



# Nebraska Literacy Project Plan

2024-2025

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## Mission, Vision, and Purpose

The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education is to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living. Addressing literacy is an urgent priority to achieve this mission.

The State Board of Education established a vision for addressing the literacy needs of all learners through a position statement on Foundational literacy. The statement reads:

*The Nebraska State Board of Education supports and encourages systemic efforts to improve foundational literacy, working to ensure that all students become successful readers and writers. The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that all schools should establish policies that promote high-quality early literacy instruction that is grounded in evidence-based practices and that highlights the importance of grade-level reading. Foundational literacy instruction is essential to ensure all children become successful readers and writers. All students, including students with disabilities, English learners, and high-ability learners should have access to high-quality instructional materials and instruction.*

All schools should:

- *Understand that literacy development begins at birth and partner with families and communities to encourage strong early literacy connections.*
- *Promote the practice of adults reading aloud to students daily to foster their enjoyment of reading and expose them to rich spoken language.*
- *Provide tools and resources to students' caregivers and families that support early literacy development.*
- *Ensure all classrooms are "print-rich" environments, and that students have opportunities to engage with a wide range of high-quality literary and informational texts.*
- *Select and implement standards-aligned, high-quality instructional materials for English Language Arts.*
- *Develop and implement a curriculum scope and sequence of foundational writing instruction.*
- *Guarantee systematic and ongoing professional learning for all educators in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension within standards-based, core instruction.*

- *Ensure all students receive a strong sequence of explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.*
- *Use the Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) to identify students in need of intervention that consists of targeted, supplemental instruction and progress monitoring.*
- *Consider factors including vision, hearing, dyslexia, and other learning issues that may affect a student's literacy development.*

The Nebraska Literacy Project will ~~work to~~ provide a sustainable plan to ensure the use of evidence-based reading instructional practices statewide. This project is designed to create a roadmap and system of support and resources that will allow the state to achieve and sustain its literacy goals of strong reading skills for all Nebraska students.

### **Goals**

The Nebraska Literacy Project has long-term outcome goals of reading proficiency for all students, but aspirational goals start with the achievement of shorter-term outcomes. Listed below are the initial goals of this project.

1. Increase third-grade proficiency on the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) ELA to 75% by 2030.
2. Increase the % of Nebraska K-3 students who meet the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act approved assessment thresholds.
3. Ensure 100% of Nebraska educator preparation programs are implementing evidence-based instruction for teachers grounded in the science of reading.

## Statutory Requirements

The Nebraska Literacy Project represents an important step in establishing a statewide focus on literacy as a priority for our state. It represents the priorities of the Nebraska State Board of Education along with educators, parents, and community members ~~across the state~~ who have a shared goal of assuring strong literacy skills for all Nebraskans. In addition, the project seeks to implement requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act first established in 2018, and revised in 2023 and 2024, including the goal of increasing the capacity of all Nebraska educators to provide high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction. It is important to note that terms such as the **science of reading**, **evidence-based reading**, and **structured literacy** appear frequently in statute, policy guidance documents, and related tools and resources. Often these terms are used interchangeably when referring to best practices associated with foundational literacy. The **science of reading** should be used when referencing the large body of research that has demonstrated how children learn to read. **Structured literacy** should be used when referring to a comprehensive approach that is grounded in the research base, or the science of reading. **Evidence-based reading** should be used when referring to specific programs or instructional methods or strategies that have a basis in trustworthy evidence. To learn more, please see Fig. 1.

