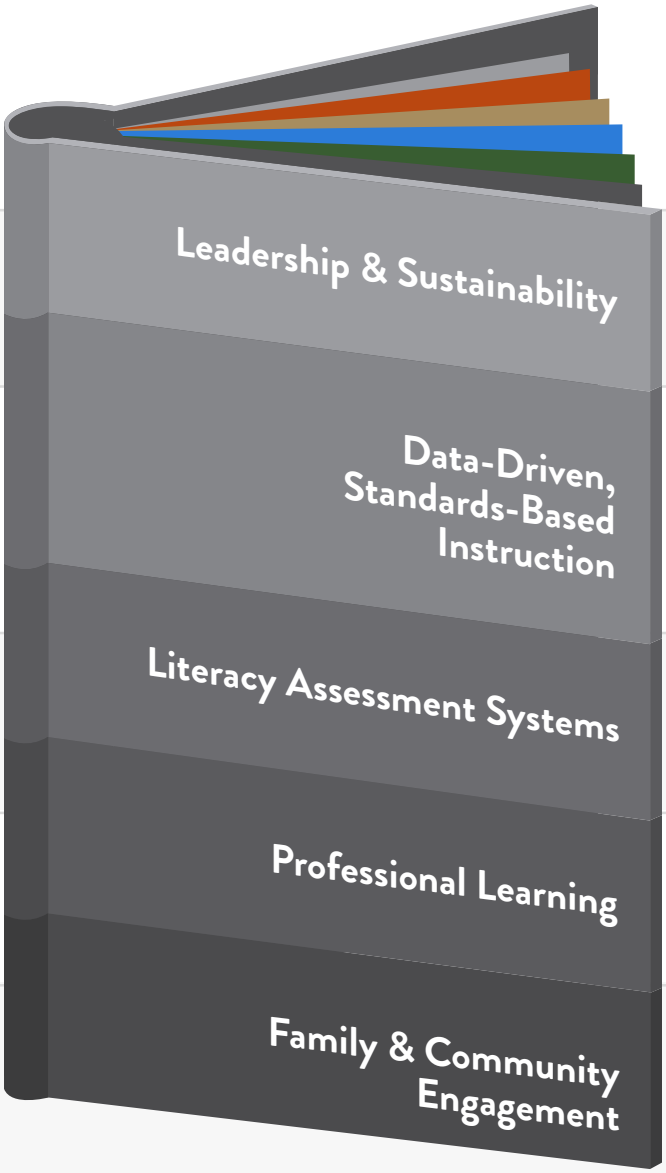
NEVADA'S ADULT LITERACY PLAN

THE FIVE NEVADA LITERACY ESSENTIALS



THE ESSENTIALS:

1. A group process aimed at strategically mobilizing others for the purpose of improving students' literacy growth. Sustainable reforms are persistent over time & circumstances.
2. All planning for literacy instruction occurs with a systematic analysis of student data. All instruction is explicitly aligned to state literacy standards. Classroom educators and interventionists use research-based strategies for delivering literacy objectives across all content areas.
3. The use of valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose students' literacy needs.
4. The development of learning opportunities, resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for all children, families, and educators.
5. A coordinated and collaborative system in which schools and other community organizations connect with families in meaningful ways to support the ongoing improvement of student, family, and community literacy.

Introduction

Breaking National Paradigms:

Through a fairly thorough review of current literature regarding components included in state literacy plans across the U.S., the NSLP Revision Team believes that Nevada's addition of an Adult Literacy component to its state literacy plan might very well be a first for the entire nation. Where other states have typically ended their literacy plans at Grade 12, Nevada becomes a true trailblazer in the field by recognizing the critical role that adult literacy plays in today's society. Indeed, "In *Reach Higher, America,* the National Commission on Adult Literacy presents powerful evidence that our failure to address America's adult education and workforce skills needs is putting our country in great jeopardy and threatening our nation's standard of living and economic viability" (2008, p. 1). This challenge is ever increasing. Nevada's statistics on adult literacy provide further evidence of the enormity of this problem – right here at our own doorstep. The following captures some of the most alarming trends: (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008).

- Nearly 370,000 Nevada adults lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Upwards of 20,000 students drop out of Nevada schools every year.
- Nearly 150,000 Nevada adults do not speak English well or at all.
- The entire Nevada Adult Education system is currently only to serve approximately 35,000 students a year

It becomes readily apparent that the need for adult literacy and education programs across America, and especially across Nevada, is immense. The NSLP is meant to serve as set of guidelines for Nevada's adult educators to improve their students' literacy achievement.

A New Focus on Family Literacy:

The NSLP also recognizes the relationship between children at risk who reside with parents at risk. This plan will provide current research findings that demonstrate successes with the alignment of literacy services across multiple generations of families. Many of these efforts hold the spark for igniting a sense of hope within many American families who might otherwise face lifetimes of despair.

A newly required component of most Adult Literacy programs in the U.S. is an emphasis on Family Literacy. This new conceptual framework expands the notion of providing parents with sound literacy skills with the sole intent of economic self-sufficiency to a system that includes the training of parents on how to be primary teachers of their children as well. Holloway (2004) describes how "research indicates that family literacy activities contribute to children's success in school and that family literacy programs can provide opportunities for educational success for both parents and children" (p. 88).

A Summarized Version of Nevada's Adult Education System:

F. Program Offerings:

Nevada's Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning and Education Options, provides an incredibly diverse set of services. Most of these programs assist Nevada adults in acquiring the basic skills that they need in order to become productive workers, family members, and citizens. This system oversees four primary areas of support for the adult learner: Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English Language Acquisition, and Transition to College or Career Pathways (NDE - OCRALEO, 2015). NDE's programs provide adult students with assistance in the following areas:

- Foundational skills (such as reading, writing, math, English language competency, and problem-solving)
- Employability and workplace readiness skills
- Basic literacy skills (for adults functioning below the 8th grade reading level)
- Transitional skills for High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation and/or Adult High School programs
- Transitional skills to postsecondary education or workplace training

G. The Adult Students Being Addressed within the NSLP:

Due to the diverse groupings of student populations within Nevada's adult education system (and in order to establish a common vocabulary), Table 1 has been provided below to illustrate the categories of adult students being provided services with their respective academic needs (NDE – OCRALEO, 2015).

Table 1. NEVADA'S ADULT EDUCATION STUDENT POPULATIONS

1. Adult Basic Education (ABE)/ Basic Skills Students	This group is comprised of students who are functioning at or below the 8th grade level in reading, writing, and math and who wish to get a job, retain their job, and/or transition on to a family-sustaining career.
2. Adult Secondary Education (ASE)/ Adult Standard Diploma Students	This group is comprised of students functioning between the 9th and 12th grade levels in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies and who wish to get a job, retain their job, and/or transition on to a family-sustaining career. They are working on passing a state-approved High School Equivalency assessment, and/or working toward their Adult Standard Diploma.
3. English Language Learners (ELLs)	This group is comprised of immigrants, refugees, or other adults whose primary language is not English and who are enrolled in programs to improve speaking, reading, and writing skills in English, often in conjunction with an employment goal.
4. College Transitions and Career Pathways Students (college prep. or developmental)	This group includes the integration of Adult Education services and postsecondary education or training that lead to industry-based certification or institutionally-granted certification, diplomas, or degrees necessary for high demand jobs.
5. Entering College Freshman placed into remedial courses in the areas of Reading and Writing.	This group includes students who have entered the community college setting in need of remedial coursework (as determined by a placement exam indicator).
6. Non-Traditional College Students placed into remedial courses in the areas of Reading and Writing.	This group includes students who have returned to the college setting after a break in their postsecondary education and who are entering at the freshman/sophomore levels in need of remediation.

Essential 1: Leadership and Sustainability

What Works Summary

Forrest Chisman, former Vice President of the Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, speaks to the critical need for leadership within the realm of adult literacy education, saying, "When I first encountered adult education 26 years ago, I quickly concluded that its greatest need was for more potent leadership. I think that is still its greatest need" (2014, p. 1). It's a common theme across the literature. David C. Harvey, President/CEO, ProLiteracy Worldwide expands upon Chisman's sentiments even more aggressively when he asserts that "Congress, business and industry, and the public in general need to support and work with the adult basic education and literacy field so we can provide the quantity as well as quality of service needed to have a well-skilled workforce. Without the support called for in this report (*Reach Higher, America*), the United States is in real danger of becoming a second rate world power." (2014). Harvey's sentiments point to the critical need for collaborative leadership as a key element in meeting the immense literacy demands facing the Adult Education arena.