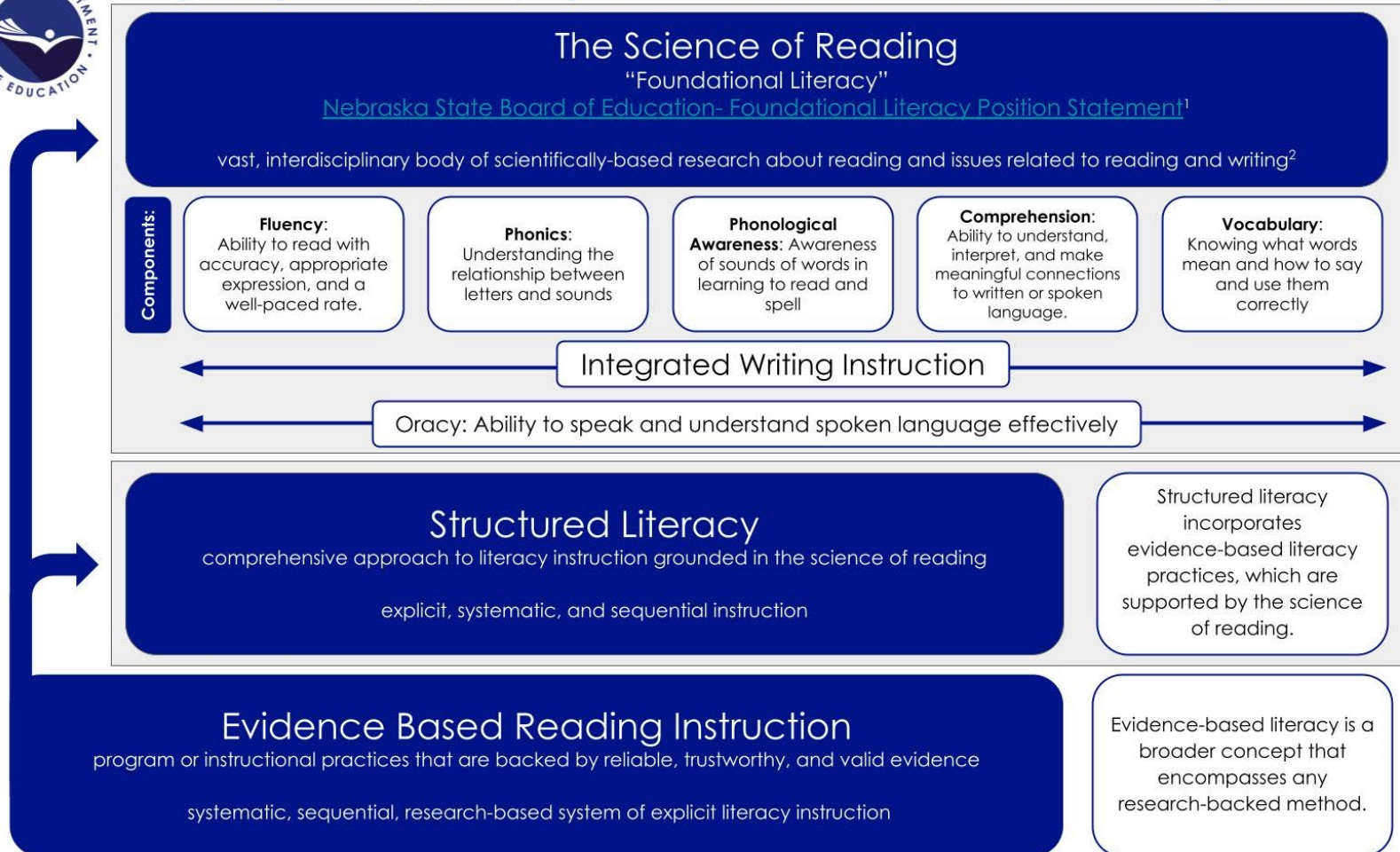
The project seeks to address key elements of the revised Reading Improvement Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-2607):

- A Professional Learning System with Regional Literacy Coaches
  - “The NDE shall develop and implement a professional learning system to help provide sustained professional learning and training regarding evidence-based reading instruction for teachers who teach children from four years of age through third grade at an approved or accredited school and teachers employed by an early childhood education program approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE).”
  - “The professional learning system shall include information and tips for teachers related to helping children and families work with local family literacy centers.”
  - “The NDE shall work with educational service units to provide regional coaches to approved or accredited elementary schools to provide assistance and job-embedded training relating to evidence-based reading instruction to teachers who teach students in kindergarten through third grade.”
- Statewide School Implementation of Evidence-Based Reading Instruction
  - “Evidence-based reading instruction means instruction in reading that is in alignment with scientifically based reading research and does not include the three-cueing system model of reading instruction.

- Three-cueing system model of reading instruction is an approach to foundational skills instruction that involves the use of three different types of instructional cues which include semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic.”
- “Approved or accredited elementary schools and early childhood education programs approved by the State Board of Education shall ensure:
  - Teachers who teach children from four years of age through third grade are aware of the professional learning system;
- And are adequately trained regarding evidence-based reading instruction to effectively instruct students in reading.”



# Integrating Literacy: Unifying the Science and Evidence of Reading Instruction



<sup>1</sup>Nebraska Department of Education. (2024). Foundational literacy. <https://www.education.ne.gov/policyreference/foundational-literacy/>

<sup>2</sup>The Reading League. (n.d.). What is the science of reading? The Reading League. <https://www.thereadingleague.org/what-is-the-science-of-reading/>

## **Tenets of the Nebraska Literacy Project**

The Nebraska Literacy Project will address its goal of strengthening literacy instruction and literacy skills through a multi-pronged approach as outlined in its five tenets.

1. High-quality professional development for all educators who teach literacy for students age 4 through 3rd grade grounded in the science of reading to ensure that educators have skills in evidence-based instructional practices.
2. Sustained teacher preparation programs and PreK-3 curriculum, instruction, and assessment grounded in the science of reading using high-quality materials.
3. Establishment of a network of regional literacy coaches across the state who are trained in the science of reading and evidence-based instructional practices.
4. Data collections measuring the effectiveness of literacy initiatives and implementation of professional development in evidence-based reading.
5. Development of resources to assist families in accessing local family literacy centers, existing community literacy initiatives, and pre-kindergarten programs in order to strengthen literacy and language development for young children so that they start kindergarten ready to thrive.



# The NDE Nebraska Literacy Project

**1. Professional Development Grounded in the Science of Reading**

**2. Curriculum and Teacher Preparation Aligned to Evidence-based Reading Instruction**

**5. Family Literacy Programs and Pre-K**

**3. Regional Literacy Coaches**



**4. Data Collection of Effectiveness**



## NDE Nebraska Literacy Project Overview (1 vision, 3 goals, 5 tenets)

### Vision

To foster a culture of proficient and lifelong readers in Nebraska and unlock student potential for learning, earning, and living through a focus on evidence-based reading instruction

### Goals

#### Increase third-grade proficiency on NSCAS ELA to 75% by 2030

##### Sub Goals

- Increase the % of Nebraska K-3 students who meet the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act approved assessment thresholds
- Ensure 100% of Nebraska educator preparation programs are implementing evidence-based instruction for teachers grounded in the science of reading

#### Tenet 1 Professional Learning System

High quality professional development for all educators who teach literacy for students age 4 through 3rd grade grounded in the science of reading to ensure that educators have skills in evidence-based instructional practices

#### Tenet 2 Curriculum and Teacher Preparation Aligned to Evidence-based Reading Instruction

Sustained teacher preparation programs and PreK-3 curriculum, instruction, and assessment grounded in the science of reading using high quality materials

#### Tenet 3 Regional Literacy Coaches

Establishment of a network of literacy coaches across the state who are trained in the science of reading and evidence-based instructional practices. This network of coaches will provide sustained support services to Nebraska schools

#### Tenet 4 Data Collections to Evaluate Effectiveness

Data collections measuring the effectiveness of literacy initiatives and implementation of professional development in evidence-based reading

#### Tenet 5 Family Literacy and Pre-K Programs

Development of resources to assist families in accessing local family literacy centers, existing community literacy initiatives, and pre-kindergarten programs in order to strengthen literacy and language development for young children so that they start kindergarten ready to thrive

## Project Phases

The Nebraska Literacy Project will take a phased approach to its goal of improving literacy for the state. Phases will overlap in some cases but will begin with an initial phase including a review of the existing landscape. Phase 2 will include professional development to ensure all current educators of children from four years of age through third grade are adequately trained regarding evidence-based reading instruction grounded in the science of reading. Phase 2 will also develop a foundational infrastructure to support sustained future practices. This will include work with higher education to ensure evidence-based literacy instruction is a key element of educator preparation programs, the development of a network of Regional Literacy Coaches, and support for Family Literacy Centers and preschools.

As a majority of practicing educators become proficient in the use of evidence-based literacy practices, efforts in Phase 3 will focus more heavily on ensuring support for sustained outcomes.

Nebraska Literacy Project Phases

<b>Phase 1</b> <b>Review of Existing Landscape</b> <b>(Current Practice)</b>  <b>2024</b>	<b>Phase 2</b> <b>Initial Professional Learning and</b> <b>Infrastructure Development</b>  <b>2024 - 2030</b>	<b>Phase 3</b> <b>Sustainability Phase</b>  <b>2030 ...</b>
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## Tenet Plans