Collaborations in Leadership:

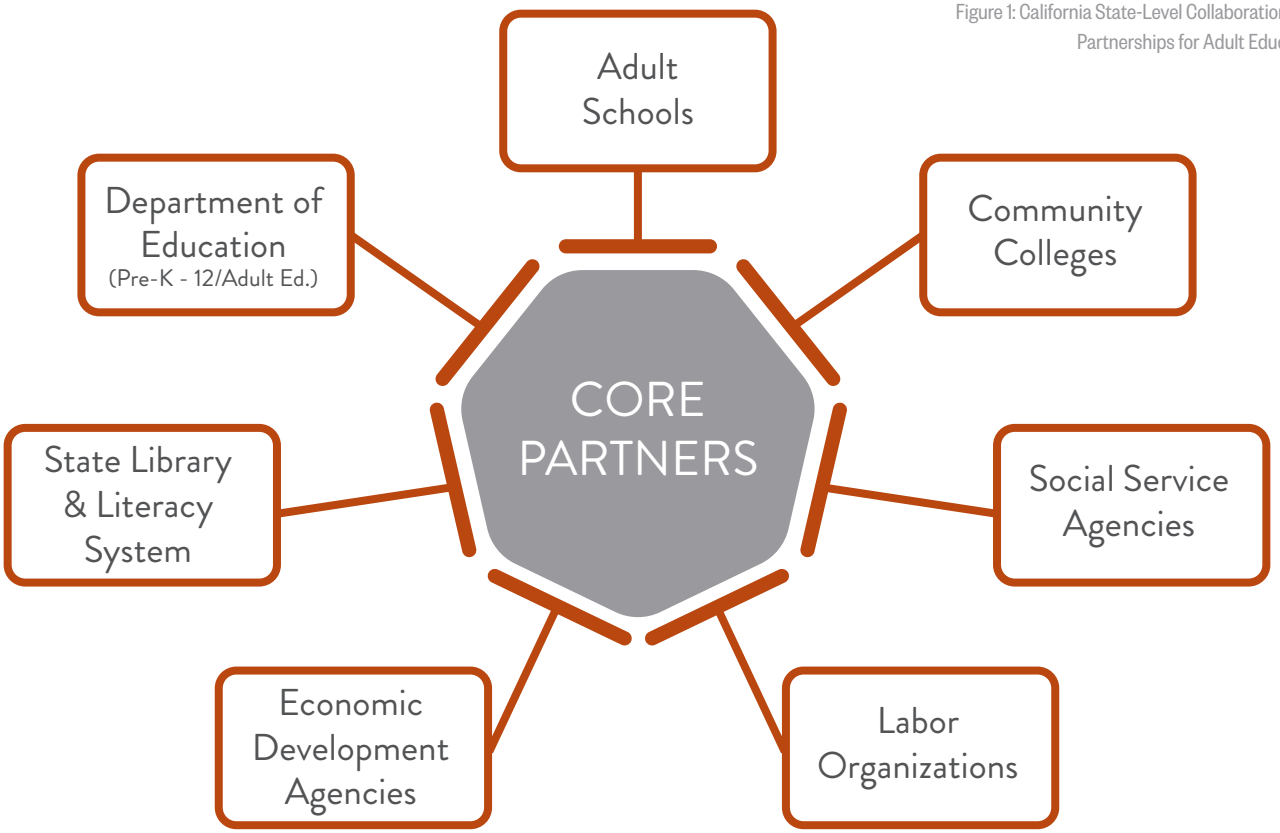
At the State Level

The collaborative leadership model is a growing trend across every layer of America's education system. Spector-Lewis and Jay define a need for such a model in their white paper for ALER (American Literacy Education and Research) organization in 2011.

> Literacy leadership needs to be recognized as a collaborative effort among key community-based stakeholders including educators, parents and other family members, students, universities, businesses, religions groups, and community members.

In order to establish such a model of collaborative leadership, the Adult Education realm of Nevada would do well to replicate the efforts of its neighboring state of California that has recently identified the following groups as core partners in assuring a collective response for improving adult education efforts. Figure 1 below depicts a graphic provided in an extensive report titled: *Linking Adults to Opportunity: Transformation of the California Dept. of Education Adult Education Program* (p. 16).

Figure 1: California State-Level Collaborations and Partnerships for Adult Education:



California leaders see this step as just the beginning stage of collaboration. They write, "strengthened state-level collaborations would lay the groundwork for more systematic collaboration at the local level" (2014, p. 16). Nevada leaders in adult literacy do well by exploring the collaborative nature of this new California plan.

At the Site Level

The critical role of the instructional leader in Adult Education quickly becomes evident. It is essential that these leaders build capacity across multiple layers of services by examining research and by aligning classroom instruction with the NVACS and the College and Career Readiness Standards

Many individuals presently in these positions arrive to the field of adult literacy and adult education "sideways," meaning later in one's career or by transferring from another area of education. Many have limited direct preparation for the multitude of tasks of leading, planning, implementing and evaluating adult education and literacy services. Current research can guide and support this process.

Much of this research indicates that effective leaders in adult literacy programs display characteristics associated with transformational leadership. One attribute of transformational leadership is an ability to bridge divergent interests and to articulate a shared vision (Bass, 1998). Most transformational leaders act collaboratively and also promote the development of leadership in others, thereby creating a pool of current and future professionals. Effective leaders inspire others to achieve high goals by being role models. Effective leaders typically engage in a continual process of self-study, education, training, and experience. Transformational leadership results in performance that goes well beyond what is expected (Bass, 1985; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2006).

Sustaining Leadership in Adult Literacy:

The unique nature of the role of instructional leader in adult literacy poses one continuous challenge – the ability of one to stay current within the field. Without college degree programs available through NSHE institutions for adult education, these leaders must routinely engage in intensive professional development and learning. Nevada has one particular venue to offer such training via the *Leadership Excellence Academies* (NDE) for adult education directors with support from the *National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium*. It is recommended that all Nevada Adult Education and Adult Literacy leaders attend this training. One of the training components of the two-year *Leadership Excellence Academies* program is entitled *Program Improvement Cluster*. (NDE – OCRALEO, 2015). This particular leadership training focuses on six critical areas. It is recommended that these six improvement strategies be utilized by all adult literacy leaders in Nevada:

1. Using Self-Assessment to Identify Strengths and Needs
2. Integrating Research into Teaching and Learning
3. Using Data to Guide Program Management
4. Providing Effective Leadership for Adult Education Services
5. Getting Teachers Off to the Right Start and Keeping Them There
6. Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners

Nevada's Adult Literacy leaders can also refer to the Chicago Education Fund's listing of competencies for success (CEF, 2008) . It would be beneficial to incorporate its findings into program leadership and development. This writing reports that one key competency of effective educational leaders includes the ability to identity and focus on key, high-priority tasks with high payoffs. Such leaders also veer away from organizational norms or rules to seek successes, and they act quickly to bring about change.

It becomes readily apparent that the role of the instructional leader within the realm of Adult Literacy is quite complex. Much of this is due to the diversity of learners, the fact that many programs utilize mostly part-time instructors and/or volunteers, the fact that attendance is not compulsory for learners, and how outside economic factors impact students' goals. The aforementioned measures are recommended in order to not only build leadership capacity, but to develop long-term sustainability of leadership that support students' literacy achievement.

Nevada State Literacy Plan

ADULT LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL
(All Adult Basic Education and Community College Programs)

Essential #1. LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Instructional leaders have established measurable literacy goals that are explicitly aligned to the College and Career-Readiness Standards for Adult Education.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional leaders review and analyze student data to inform decisions aimed at improving student performance and educator effectiveness across all components of literacy.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Instructional leaders have established a culture that demonstrates and communicate a shared responsibility for student literacy outcomes both internally and externally (across the entire local community).				1 2 3 4 5
4. Instructional leaders facilitate collaboration among Adult Education educators aimed at improving student performance and educator effectiveness across literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Instructional leaders establish collaborative networks (within specific Adult Education components, across Adult Education components, and between Adult Education and Community College systems) aimed at improving all levels of adult literacy acquisition.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Instructional leaders consistently update their own professional knowledge base on all aspects of effective literacy instruction.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Leadership & Sustainability:

Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention

What Works Summary

Data-driven standards-based instruction and intervention is a process of analyzing multiple sources of student data for the purpose of adjusting instruction with the intent of improving student achievement and/or implementing the necessary intervention strategies that benefits the students (Hamilton et al., 2009). In high school, standards based instruction must be geared toward the specific literacy, learning, and developmental needs of young adolescents across all content areas as they work toward mastery of the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).

Data-Driven Decision-Making:

The planning for all instruction and intervention across every component of Nevada's Adult Education system must begin with data. As with all of the other grade bands noted within this plan, the importance of gathering and analyzing student data to inform instruction is likewise critical within this age group. Systems are already in place for data collection and analysis by professionals within the Nevada Department of Education's Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning and Education Options. It is recommended that all adult literacy educators across the state incorporate the practice of utilizing student data in order to drive their instruction.