<p>Tenet 1: Professional Learning System          Tenet Leads: Allyson DenBeste, Dr. Cindy Gray</p>		
<p>The Tenet 1 objective is to ensure all Nebraska educators who teach students age 4 through 3rd grade are proficient in the implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading.</p>		
<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers are the single most important in-school factor affecting student learning and achievement. A focus on refining and equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and tools necessary for addressing student literacy, including writing instruction and characteristics of dyslexia, is paramount.</li> <li>Several professional learning structures have already been developed and leveraged through various funding streams. The NDE will use the Literacy Advisory Panel to develop key criteria on which additional professional learning systems or providers are evaluated, meet statutory requirements, and are of high-quality.</li> </ul>		
<p>Current Practice 2024</p>	<p>Infrastructure Development 2024-2030</p>	<p>Sustainability Plan 2030...</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nebraska school districts have local control in determining professional development for teachers.</li> <li>The existing Reading Improvement Act (<a href="#">Nebraska Revised State Statute 79-2601 through 79-2607</a>) requires that students are screened for reading difficulties three times per year from kindergarten through grade 3. Students who do not meet approved thresholds must be provided with an Individual Reading Improvement Plan. Districts have autonomy in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NDE coordinated a NDE Literacy Advisory Panel, comprised of individuals with strong knowledge of evidence-based reading practices, who will:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise the NDE as they develop and implement the Nebraska Literacy Project.</li> <li>Assist in the development and refinement of criteria for evidence-based literacy approved professional learning programs.</li> <li>Support the selection of resources and professional development opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the state develops a critical mass of practicing educators with skills in evidence-based reading instruction (as measured by district assurance statements), priorities will shift to an emphasis on sustainability.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage the use of <a href="#">Nebraska Rule 20</a> to ensure strong instruction around structured literacy and evidence-based reading practices in Nebraska's educator preparation institutions (See Tenet 2 Plan).</li> <li>Leverage Regional Literacy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>creation of the plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The NDE conducted a 2024 Statewide Early Literacy Survey. The survey was sent to all public and private school superintendents in Nebraska and sought information regarding previous and/or existing SOR work in Nebraska schools (Sept. 2024) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current materials</li> <li>○ Number of teachers who have received training</li> <li>○ Types of previous trainings for PK-3 teachers</li> <li>○ Planned trainings for PK-3 teachers</li> <li>○ District priorities for future support</li> <li>○ District interest in Pilot program participation for WORDs or the UNO Early Literacy Workshop</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Initial projects will include the University of Nebraska Omaha Literacy Workshop, the University of Nebraska Lincoln WORDS Project and the University of Nebraska Kearney RISE preK workshop. Evaluation of these projects is ongoing.</li> </ul>	<p>for Regional Literacy Coaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaborate in the revision and enhancement of assessment criteria under the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act.</li> <li>● The NDE will collaborate with other organizations (e.g., higher education, Nebraska school districts) to implement and evaluate professional learning options related to evidence-based literacy for both public and nonpublic schools. ,</li> <li>● The NDE will provide a menu of evidence-based professional learning options for schools to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NDE Approved Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ WORDS Project (UNL)</li> <li>■ Lexia LETRS</li> <li>■ UNO Early Literacy Workshop</li> <li>■ UNK RISE (PreK)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Other structured literacy training would be recognized as meeting Nebraska Reading Improvement Act requirements based upon review from the NDE Literacy Advisory Panel. Programs including three-cueing will not be approved.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Coaches (See Tenet 3 Plan) to ensure ongoing support for evidence-based instructional practices related to structured literacy.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional funding support for professional development in structured literacy may be available through CLSD grant funding via request for application.</li> </ul>	
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<p>Tenet 2: Curriculum and teacher preparation aligned with evidence-based reading instruction  Tenet Leads: Dr. Marissa Payzant, Jim Kent</p>		
<p>The Tenet 2 objective is to ensure that Nebraska schools and Nebraska educator preparation programs provide curriculum, instruction, and materials aligned with evidence-based reading instruction for elementary English Language Arts.</p>		
<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-quality instructional materials align to academic standards, have clear learning outcomes, and reflect evidence-based practices. One resource to support the selection of high-quality instructional materials is the Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative (NIMC). The NIMC includes definitions for content area standards, curriculum, instructional materials, assessment and classroom instruction. A curriculum is determined locally and reflects "how" teachers help students learn the content within content area standards. Instructional materials are the tools and resources that are used as part of a locally determined curriculum.</li> <li>Nebraska's 16 educator preparation programs (EPPs) serve as the largest pipeline for new teachers in the state of Nebraska. Additionally, they serve as resources for additional skill building, added endorsements, and continued education. Nebraska's EPPs must ensure they align their preparation of educators to statutory requirements and best practices surrounding structured literacy, including writing instruction and characteristics of dyslexia, and the NDE must continue to support and hold EPPs accountable to expectations set forth by the State Board of Education.</li> </ul>		
Current Practice 2024	Infrastructure Development 2024-2030	Sustainability Plan 2030...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to 2024, institutions of higher education have had autonomy in the development of curriculum for teacher preparation in evidence-based reading instruction.</li> <li><a href="#">NDE Rule 20: Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs</a> was updated in June</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate communication of NDE Rule 20 updates with Nebraska educator preparation programs, including information about the science of reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NDE will develop an Implementation Guidance Document for Rule 20</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<p>2024. Teacher Preparation Program Requirements include section 005.02H Instructional Strategies. “The candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, build reading and writing skills through the application of the science of reading, and to apply knowledge in meaningful ways...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nebraska PK-12 districts have autonomy in the selection of instructional materials. The NDE provides guidance with information about the extent of alignment between instructional materials and academic standards.</li> </ul>	<p>including recommendations, look fors, and resources for EPPS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDE will continue to evaluate first- and third-year teacher survey results to determine additional support and/or identified needs for ed prep programs.</li> <li>• Curate information regarding alignment studies related to the science of reading and available curriculum and professional development materials.</li> </ul>	
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<p>Tenet 3: Regional Literacy Coaches Tenet Leads: Amy Rhone, Olivia Albert, Dr. Larianne Polk</p>
<p>The Tenet 3 objective is to develop a network of Regional Literacy Coaches who will provide sustained job-embedded training and support for evidence-based reading instruction for schools across the state.</p>
<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development is bolstered when there is follow up, accountability, and ongoing support. Coaches provide continued development to sustain teacher learning and implementation of evidence-based reading instruction, including writing instruction and characteristics of dyslexia</li> <li>• Educational Service Units serve as an invaluable resource for districts across the state. ESUs provide coaching to districts already, and as per Neb. Rev. Stat 79-2607, the NDE must collaborate with ESUs to establish regional coaches. This bill also provides \$1.8 million in state appropriations to fund the coaching system.</li> </ul>