Standards-Based Instruction:

The incorporation of updated national standards into adult education arena in the U.S. quickly followed the development and launch of the Common Core State Standards in 2010. That year, a consortium of states across the nation adopted the standards. In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education released the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*, the adult subset of the Common Core (Pimentel, 2013). The authors of these new CCR standards summarize their purpose in creating this premier set of national standards that historically connects the adult education world with the K-12 world through a common strand of anchor standards. They write, "It presents a starting point for raising awareness and understanding of the crucial skills and knowledge expected and required for success in college, technical training programs, and employment in the 21st Century" (Pimentel, p. 1).

The Literacy Guiding Principles:

Across every layer of adult education, integrating the guiding principles into practice is strongly recommended. This set of academic behaviors would benefit every category of students, from Adult Basic Education students and Secondary education students to English Language Learners, Transition students, and beginning college students. The acquisition of these skills will only enhance the adult learners' literacy achievement. The NSLP Educator Planning Guide (*Appendix D*) provides teachers with a planning template that incorporates both the College and Career Readiness Standards and these principles. Table 2 below provides a complete listing.

Table 2. LITERACY GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Kamil, June, 2014, Presentation: Las Vegas, NV.)

Literate Individuals in the 21st Century need to . . .	
DEMONSTRATE INDEPENDENCE - Comprehend and evaluate complex text across disciplines. - Construct effective arguments and convey multifaceted information.	PRIVILEGE EVIDENCE - Cite text evidence for interpretations. - Make reasoning clear. - Evaluate others' use of evidence.
BUILD STRONG CONTENT KNOWLEDGE - Build knowledge in different subjects. - Become proficient in new areas. - Read purposefully. - Refine knowledge and share it.	CARE ABOUT PRECISION - Become mindful of the impact of vocabulary. - Compare meanings of different choices. - Attend to when precision matters.
RESPOND TO DEMANDS OF AUDIENCE, TASK, AND DISCIPLINE - Consider context in reading. - Appreciate nuances. - Know that different disciplines use different evidence.	LOOK FOR AND CRAFT STRUCTURE - Attend to structure when reading. - Understand how to present information in different disciplines. - Understand how an author's craft relates to setting and plot.
COMPREHEND AND CRITIQUE - Become open-minded and skeptical readers. - Understand what authors are saying. - Question an author's assumptions. - Assess the veracity of claims.	USE TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGICALLY - Employ technology thoughtfully. - Efficiently search online for information. - Integrate online and offline information. - Select best suited media for goals.
UNDERSTAND OTHER CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES - Actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures. - Communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. - Evaluate other points of view critically and constructively.	

Best Practices and Implementation:

A. Individualization of Instruction:

The complexity of the student population in the Adult Literacy world presents a nearly complete microcosm of literacy education, across every level of learning. Conceivably, students might enter this realm with basic literacy needs, high school completion needs, special education needs, English language needs, cultural and civic education needs, postsecondary education or training needs, career pathway and employment needs, and sometimes, all of the above.

Invariably, the critical role of effective diagnostics comes into play. With sound diagnostic tools, effective student placement decisions can be made. Depending on the need of the individual student, literacy instruction varies greatly. While the instructional aim is the same regardless of a students' age (which is to say, that an adult needs to master the same competencies as a child would at the third grade literacy level, for example), the approach must be different in that it must be relevant, meaningful and engaging as well as appropriate for adults. Research-based best practices for working with adult learners are essential. Adult literacy curriculum and instructional approaches are consistently developed with a lens for disabilities and multiple learning styles.

B. Reading Strategies for Adult Basic Education Students:

The Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix (2006) recommends the following reading strategies for adult learners:

Reading Skill	Instructional Strategies for Reading
Alphabetic Skills	Teach explicit, structured, systematic phonics, which includes phonemic awareness.
Fluency	Provide adults with regular opportunities to practice guided, repeated oral reading of connected text; guidance may be provided by a teacher or a tutor, another adult learner, or audio-taped texts.
Vocabulary	Assess adults' vocabulary with an oral vocabulary test as a measure of their reading potential. Oral vocabulary represents reading potential because if students know the word meanings from their experience with oral language, they need to be able to identify the words in print. Expand adult learners' vocabulary through: - Direct instruction in word meanings and word-learning strategies. - Indirect approaches involving broad readings in varied content areas.
Comprehension	Provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies. Instruction in other reading components can include decoding, word identification, fluency, and vocabulary. Use the following strategies to help improve comprehension: - Comprehension monitoring - Graphic and semantic organizers - Question answering & Cooperative learning - Question generation - Story structure - Summarization

C. Literacy Resources for Other Adult Education Student Categories:

In order to meet the literacy needs of the English language learner students, it is recommended that adult educators utilize WIDA standards as a guide. With regards to students working toward a high school diploma, the NVACS contain the appropriate grade level standards. By investigating specific workforce expectations, such as those listed on the Workforce Transition page, educators will be able to best prepare students for future careers. Lastly, collaborative teams are recommended between local high schools and community colleges/universities in order to best communicate the expected Reading and Writing skills necessary for entrance into a higher education setting.

D. Writing Strategies for Adult Education (all categories):

Teaching Excellence for Adult Learners (TEAL) recommends the following writing strategies for adult learners (2013):

- Strategy Instruction (self-regulated by student)
- Summarization
- Collaborative Writing
- Setting Specific Product Goals
- Word Processing and other technological tools
- Sentence combining
- Pre-writing
- Inquiry
- Process Writing
- Study of written models with directed guided practices

E. Content and Delivery:

Explicit instruction in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language is essential to the adult learner's success. Additional instruction in employability skills is often provided. Pathways are made for learners to progress, regardless of functioning level upon entry, up and through the High School Equivalency level, and then on to postsecondary education, or training that will lead to family-sustaining jobs that exist in their community. Multiple delivery modalities are recommended including online, face-to-face, webinars, etc. Methods for embedding instruction with technology are also recommended. More peer collaboration has been embedded into instructional objectives.

Malcolm Knowles (2008), a pioneer in adult learning, recommends the following six tips for teaching adults:

Table 3. KEY TIPS FOR TEACHING ADULTS
(Knowles, 2008)

- Plan some activities where students can direct their own learning
- Use active participation and groups for social interaction
- Use a variety of teaching and learning activities, including hands-on learning
- Make the learning relevant to what students will be doing when they leave the classroom
- Spend less time lecturing and let students work on solving problems
- Provide a supportive learning environment with multiple resources, breaks, and opportunities to ask questions and correct mistakes

Digital and Multi-Media Tools:

A. The Standards:

Because the use of digital and multi-media tools is such a new element to the instructional design, language from the original NVACS regarding its use is quite specific::

> New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. Digital texts confront students with the potential for continually updated content and dynamically changing combinations of words, graphics, images, hyperlinks, and embedded video and audio. (CCSS Anchor Standards, 2009).

B. Integration:

Ampferer, Indelicato, and Wilson-Vazauez (2007) point out the critical role that technology plays in adult literacy, saying "We know that our students all need digital literacy skills if they're going to take the GED, go on to college, or even apply for a job. However, experience (and research) shows us that isolated digital literacy instruction isn't effective and students have a hard time transferring the skills to new situations. So we're integrating technology into writing instruction so that students can learn the digital skills, sometimes without really noticing they're learning them, as they focus on writing".

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Essential #2. DATA-DRIVEN AND STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION				
Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Instructional materials and content are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional materials and content include explicit instruction in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.				1 2 3 4 5
3. CCR standards are strategically incorporated into educators' daily lesson planning and instructional practice with fidelity.				1 2 3 4 5
4. All adult students complete student evaluation forms at the end of every course that align to the CCR Adult Education Standards.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Web-Based intervention supports in Adult Education Literacy are created for students in all categories of Adult Education.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Student data is routinely reviewed to evaluate literacy progress and instruction across all layers of Adult Education including ABE, ASE/High School Completion, ELL, Career Pathways, and Community Colleges.				1 2 3 4 5
7. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5
Action Ideas for Data-Driven and Standards-Based Instruction and Intervention:				

Essential 3: Literacy Assessment Systems

What Works Summary

Literacy Demands:

There is a tremendous need to improve literacy rates for adults in America. Forty-three percent of the adult population in the United States reads at or below the basic literacy level, which is defined as having the skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy activities, such as using a television guide to find out what programs are on at a specific time (Kutner, Greenberg, Jin, Boyle, Hsu, & Dunleavy, 2007). Fourteen percent of adults do not read well enough to understand a newspaper story written at an eighth grade reading level or to even fill out a job application (Proliteracy, 2010). In 2003, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy found that 30 million adults were shown to possess no more than the simple, concrete literacy skills of a fifth grader (Baer, Kutner, Sabatini, & White, 2009). These daunting statistics point to the blaring reality that many American adult lives are affected by literacy deficits. For those involved in assisting these individuals, the necessity to individualize instruction and programmatic services has become commonplace; therefore, the role of assessment becomes critical in meeting every adult learner's literacy needs.

Assessment Framework:

To assist providers in collecting and reporting outcomes, an Adult Literacy accountability system must provide measures that allow assessment of the impact of adult education instruction, methodologies for collecting the measures, reporting forms and procedures, and training and technical assistance. Measures include but are not limited to academic achievement, attainment of career and high school equivalency certificates, and entry into higher education or training.

Comprehensive Assessment System:

In an extensive review of the assessment protocols used in Adult Literacy, Dr. Ann Bessell of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy discovered a variety of tests and measurements being used to measure both student and program progress in this area that includes achievement tests for adults and children, state academic tests, tests for English language learners, surveys, Likert scale inventories, and interviews. One downside is that this variety of measures makes it difficult to compare programs and results of interventions (Bessell, 2007). Bessell also recommends actions for establishing systems of shared data. Her premise is that "shared measurement can provide a platform to share data and engage in strategic dialogs for improvements in strategies and actions" (Hanleybrown et al., 2011). Continued efforts are in place across the country for expanding the use of shared measurement practices - particularly across both realms of adult and family literacy.

Nevada State Assessment System:

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education (ED, OCTAE) mandates that each state receiving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II (WIOA) funding develop, publish, and implement on an annual basis a written assessment policy (Federal Register 34 CFR 462.40-462.44). The regulation requires states to describe what assessments local programs are to use, when local programs are to administer pretest and post-tests, what the training requirements are for assessments, and what the assessment administration and reporting requirements are.

Program providers must use LiteracyPro Systems' Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) data collection and reporting software to report learner progress by educational functioning levels. All eligible adult literacy program providers must use state approved instruments for state and federal reporting requirements. The use of common assessment instruments based on standardized scaled scores provides National Reporting System (NRS) standardized data and progress reports across all of Nevada's adult literacy providers.

Best Practices & Implementation:

The student population in adult literacy is obviously broad and diverse. It includes adults who are non-literate with little or no schooling, immigrants in need of English skills, learners who have had some formal secondary education yet lack the skills for entry-level college classes, and transitional students who are college or career bound. This diversity of students results in the use of a variety of literacy assessment tools and methods. Therefore, the collection of valid and reliable data for Adult Basic Education and English Language Acquisition programs is accomplished through the use of standardized assessments. The most prevalent assessments being used to measure adult literacy include the following:

- CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System), appropriate for English language and basic skills learner
- TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education), appropriate for basic skills and high school equivalency learners
- TABE Complete Language Assessment System–English (TABE CLAS-E), appropriate for English language learners
- GAIN (General Assessment of Instructional Needs), appropriate for basic skills and High School Equivalency learners
- Other sources include the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and assessment data from institutions of higher education in the state

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ADULT LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL
(All Adult Basic Education and Community College Programs)

Essential #3. LITERACY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Literacy assessment tools and protocols align to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.				1 2 3 4 5
2. An assessment framework has been established that includes multiple measures and data points. Data that is gathered includes all categories of student literacy performance (diagnostic, formative, interim, summative, etc.).				1 2 3 4 5
3. A data collection system has been established that is user-friendly and accessible to all educators. Adult educators have received training on the effective use of this system.				1 2 3 4 5
4. Adult educators have received (evidence-based) training on the data-driven decision-making process.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Data teams are established that meet routinely to analyze student performance in order to improve student growth and educator effectiveness across literacy components.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Literacy data discussions are structured via an evidence-based collaborative inquiry model; one that includes strategies for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Structures are in place for communicating data to stakeholders.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Literacy Assessment Systems:

Essential 4: Professional Learning

What Works Summary

National Guidelines:

Learning Forward, the Professional Learning Association, has composed an entire set of standards for professional learning (2013). This thorough set of recommendations covers the following areas: professional learning communities, resources, outcomes, leadership, data, implementation, and learning designs. Nevada adult educators are recommended to utilize the specifics of Learning Forward's standards as a guiding tool for their work.

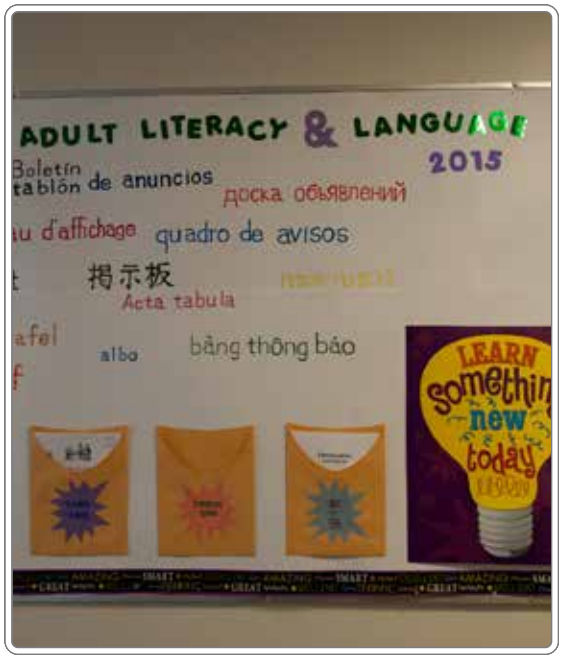
Alignment to College and Career Readiness Standards:

With the onset of the K-12 CCSS (Common Core State Standards) in 2010, the world of adult education quickly followed suit. By 2013, the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education released a new set of College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. The authors of these new CCR adult education standards summarize their purpose in creating this premier set of national standards, saying "it presents a starting point for raising awareness and understanding of the critical skills and knowledge expected and required for success in college, technical training programs, and employment in the 21st century" (Pimentel, 2013). In 2013 the state of Nevada adopted these standards. It is recommended that actions be taken to align professional learning opportunities in adult literacy to this set of standards.

Alignment to Professional Teaching Standards:

Experts within Nevada's Adult Education program have created a set of *ABE/ESL Teacher Professional Standards* in 2013 (NDE – OCRALEO). These standards are applied to all adult educators within the system. The primary focuses addressed by these standards include curriculum and andragogy, assessment and accountability, student engagement, professionalism, English language instruction, and math instruction. While the title of these standards might appear to only reflect upon two components of Adult Education, aligning professional learning to them is still strongly recommended for every component of Adult Education.

Best Practices and Implementation:



A. Pre-Service Preparation at Degree-Granting Institutions:

While a trend is growing across the nation, Nevada is not one of the states that presently offers any specific college teaching degree in the area of adult education or adult literacy. With the increase in these particular degree programs across the country, it is recommended that Nevada System of Higher Education leaders explore the feasibility of adding undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Adult Education, Adult Literacy, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

B. Advanced Degree Endorsement and/or Certifications:

Most adult educators in Nevada have already acquired a K-12 teaching degree. The primary advanced endorsement that is offered in Nevada is the TESL endorsement for those adult educators choosing to teach English language learners. Some states across America are beginning to require this particular degree for all adult educators.

C. Traditional Professional Learning Workshops:

The typical format presently used in Nevada's Adult Literacy professional learning opportunities include short-term, one-session workshops, trainings, professional learning communities (PLCs), ongoing and sustained professional development offerings, seminars, lectures, and conference sessions. The very independent world of the adult educator (most are part-time, many work in relative isolation teaching predominately evening classes at a variety of locations across the state away from the adult education program's main offices) has resulted in this format becoming the norm. Limitations of some of these offerings include the short-term exposure, a lack of depth of content, limited collaboration with other colleagues, and cost. The Leadership Excellence Academies (sponsored by the Nevada Department of Education) that is offered to adult education program directors aims to remedy some of these issues (along with more sustained PLC offerings).

D. Job-Embedded Professional Learning:

This format includes training that is specifically provided within the school or program, sometimes supported by NDE federal Leadership dollars. Activities often include study circles and/or inquiry groups. The make-up of the adult education teaching population (many instructors have other full-time jobs, they teach at a variety of different times, ranging from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. beyond) often makes this type of instructional delivery difficult. However, there are obvious strengths to this type of training. These include a more in-depth level of learning, which becomes ongoing and relevant to one's daily work and involves a higher level of critical thinking. As Helen Duffy writes, these critical elements need to be included for adult training to be effective saying, "Professional development should be set up to be content-rich, school-based, and job-embedded" (2014).

E. Literacy Content & Delivery Modalities:

There is a huge range of literacy functioning levels across the adult student population: pre-literate, non-literate, immigrants who have no formal education; those who are from cultures with no formal written alphabet; native English speaking adults who are functionally illiterate and reading below the 3rd grade level; and those who have completed high school and are getting ready for college academic writing and math. This range of ability requires that all literacy content follow the NVACS (for K-12 levels) and the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. Professional learning opportunities in adult literacy must align to both sets of these standards.