Current Practice 2024	Infrastructure Development 2024-2030	Sustainability Plan 2030...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nebraska is divided into 17 Educational Service Unit areas (<a href="#">Nebraska Revised Statute 79-1204</a>). The role of the ESUs is to serve as educational service providers for their member Pk-12 school districts. ESUs collaborate with their member districts to prioritize services and professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review data from the 2024 Statewide Early Literacy Survey to evaluate the needs of Nebraska districts for support from Regional Literacy Coaches.</li> <li>Collaborate with Nebraska ESUCC to develop an MOU that establishes a plan for hiring and coordinating the use of Regional Literacy Coaches per Nebraska Revised Statute 79-2607.</li> <li>Develop job descriptions and hiring timelines.</li> <li>Collaborate with the NDE Literacy Officer, the NDE Literacy Advisory Panel, and SOR Professional Learning pilot leaders to establish processes that support an effective coaching model and deliver targeted professional development for literacy coaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with Statewide Literacy Coach Coordinator, Literacy Advisory Panel, and SOR Professional Learning pilot leaders to establish sustainable processes that will continue to support and provide professional learning for coaches.</li> <li>Explore funding options that will provide sustained resources extending beyond existing grant funding.</li> </ul>

<p>Tenet 4: Data to Measure Effectiveness  Tenet Leads: Lane Carr, Dr. Kristin Yates</p>
<p>The Tenet 4 objective is to develop appropriate data collections to measure the effectiveness of professional development and monitor improvement trends in student reading outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Context:</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NDE will leverage existing partnerships and explore additional opportunities for third-party evaluation of all activities across the other four tenets.</li> <li>• In addition to the Nebraska Education Profile, the NDE will consider other ways to provide stakeholders transparent progress toward literacy goals.</li> </ul>		
Current Practice 2024	Infrastructure Development 2024-2030	Sustainability Plan 2030...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All public schools participate annually in a state assessment, the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS). These assessments are administered to students in grades 3-8. The ACT is used as the state assessment in the 11th grade (3rd year high school cohort).</li> <li>• All public schools also participate in a state accountability system, Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (<a href="#">AQUESTI</a>). Through this system, districts and schools are given an annual rating which is reported publicly via the NDE Nebraska Education Profile (<a href="#">NEP</a>).</li> <li>• As part of the legislated Nebraska Reading Improvement Act (<a href="#">Nebraska Revised State Statute 79-2601 to 2607</a>), all public schools administer an NDE-approved reading assessment three times during the school year to all students in kindergarten through grade three. Assessments are funded through the district and as of 2024 a range of assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement trends in 3rd-grade reading will be measured using NSCAS results.</li> <li>• Improvement trends in early reading will be measured using reporting for fall and spring of the percent of students meeting approved assessment thresholds at grades K, 1, 2, and 3. This will involve revision of reporting processes for schools in the 2024-25 school year.</li> <li>• Strength of the efficacy of professional learning in evidence-based reading will be addressed in several ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Selected districts will be invited to participate in a pilot of the UNO Literacy Workshop during the 2024-25 school year. Cooperative efforts between UNO and the NDE will be used to evaluate student reading outcomes and outcomes for teacher practice and teacher efficacy.</li> <li>○ WORDS: Cooperative efforts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued monitoring of reading improvement trends based on data from NSCAS</li> <li>• Continued monitoring of early literacy improvements through review of trend data reporting the percent of Nebraska students meeting approved assessment thresholds for grades K, 1, 2, and 3</li> </ul>

<p>options were approved by the NDE to meet requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of <a href="#">Nebraska Revised Statute 79-11, 157.01</a>, districts reported data regarding the number of students evaluated for a specific learning disability (SLD) and the number verified with SLD in the area of reading. Districts also reported the total number of K-3 students who received an Individual Reading Improvement Plan and the number who demonstrated at least one point of growth.</li> </ul>	<p>between UNL and the NDE have been used to evaluate student reading outcomes and outcomes for teacher practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NDE Literacy Advisory Panel will develop a proposal process and selection criteria for the evaluation of additional professional development opportunities around evidence-based reading instruction.</li> <li>Existing assessments the NDE has approved to meet requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act (<a href="#">Nebraska Revised State Statute 79-2601 to 2607</a>) will be reviewed and curated to assure strong psychometric qualities and to ensure measures include information related to characteristics of dyslexia.</li> </ul>	
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<p>Tenet 5: Family Literacy Centers and Pre-K Tenet Leads: Dr. Zainab Rida, Melody Hobson</p>
<p>The Tenet 5 objective is to collaborate with existing community literacy initiatives and pre-kindergarten programs designed to strengthen literacy and language development for young children so that children start kindergarten ready to thrive.</p>
<p><b>Context:</b> Family literacy is a model supporting the intergenerational nature of literacy learning. Under the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, family literacy programs include four components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive literacy activities between parents and children (sometimes called Parent and Child Together Time, or PACT)</li> </ul>

- Training in parenting activities
- Literacy training for parents and/or adult education
- And age-appropriate education for the children themselves

Family literacy ensures parents, guardians, and educational decision-makers are supported as the first teachers of their children. Some programs build literacy skills of parents themselves, and extend learning opportunities.

NRS 79-2607 requires NDE to include family literacy efforts noting, *"The professional learning system shall include information and tips for teachers related to helping children and families work with local family literacy centers to strengthen home and family literacy programs and better instruct children in reading."* The NDE has already incorporated family literacy efforts by:

- Establishing the Nebraska Growing Readers initiative to support the distribution of books and resources to parents and families across the state - More information at <https://nebraskagrowingreaders.org/>

Current Practice 2024	Infrastructure Development 2024-2030	Sustainability Plan 2030...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there are numerous initiatives, activities, and programs in Nebraska that address family literacy, there is a need for greater alignment and coordination.</li> <li>• There are many resources related to family literacy, but they are located across various platforms, making it challenging for families to navigate and access them effectively.</li> <li>• There are many partners who, while not primarily focused on family literacy, are eager to contribute to the solution and engage with the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NDE offices of Early Childhood Education and Coordinated Student Support Services will establish a Family and Early Literacy working group/Special Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from existing partner organizations and facilitate regular meetings to identify current literacy initiatives, identify gaps, and develop joint strategies for expansion and improvement of family literacy opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>This includes the review of relevant data and evaluation at the national and local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NDE will work to identify a digital platform and compile a resource repository that families and communities can access. Resources will support family and children's development and literacy skills. .</li> <li>• The NDE will develop a family implementation guide to provide and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive long-term strategic plan for literacy initiatives, including clear goals, timelines, and metrics for success.</li> <li>• Identify and pursue diverse funding sources, including federal and state grants, private foundations, corporate sponsorships, and community donations.</li> <li>• Develop and implement scalable program models that can be adapted to different community sizes, needs, and resources.</li> <li>• Implement continuous data collection and evaluation processes to monitor program outcomes, assess impact, and identify areas for improvement.</li> </ul>