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ADULT LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL
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Essential #4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Student literacy data are routinely gathered and analyzed by educators in order to determine the content of professional learning curriculums.					1 2 3 4 5
2. Professional learning opportunities are aligned to the CCR Adult Education Standards and the Nevada's ABE/ESL Teacher Professional Standards. Instructors across all content areas receive explicit training on Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language.					1 2 3 4 5
3. Ongoing, job-embedded professional learning is provided in many ways to meet the very diverse realm of Adult Education (e.g. Professional learning communities, coaching, peer mentoring, and web-based learning).					1 2 3 4 5
4. Individual, Instructional and Professional Growth (teachers and administrators) opportunities are in place for educators based on observation, data, and staff needs.					1 2 3 4 5
5. Structures are in place for providing professional development for new Adult Education instructors.					1 2 3 4 5
6. Specific professional learning opportunities are offered that train the adult educator on Nevada's ABE/ESL Teacher Professional Standards.					1 2 3 4 5
7. Diverse professional learning opportunities are explored for the adult educator. [These might include the following topics: The Psychology of the Adult Learner, Multi-Cultural Education, Spanish for the Adult Educator, Using Data to Inform Instruction, & Collaborative Teaching Practices].					1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL					1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Professional Learning:

Essential 5: Family and Community Engagement

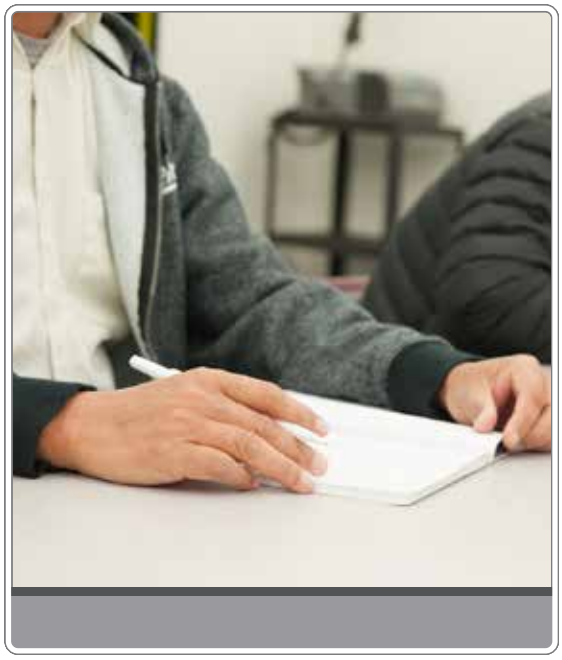
What Works Summary

National Guidelines:

In 2013, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, created a national framework for family-school-community partnerships – *the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships* (Kuttner & Mapp). These researchers discuss their rationale for the creation of this new capacity-building model: "As educators and policymakers become clearer on the *why* of engagement, they are still struggling with the *how*. We argue that these struggles emerge in part from a lack of attention to building capacity among families, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders" (p. 25).

Mapp and Kuttner's *Dual Capacity-Building Framework* was formulated using research on effective family engagement and home–school partnership strategies and practices, adult learning and motivation, and leadership development. The four primary components of this framework include:

- a description of the capacity challenges that must be addressed to support the cultivation of effective home–school partnerships;
- an articulation of the conditions integral to the success of family–school partnership initiatives and interventions;
- an identification of the desired intermediate capacity goals that should be the focus of family engagement policies and programs at the federal, state, and local level; and
- a description of the capacity-building outcomes for school and program staff as well as for families.



As this component of Adult Education expands, it is recommended that Nevada educators investigate SEDL's highly creative visual and contextual model for the 21st Century (*Appendix E: Links and Resources*).

Nevada State Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

In 2011, the Nevada State Legislature passed the Assembly Bill (AB) 224, which established Nevada's first Advisory Council on Family Engagement and Office of Family Engagement within the Nevada Department of Education. In creating a vision for family engagement across Nevada, this group adopted a set of national research-based PTA standards for Family-School Partnerships. Efforts aimed at improving the literacy skills are embedded within this state framework. While not specifically targeting the Adult Education arena, these principles still remain highly applicable to Adult Education efforts in this area. It is recommended that literacy family engagement activities be aligned to the following six standards (PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships):

1. Welcoming All Families into the School Community
2. Communicating Effectively
3. Supporting Student Success
4. Speaking Up for Every Child
5. Sharing Power
6. Collaborating w/the Community

Best Practices and Implementation for *Family Literacy*:

Multi-Generational Approaches:

In 2002, several researchers studied family literacy programs across the U.S. (Padak, Spain, and Baycich, 2002). They found the following "many documented benefits" of family literacy efforts:

> Adults who participated in these programs enhanced their academic skills, showing improvement in reading, writing and mathematics proficiency as well as in oral communication. Children demonstrated significant gains in school readiness and in language development and showed increased interest in reading"

Another major push toward expanding family literacy efforts across the U.S. was developed through a partnership of Toyota and the National Center for Family Literacy (now referred to as the National Center for Family Learning) in 2003. This program continues to thrive. One of their major activities today is to fund family literacy programs while also identifying model programs around the nation. Much of their work is grounded by sound research. They describe one of their efforts:

> The Toyota Family Literacy Program addresses the educational needs of Latino and other immigrant families by teaching English language and literacy skills to parents at the same time it enables them to be more involved in their children's education. Geared to families of children in kindergarten through third grade the program invites parents to come to school with their children and split their time between adult education classes and their own children's classrooms.

To combat the inter-generational problem of illiteracy with a multi-generational solutions, Literacy Kansas City is launching a new Family Reading Program. The following describes how this program operates:

> Adult learners will spend time learning on a self-paced reading computer program with the guidance of an instructor followed by individualized and small group tutoring. While adults are in class, their children will spend time with librarians and volunteers in age-appropriate literacy activities that include technology, playing, dancing, and singing.

The world of family literacy within an Adult Education framework holds much possibility for the future of literacy achievement across Nevada.

Best Practices and Implementation for *Community Partnerships:*

Model Programs:

The 2014 Library of Congress National Literacy Awards offers prime examples of model programs in family and community literacy across the nation. Several winners of this prestigious award include:

> **Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford, Connecticut** – adult literacy services are provided for mostly second language learners through volunteer teachers who are trained and regularly evaluated based on performance.
>
> **California Library Literacy Services (CLLS)** – one of the only state-funded, statewide library literacy programs in the country. CLLS is administered through local library systems and is implemented at more than 500 locations in 97 library systems. Each has staff members dedicated to performing volunteer training and matching volunteer tutors with adult learners.
>
> **The Literacy Assistance Center (LAC)** – provides professional development training to adult literacy educators and providers in New York City.
>
> **The Parent-Child Home Program** of Garden City, NY – connects community-based early literacy specialists to participating families twice a week for two years. Each week they supply a book or educational toy and model activities for parents.

The inclusion of these exemplary models of community partnerships in literacy is meant to serve as a starting point of investigation with the hope of replicating similar efforts across Nevada.:

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(All Adult Basic Education and Community College Programs)

Essential #5. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level 1 No Planning or Implementation in place	Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	Level 5 Sustained Practice
1. Adult educators encourage and maintain a culture that respects the broad diversity of their student population.				1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional leaders design and implement Adult Literacy Education offerings in partnership with Family Engagement Activities in Pre-K Literacy Education Settings.				1 2 3 4 5
3. Instructional leaders design & implement local and statewide communication networks for Adult Literacy. Traditional networks are expanded out into local businesses, churches, organizations, employers, etc.				1 2 3 4 5
4. The availability of adult literary support services are communicated across communities, colleges, and every public K-12 system.				1 2 3 4 5
5. Systems are in place to inform local employers of Adult Literacy educational offerings.				1 2 3 4 5
6. Structures are in place for welcoming, training, and monitoring volunteers in adult literacy.				1 2 3 4 5
7. Structures are in place for educating the adult learner about navigating his/her way through the Adult Education terrain.				1 2 3 4 5
8. OVERALL LEVEL OF THIS ESSENTIAL				1 2 3 4 5

Action Ideas for Family and Community Engagement:

Suggestions for Adults to Effectively Transition to Life-Long Literacy Learning

- Continue to participate in adult education programs that offer additional opportunities for reading and writing (including other topic areas such as history, etc.)
- Familiarize yourself with the local community library. Stay up to date on its offerings. Become a regular visitor. Become a guide for family and friends.
- Strive to improve your own reading and writing behaviors in the workplace. Extend your efforts by becoming a literacy role model for your workplace peers.
- Strive to improve your own reading and writing behaviors in home environment. Extend your efforts by becoming a literacy role model for your family members.
- Participate in meaningful book clubs with your peers. Model how to intellectually discuss the elements of a book with your family members.
- Turn your television off during several evenings each week. Replace this behavior with reading and/or writing activities for enjoyment (including board games).
- Keep a personal journal.
- Begin capturing family stories by writing them down for future generations of your own family.
- If you have always wanted to write a book – give it a try. Take a risk.
- Sustain effective reading behaviors with your family members.
- Sustain effective listening and speaking behaviors for your family members.
- Sustain effective writing behaviors with your family members.
- Educate yourself on how to navigate online sources of information. Become information literate by being able to identify research-based facts versus opinions. Teach this skill to your family members.
- Become involved in community activities aimed at extending the role of literacy across Nevada. Become a Nevada literacy advocate.