	<p>share actionable strategies drawn from existing and community literacy initiatives in order to strengthen literacy and language development for young children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NDE will explore and develop partnerships with local libraries to provide families and caregivers resources to support home and family literacy programming. The NDE will consider online resources like ACCESSNebraska and other tools from libraries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in advocacy efforts to promote policies that support literacy education, including securing funding, maintaining program standards, and expanding access.</li> </ul>
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## Glossary

**Balanced literacy instruction:** A balanced literacy program includes both foundational and language comprehension instructional features, such as phonemic awareness and phonics (understanding the relationships between sounds and their written representations), fluency, guided oral reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension. An alternative interpretation of balanced literacy is that it mixes features of whole language and basic skills instruction. It should not be used as it is not based on science. (ILA)

Key Components:

- Guided reading (leveled readers, cueing strategies)
- Strategies taught based on teacher observations
- Running records
- Phonics taught in mini-lessons or as word study
  - Not sequential aligned
- Based on 3 Cueing System- semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues
- Not taught explicitly and systematically

**Comprehension:** Making meaning of what is viewed, read, or heard. Comprehension includes understanding what is expressed outright or implied as well as interpreting what is viewed, read, or heard by drawing on one's knowledge and experiences. Comprehension may also involve application and critical examination of the message in terms of intent, rhetorical choices, and credibility.

**Content area literacy:** General literacy strategies that apply across all content areas (e.g., summarizing, drawing inferences, visualizing, predicting). (ILA)

**Disciplinary literacy:** Refers to the specifics of reading, writing, and communicating in a discipline. It focuses on the ways of thinking, the skills, and the tools that are used by experts in the disciplines. (ILA)

**Dyslexia:** Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (National Institutes of Health, International Dyslexia Association, and the Nebraska Dyslexia Association)

**Dysgraphia:** A neurologically based Specific Learning Disability (SLD) in writing, such as difficulty with spelling, handwriting, or recording your ideas.

**Evidence-based literacy instruction:** It is an effective, efficient, systematic, research-based, revolutionary system of explicit literacy instruction (EBLI). Evidence-based literacy instruction can also mean that a particular program or collection of instructional practices has a record of success. There is reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in reading achievement (ILA).

**Explicit:** This means that the teacher clearly explains and models key skills, using well-chosen examples; children are not expected to develop these skills based mainly on exposure and incidental learning opportunities. (IDA)

**Fluency:** The ability to read words, phrases, sentences, and stories correctly, with enough speed, and expression. (NCIL)

**Morphology:** The study of structure and forms of words including derivation, inflection, and compounding. (ILA)

**Orthography:** The study of the nature and use of symbols in a writing system. Orthography can also be thought of as standardized spelling according to established usage in a given language or a conventional writing system in a given language. (ILA)

**Phonemic awareness:** The ability to detect and manipulate the smallest units (i.e., phonemes) of spoken language. For example, recognition that the word cat includes three distinct sounds or phonemes represents phonemic awareness. Individuals with phonemic awareness can blend phonemes to form spoken words, segment spoken words into their constituent phonemes, delete phonemes from spoken words, add phonemes, and substitute phonemes. (ILA)

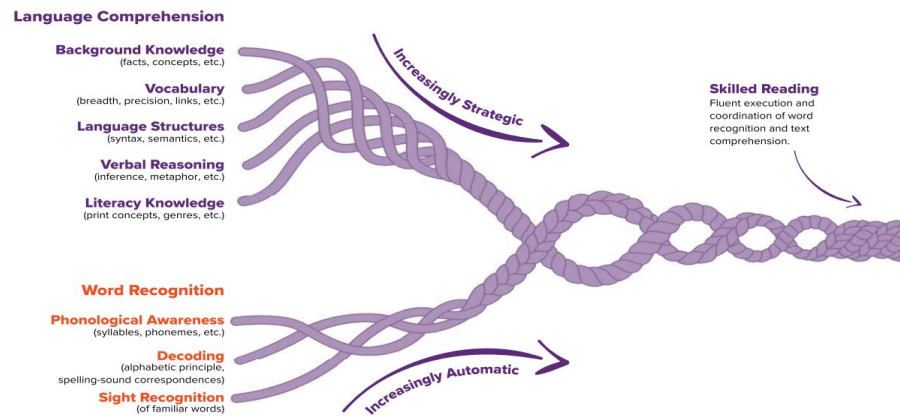
**Phonics:** An approach to teaching reading that emphasizes the systematic relationship between the sounds of language and the graphemes (i.e., letters or letter combinations) that represent those sounds. Learners apply this knowledge to decode printed words.