Appendix A: NSLP ACTION ROADMAP

LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

	Leadership and Sustainability	Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention	Literacy Assessment Systems	Professional Learning	Family and Community Engagement
Level 5 Sustained Practice	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly Progress Reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually	- Evidence-based progress monitoring conducted on all items noted in Level 4 - Yearly progress reviews - Recommended modifications are made annually
Level 4 Expanded Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are revisited and revised - Collaboration & shared responsibility plan is revisited & revised - Literacy training continues for instructional leaders - Literacy coach fully on board	- Educators' use of data to inform instruction is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of nationally recognized targets revisited & revised - Methods for measuring fidelity of RTI revisited & revised - Effectiveness of interventions is systematically monitored	- Adopted assessment framework is revisited and revised - Data collection system is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator DBDM Training is implemented - System used for data teams is revisited and revised - Advanced Educator training on assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers' use of data to inform practice is revisited and revised - NVACS Alignment system is revisited & revised - Use of explicit literacy instruction is revisited and revised - Educators identify focus literacy goals in NEPF PGP	- Culture validates and honors parent/family diversity - Parental support Literacy training is expanded - Parents become active participants in monitoring student literacy progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Impact of literacy work with community partners revisited and revised
Level 3 Beginning Level of Implementation	- Literacy goals are created - Literacy goals are implemented - Culture implements collaboration & shared responsibility for literacy - Literacy training begins for instructional leaders - Literacy coach phased in	- Educators use data to inform instruction - System created for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Instruction targets nationally recognized literacy objectives - Fidelity of RTI is measured - Effectiveness of interventions is monitored	- An effective assessment framework is implemented - An effective data-collection system is implemented - Educators receive training on the DBDM process - Data teams are established - Educator training on new assessments is implemented	- Professional learning providers use data to inform practice - System created for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Professional learning offered that includes explicit literacy - Educators use NEPF Growth Plan with literacy objectives	- Culture demonstrates respect for diversity - Parental support Literacy training is implemented - Parents/families are routinely contacted by educators to discuss student progress - Adult literacy referrals made - Implementation of literacy work with community
Level 2 Strategic Planning is in place	- Planning for goals occurs - Planning for collaboration & shared responsibility of literacy occurs - Planning for developing leaders' knowledge base occurs - Research begins on how to add a site-based literacy coach	- Planning occurs for educator data collection & analysis - Planning occurs for aligning materials/content to NVACS - Planning begins for insuring use of nationally recognized literacy objectives - Planning occurs for insuring fidelity of RTI model - Planning occurs for measuring effectiveness of interventions	- An effective assessment framework is designed - An effective data-collection system is designed - Educator training is scheduled on the DBDM process - Planning begins for establishing data teams - Educator training is scheduled on new assessment tools and protocols	- Planning for professional learning is data-based - Planning occurs for aligning professional learning to NVACS - Explicit literacy instruction added to planning process - Planning occurs for insuring educator collaboration - NEPF Growth Plans template adds NVACS literacy objectives	- Systematic plans created for developing respect of parent & family diversity - Systematic plans created for parent/family literacy training - System designed for the communication of student progress to parent/families - Systems designed for referring adults to literacy courses - Systematic plan created for expanding literacy partners
Level 1 No planning or implementation is in place	- No data-driven measurable goals aligned to NVACS - Culture does not support collaboration or shared responsibility of literacy - Instructional leaders have no literacy knowledge base - No support of literacy coach position	- Educators not gathering or analyzing student literacy data to inform instruction - Instruction & materials not aligned to NVACS - Nationally recognized literacy objectives not targeted - RTI model not being implemented with fidelity - Interventions not assessed	- An ineffective assessment framework is in place - An ineffective data-collection system is in place - Educators receive no training on DBDM process - No data teams have been established - Educators receive no training on new assessments	- Professional learning is designed w/o data analysis - Professional learning is notaligned to NVACS - Professional learning does not include explicit literacy instruction - Culture does not support educator collaboration in lit. - Literacy absent from PGPs	- Lack of respect for diversity of parents/families - Lack of literacy training available for parent / families - Student literacy progress not communicated to parents - No referral protocols for adult literacy education - Ineffective community partners in literacy

Appendix B: Adult Action Plan Framework

NSLP Strategy Form

Action Plan Framework

ESSENTIAL: _____ Current Level of Implementation (per the NSLP Action Roadmap): _____

Members of Planning Team:

District: _____ School: _____ Grade Band: _____ Date: _____

Literacy Activity (What will be done?)	Specific Action Steps (How will it be done?)	Individual(s) Responsible (Who will be doing it?)	Projected Timeline (When will it occur?)		Resources Needed	Notes
			Start Date	End Date		

Appendix C: Adult Educator Professional Growth Plan Template

Adapted from Louisiana State Comprehensive Literacy Plan's Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Template, with permission

Name ..... Position .....

This sample template is provided to assist you as a Nevada Elementary School educator, as you work to design your own individualized Professional Growth Plans as outlined in the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). As an NSLP instrument, this template embeds professional goals and objectives that are deliberately aligned to literacy improvement. The educator is encouraged to design his/her professional growth plan with a strategic focus on literacy.

Part 1: Possible Goals:

When thinking about possible goals for your PGP, consider the following questions:

- How does my literacy knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performances measure up against the NEPF?
- Where do I need to grow professionally in order to optimize my effectiveness in impacting student literacy performance (i.e. outcomes and achievement levels).
- What areas for professional growth will have the greatest potential to improve the quality of literacy teaching and learning in my program?

Brainstorm of my Possible Goals (3-5):

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: NSLP/District/School/Program Connections:

When aligning your professional goals with the known needs of the NSLP, your district, school, or program, consider the following questions:

- Which of my professional goals are most directly related to implementing elements of Nevada's Elementary Literacy Plan aimed at improving student outcomes?
- For which of these goals can I identify reasonable outcomes, measures, or products that will serve as evidence of my professional growth?
- How will these goals be complementary to my colleagues PGPs and/or other component of my Elementary program?

My goals relate to NSLP/district/school/program improvement needs in the following ways:

_____

_____

_____

> CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Part 3: Identified Goals (inclusive of literacy) and their intended student outcomes (3-4):

Professional Educator Goals	Student Outcomes

Part 4: Outline of My Plan:

When outlining your specific PGP, consider the following questions:

- What am I going to do to achieve my goals?
- What are the initial steps in my plan?
- What activities will help me to achieve my goals and objectives?
- How will I make the time to accomplish the elements of my plan?
- What NSLP/district/school/program resources will I need?
- What evidence will I collect to demonstrate the achievement of my professional learning goals and how will I organize my evidence?

A. I will engage in the following activities (inclusive of literacy strategies):

_____

_____

_____

B. I will document my progress in achieving my professional learning goal(s) with the following artifacts (e.g. anecdotal records, observation logs, lesson plans, videotapes) and outcome data (i.e. assessment data gathered as evidence of student growth and development and student products).

_____

_____

_____

C. Resources I will need for full implementation of my PGP:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: NSLP Educator Planning Guide

NSLP EDUCATOR PLANNING GUIDE

for Authentic Literacy-Based Instruction

Teacher Name: _____ Age/Grade Band(s): _____

From (Date): _____ through (Date): _____

Instruction driven by the following data point(s): _____

Nevada State Literacy Plan ~ Essential 2: Data-Driven Standards-Based Instruction & Intervention: Implementation Targets from NSLP Self-Assessment Tool (list numbers)**:**

Targeted Content Objectives	_____Standards
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Targeted Literacy Objectives	**_____Standards**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Targeted Guiding Principles	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Birth-Age 3-Guidelines, Pre-K Standards, NVACS (K-12) CCR (College & Career Readiness) Standards (Adult)

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

THE "HOW": Using Literacy Strategies as Effective Instructional Methodologies ~

Literacy Modalities / Stages of Literacy Instruction	(Receptive Literacy) AUTHENTIC READING STRATEGIES	(Expressive Literacy) AUTHENTIC WRITING STRATEGIES
I. Pre-Instruction		
II. During Instruction		
III. Post-Instruction		
Integration of Technology:		
Classroom Interventions:		
Assessment Protocol(s):		
Exit Data Point(s): (if available)		

THE "WHAT" = Outcomes:

- Acquisition of Content Knowledge
- Enhancement of Sound Literacy Skills
- Enhancement of Guided Principal Behaviors

Appendix E: Links and Resources

Links to Nevada Department of Education Resources:

NDE Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning & Education Options:
http://cteae.nv.gov/

NDE Office of Career and Technical Education:
http://cteae.nv.gov/About/Career___Technical_Education/

NDE Office of Educator Development and Support:
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Educator_Development_and_Support/

NDE Office of Parental Engagement and Family Support:
http://nevadapife.nv.gov/

Nevada Department of Education Nevada ABE/ESL Teacher Professional Standards:
http://www.nevadaadulteducation.org/userfiles/files/Standards_Teacher%281%29.pdf

NDE Career and Technical Education Advisory Committees Policy and Guidance Handbook for Secondary and Postsecondary Education Revised 2014 Nevada:
http://cteae.nv.gov/Career _and_Technical_Education/Career_and Technical _Education_ _Home/

Links to Supplementary Resources:

College and Career Readiness Standards for Adults:
http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf

Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy:
http://www.ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/

CSAL – Center for the Study of Adult Literacy:
http://csal.gsu.edu/conten/homepage

National Commission on Adult Literacy:
http://wwwnationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org

Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers:
http://www.aleronline.org/

Toyota Family Learning:
http://toyotafamilylearning.org/

National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL):
https://nces.ed.gov/naal/

National Center for Families Learning (NCFL):
http://www.familieslearning.org/

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Summary of Legal Requirements Overseeing Literacy Education

Please Note:

The following legal and regulatory literacy references established by the state of Nevada are provided in a summarized version. Readers are encouraged to research each law and/or regulation in its entirety.

Nevada Revised Statutes

NRS 209.393: Regulations regarding literacy of offenders. The Board may adopt regulations which: Designate a level of **literacy** in reading and writing which is consistent with that required by the State Board of Education for its pupils in the eighth grade.

NRS 209.393: prohibiting illiterate offender from vocational training unless he's also receiving literacy training

2. An offender whose:

(a) Native language is not English;

(b) Ability to read and write in his or her native language is at or above the level of **literacy** designated by the Board in its regulations; and

(c) Ability to read and write the English language is below the level of **literacy** designated by the Board in its regulations,

5. As used in this section, "illiterate" means having an ability to read and write that is below the level of **literacy** designated by the Board in its regulations.

NRS 213.315: prohibiting offenders from participation in a program

2. An offender whose:

(a) Native language is not English;

(b) Ability to read and write in his or her native language is at or above the level of **literacy** designated by the Board in its regulations; and

(c) Ability to read and write the English language is below the level of **literacy** designated by the Board in its regulations,

5. As used in this section, "illiterate" means having an ability to read and write that is below the level of **literacy** designated by the Board in its regulations.

NRS 233C.200: Creation; members; meetings; quorum; compensation and reimbursement; administrative services.

(f) The Chair of the State Council on Libraries and **Literacy** or a member of the Council designated by the Chair.

NRS 379.003: Master plan for libraries. The governing body of every public library in this State shall develop, through a continuing process of planning, a master plan for the library or libraries for which it is responsible, including plans for levels of library services and resources, and shall submit the plan to the State Council on Libraries and **Literacy**. The master plan must be designed to extend 5 years into the future and must be made current at least every 2 years.

NRS 380A.021: "Council" defined. As used in this chapter, "Council" means the State Council on Libraries and **Literacy.**

NRS 380A.031: Creation; appointment of members; terms of office. The State Council on Libraries and **Literacy** is hereby created. The Council is advisory to the Division of State Library and Archives of the Department of Administration.

NRS 380A.041: Qualifications of members; ex officio members; term limits.

(j) A representative of private **literacy** organizations, voluntary **literacy** organizations or community-based **literacy** organizations; and

NRS 380A.081: Powers and duties. The Council may:

6. Examine and evaluate the programs for **literacy** in this State.
7. Establish a plan for coordinating programs and activities for promoting and increasing **literacy** in this State.

NRS 385.635: Duties; annual report; posting of certain information on Department's website.

(d) Provide information to the school districts and public schools on the availability of competitive grants for programs which offer:

(3) Family **literacy** training;

NRS 388.575: Establishment of statewide program by Department of Education; requirements of statewide program.

2. The statewide program may include courses of study for:

(a) A high school diploma;

(b) Basic **literacy;**

NRS 389.074: Instruction on financial **literacy.** The board of trustees of each school district and the governing body of each charter school that operates as a high school shall ensure that instruction on financial **literacy** is provided to pupils enrolled in each public high school within the school district or in the charter school, as applicable. The instruction must include, without limitation:

NRS 391.512: Creation of regional training programs and Nevada Early **Literacy** Intervention Programs; provision of services to teachers and administrators in certain geographical areas; designation of certain school districts as fiscal agent.

1. There are hereby created the Southern Nevada Regional Training Program, the Northeastern Nevada Regional Training Program and the Northwestern Nevada Regional Training Program. The governing body of each regional training program shall establish and operate a:

(b) Nevada Early **Literacy** Intervention Program through the regional training program established pursuant to paragraph (a).

As fiscal agent, each school district is responsible for the payment, collection and holding of all money received from this State for the maintenance and support of the regional training program and Nevada Early **Literacy** Intervention Program established and operated by the applicable governing body.

NRS 391.544: Provision of training to teachers, other licensed educational personnel and administrators; maintenance and distribution of training list; authority to contract with board of trustees for additional training; training for paraprofessionals authorized.

(b) Through the Nevada Early **Literacy** Intervention Program established for the regional training program, training for teachers who teach kindergarten and grades 1, 2 or 3 on methods to teach fundamental reading skills, including, without limitation:

NRS 391.552: Evaluation of regional training program by governing body; submission of annual report. The governing body of each regional training program shall:

Establish a method for the evaluation of the success of the regional training program, including, without limitation, the Nevada Early **Literacy** Intervention Program. The method must be consistent with the uniform procedures and criteria adopted by the Statewide Council pursuant to NRS 391.520.

3. (h) An evaluation of the success of the regional training program, including, without limitation, the Nevada Early **Literacy** Intervention Program, in accordance with the method established pursuant to subsection 1.

NRS 393.07105: Trustees may grant use of school libraries to general public during non-school hours; cooperative agreements for library personnel and resources; acceptance of gifts and grants and outreach to certain families authorized.

4. (b) Enhance its outreach to families with preschool children, parents who need to improve their **literacy** skills and the general community.

NRS 430A.160: Services provided.

(g) Programs to supplement formal education, including, without limitation, mentor programs for pupils in elementary and secondary schools, **literacy** programs, programs that encourage parental involvement in school, programs that teach English as a second language, programs to assist in the naturalization process and other alternative educational programs;

NRS 432A.076: Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council: Creation; membership; duties; acceptance of gifts, grants and donations.

2. The Council shall:

(f) Establish, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, guidelines for evaluating the school readiness of children. The guidelines must:

(2) Address the following components of school readiness:

(IV) Language and early **literacy** development; and

NRS 632.292: Application for certificate; certification by endorsement; issuance of certificate.

1. An applicant for a certificate to practice as a medication aide - certified must submit proof satisfactory to the Board that the applicant:

(d) Has successfully completed a **literacy** and reading comprehension screening process approved by the Board;

Nevada Administrative Code (NAC)

NAC 378.070: Approval or disapproval of proposal. (§ 3 of ch. 328, Stats. 1983)

1. If the State Library and Archives Administrator approves the proposal, it will be forwarded to the State Council on Libraries and **Literacy** for its recommendation.

NAC 389.029: "Information literate" defined. (NRS 385.080) "Information literate" means attaining the **literacy** level established by NAC 389.2433, 389.248, 389.2932, 389.29415 or 389.299 for the grade level in which a pupil is enrolled.

NAC 389.2433: Second grade: Information **literacy.** (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520) By the end of the second grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the second grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information **literacy** by the completion of the second grade:

NAC 389.248: Information **literacy.** (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520) By the end of the third grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the third grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information **literacy** by the completion of the third grade:

NAC 389.2932: Information **literacy**. (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520) By the end of the fourth grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the fourth grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information **literacy** by the completion of the fourth grade:

NAC 389.29415: Fifth grade: Information **literacy.** (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520) By the end of the fifth grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the fifth grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information **literacy** by the completion of the fifth grade:

NAC 389.2948: Fifth grade: Technology and computers. (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520)

5. For the area of the appropriate use of technology, understand human, cultural and societal issues relating to technology and practice legal and ethical behaviors when using technology, as demonstrated by the ability of the pupil to:

(e) Explain the concepts of using technology in an appropriate manner, accessing technology in an appropriate manner and technological **literacy**, and explain the personal and societal responsibilities associated with those concepts.

NAC 389.299: Sixth grade: Information **literacy**. (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520) By the end of the 6th grade, and continuing through the 12th grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the 6th grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information **literacy** by the completion of the 6th grade and continuing through the completion of the 12th grade:

NAC 389.670: Credit granted for performance on examination in lieu of course attendance: Board of trustees required to prescribe application and eligible courses of study; effect of pupil's withdrawal from school; authority of State Board to review examination and minimum score required. (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.171) 2. The board of trustees of each school district shall prescribe the specific courses of study for which a pupil may be granted credit without having attended the regularly scheduled classes in the course pursuant to NRS 389.171, including, without limitation, Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, computer **literacy**, English I, English II, English III, English IV, principles of science, life science, physical science, health, history of the United States, world history, government of the United States, sociology and foreign languages. The board of trustees of each school district shall make available to school counselors, pupils and parents of pupils a list of the courses of study prescribed pursuant to this subsection.