**Phonological awareness:** Awareness of sounds of words in learning to read and spell. (Note: The constituents of words can be distinguished in three ways: (1) by syllables, as /boʊk/, (2) by onsets and rimes, as /b/ and /oʊk/, or (3) by phonemes, as /b/ and /oʊ/ and /k/.

**Phonology:** The study of speech sounds and their functions in a language or languages. (ILA)

**Science of Reading:** The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties. (The Reading League)

**Scarborough's Rope:** Scarborough's Rope is a visual metaphor for the development of skills over time (represented by the strands of the rope) that lead to skilled reading. (The Reading League)



The Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001)

**Semantics:** The study of meaning in language, as the analysis of the meanings of words, phrases, sentences, discourse, and whole texts. In semiotics, semantics can also denote the study of the relationships between signs and their objects. (ILA)

**Simple View of Reading:** The Simple View of Reading has been empirically validated by over 150 scientific studies. It shows us that reading comprehension is not the sum, but the product of two components - word recognition and language comprehension - such that if either one is weak, reading comprehension is diminished. (The Reading League)



Gough, P. B., & Tunmer, W. E. (1986). Decoding, reading, and reading disability. *Remedial and Special Education*, 7, 6-10.

**Structured Literacy:** Structured Literacy is a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading that research has shown is effective for all students and essential for students with dyslexia. The instruction emphasizes highly explicit and systematic teaching of all of the foundational elements that are critical for reading and writing proficiency. These include phonology, orthography, syntax, morphology, and semantics. (IDA)

Key Components:

- Explicit, systematic instruction
- Decodable text
- Practice to mastery

**Syntax:** Syntax is the pattern or structure of word order in sentences, clauses, and phrases, or the rules for determining how a language will be used to formulate a thought. (ILA)

**Systematic instruction:** Systematic instruction in reading is a plan of instruction (e.g., scope and sequence) that takes students through an explicit sequence of learning activities. (ILA)

**Three-cueing system:** The 3-cueing model has its origins in a “balanced literacy” or “whole language” approach to reading instruction. Balanced is an appealing term, but in reality, this approach has yielded too little systematic instruction in foundational reading skills, including phoneme awareness, phonics, and fluent word recognition. In the 3-cueing system, children are taught to rely on context and pictures to identify printed words instead of using their knowledge of letter sounds. The practice reinforces what poor readers do and does not support the development of decoding skills. It should not be used, and is expressly prohibited by NE Revised Statute 79-2607.

The 3-cueing model uses three types of instructional cues as students are engaging with text:

- Semantic: the meaning and relationship among words, ex. “Does that make sense?”
- Syntactic: the structure of sentences (grammar, syntax, sentence organization), ex. “Does that sound right?”
- Graphophonic: the relationship of written symbols (graphemes) and their sounds (phonemes), ex. “Does that look right?”

**Tier 1 CORE** (all students): The key component of tiered instruction; all students receive instruction within an evidence-based, scientifically researched core program (NeMTSS)

**Tier 2 INTERVENTION** (some students): Some children who fall below the expected levels of accomplishment (benchmarks) and are at some risk for academic failure, but who are still above levels considered to indicate a high risk for failure. Instruction is provided in smaller groups or individually supplementing and supporting the Core Program (NeMTSS)



**Tier 3 INTENSIFIED INTERVENTION** (few students): Few children who are considered to be at high risk for failure and were not responsive to previous instruction, according to expected levels of accomplishment (benchmarks) and require more intensive individualized instruction to supplement and support Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 programs (NeMTSS)

**Vocabulary:** Knowing what words mean and how to say and use them correctly. (NCIL)

**Whole language approach:** Whole language is an educational philosophy that stresses "using children as educational informants" and building curriculum from that base. Whole language developed from studies of readers' miscues as they read whole texts as well as what young children knew about language prior to going to school. As a curricular approach, it advocates meaning making by using authentic texts such as children's literature (rather than basal texts) as the core of reading and setting aside uninterrupted time for personal writing each day. From a cross-curriculum perspective, it advocates inquiry-based learning in which students' inquiry questions become the focus of instruction and where the disciplines are seen as perspectives that students might take in exploring topics of interest. Component included in balanced literacy. (ILA)

References:

- IDA - International Dyslexia Association, [Fact Sheet](#)
- ILA - International Literacy Association, [Literacy Glossary](#)
- NCIL – National Center on Improving Literacy, [Learning Literacy Glossary](#)
- NeMTSS – Nebraska Multi-Tiered System of Support, [Glossary of Terms](#)
- Reading League – The Reading League, [What is the Science of Reading?](#)

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