NAC 391.089: Qualifications for teaching pupils from birth through second grade.

3. Hold an elementary license, a secondary license, or a license to teach middle school or junior high school education, that is endorsed with a major in child care, and:

(b) Have completed at least 6 semester hours of courses in early childhood education consisting of courses in any of the following subjects:

(2) Emergent language and **literacy**; or

4. Have completed at least 35 semester hours of courses in early childhood education for children who are developing typically and atypically consisting of:

(b) Twelve semester hours in early childhood curriculum and program implementation that include at least one course in each of the following subjects:

(1) Language and **literacy**;

NAC 391.095: Qualifications for elementary license. To receive an elementary license, a person must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and must have completed a program of preparation for teaching in the elementary grades which is approved by the Board. The program must include, without limitation:

1. Thirty-two semester hours of credit in courses in elementary professional education consisting of:

(c) Nine semester hours of credit in the teaching of **literacy** or language arts; and

NAC 391.098: Endorsements. (NRS 391.019)

2. The Board recognizes the following subjects for an endorsement on an elementary license:

(e) **Literacy.**

NAC 391.13066: Major or minor in business education. (NRS 391.019)

1. The semester hours of credit required for a major in business education must include course work in each of the following areas of study, including 9 semester hours in upper division courses:

(g) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, use of computers, which must include instruction in each of the following areas of study:

(1) Computer **literacy,** including, without limitation, proper keyboarding techniques, word processing and the use of databases and spreadsheets;

NAC 391.243: Endorsement to teach American Sign Language. (NRS 391.019)

1. A person may receive an endorsement to teach American Sign Language in kindergarten through grade 12 if the person:

(b) Has completed at least 12 semester hours of course work in professional education and the methods of teaching from a regionally accredited college or university of which at least 6 semester hours of credit must have been earned in the methods of teaching basic subjects, including, without limitation, **literacy** or language arts, mathematics, science and social studies; and

NAC 391.285: Endorsement to teach reading. (NRS 385.080, 391.019) To renew this endorsement, the holder must have completed 6 semester hours of graduate courses in reading and **literacy** education or either of them.

NAC 391.339: Endorsement to teach mathematics in grades 5 to 8, inclusive. (NRS 391.019)

1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 4, to receive an endorsement to teach mathematics to pupils in grades 5 to 8, inclusive, a person must hold a valid elementary or secondary license, or a license to teach middle school or junior high school education, and must complete 24 semester hours of credit in courses in methods of teaching mathematics and courses involving:

(e) Computer **literacy** or computer science;

NAC 391.378: Qualifications for teaching pupils who have autism. (NRS 391.019, 391.032)

2. To receive the endorsement, the person must:

(d) Hold a bachelor's or master's degree and have completed:

(2) Thirty semester hours of course work, including course work in the following areas:

(XI) Methods of teaching **literacy.**

NAC 432A.430: Early care and education programs. (NRS 432A.077)

4. Each facility described in subsection 1 shall develop a written plan of curriculum for the children enrolled in the facility. The plan must:

(e) Integrate age appropriate key areas of instruction, including, without limitation, **literacy,** mathematics, science, social studies, creative expression and the arts, and health and safety;

Attorney General Opinion

AG OPINION NO. 2000-28 COSMETOLOGY; LICENSES:

The court also justified its holding by stating that the national language of the United States is English. The court stated:

Our laws are printed in English and our legislatures conduct their business in English. Some states even designate English as the official language of the state. [Citation omitted.] Our national interest in English as the common language is exemplified by 8 U.S.C. Section 1423, which requires, in general, English language literacy as a condition to naturalization as a United States citizen.

Id. at 1220. In summary, the court found that the Commission, by offering its examination in English only, did not violate any of the plaintiff's constitutional rights since the Commission's testing policy rationally furthered a state purpose.

Nevada System of Higher Education

Board of Regents Handbook, Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 7

Section 7. Regents' Service Program

The Regents' Service Program is established by the Board of Regents so that NSHE students can make a contribution to the critical needs of the community. Work opportunities for currently enrolled students shall be service-oriented and reflect a high level of skill or knowledge. Priority will be given to **literacy** and P-16 programs.

Procedures and Guidelines Manual, Chapter 11, Section 1

Section 1. Regents' Service Program

Title 4, Chapter 18 of the Board of Regents' Handbook establishes the Regents' Service Program so that NSHE students can make a contribution to the critical needs of the community. The following procedures outline the program's structure.

1. Intent

Institutional models previously entitled Regents' Award Program shall be renamed to Regents' Service Program. Programs must include:

b. **Literacy** programs that meet the needs of students in K-12 shall receive first priority. Recipients may be placed as off-campus tutors or coordinators for these programs.

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(on behalf of the National Center on Innovation)

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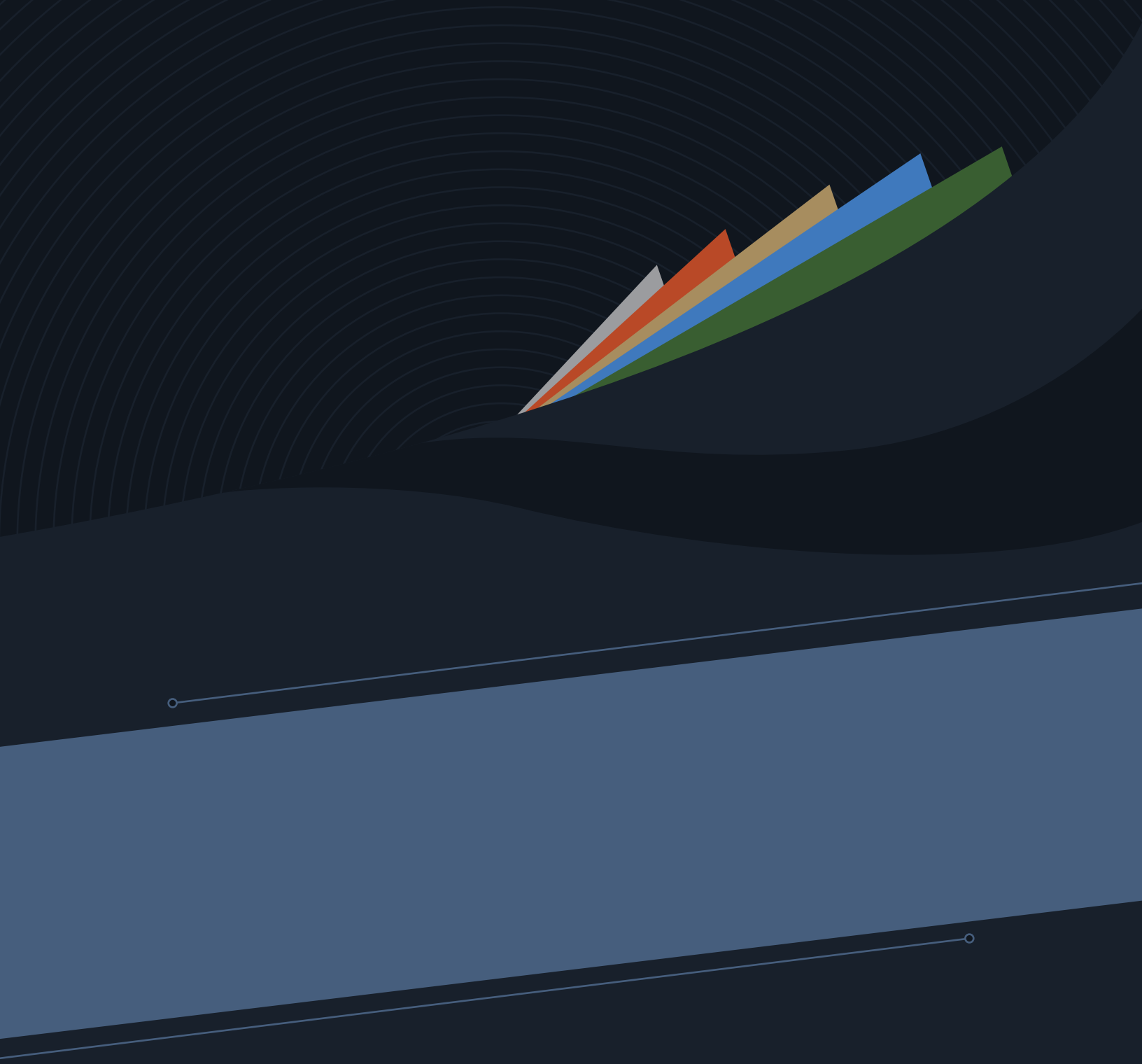

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