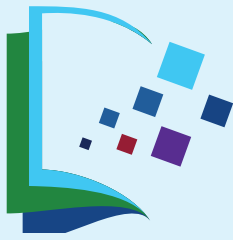![Comprehensive Literacy State Development | National Literacy Center]

State Literacy Plan Self-Assessment Tool User Guide

Comprehensive Literacy State Development | National Literacy Center

Disclaimer Statement

This presentation contains examples and resource materials that are provided for the user's convenience. The inclusion of any material is not intended to reflect its importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of the presenter as well as hypertext links, contact addresses and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials. Mentions of specific programs or products in these examples are designed to provide clearer understanding and are not meant as endorsements.

Contents

Purpose and Intended Audience of the State Literacy Plan Self-Assessment Tool and User Guide

State education agencies (SEAs) with existing state literacy plans (SLPs) can use this SLP Self-Assessment Tool and User Guide to revise or enhance the SLPs.

For SEAs that do not have an SLP, the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) National Literacy Center suggests starting with the SLP Starter Kit because it provides background knowledge about SLP development, a readiness checklist, and information about creating a stakeholder group and SLP writing team.

Background

The U.S. Department of Education (Department), through the CLSD program, currently funds discretionary grant awards to eligible SEAs to enhance literacy skills. CLSD grantees must conduct subgrant competitions that fund literacy development programs in local education agencies (LEAs) and early childhood organizations; support pre-literacy, reading, and writing instruction using evidence-based practices and interventions; and serve children from birth through grade 12, prioritizing disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities.

In 2023, the Department's CLSD National Literacy Center team reviewed the publicly available SLPs of the CLSD grantees in the 2019 and 2020 cohorts to identify common elements and components of SLPs. It also conducted a focus group of current grantees to establish trends in how SEAs approach the SLP development process. That information was used to develop the SLP Self-Assessment Tool, which serves as a resource to assist SEAs in revising their SLPs.

How to Use the SLP Self-Assessment Tool

The State Literacy Plan (SLP) Self-Assessment Tool lists nine overarching components that often correspond with sections of an SLP, each separated in a different tab. Each component includes multiple elements to further define the component. Use the guiding questions in the SLP User Guide as a discussion guide with the team and note the individual or team's responses. Based on the user(s) responses to the guiding questions, use the "Levels of Development" key located on each worksheet to select the best level (0–4) for the element. The user(s) can either type in the number or use the drop-down menu when selecting a level. When appropriate, elements include separate ratings for the grade bands birth–pre-K, K–5, and 6–12. If the user(s) select a number outside the 0-4 range, the Self-Assessment Tool will give an error message.

At the end of each component, there is space to identify any technical assistance (TA) needs related to the component. This space can identify the elements where TA is needed based on

the levels of development selected. Refer to the SLP User Guide, Starter Kit, and the What Works Clearinghouse[1] for more evidence-based resources that may pertain to revising the SLP.

In the Self-Assessment Tool, the Completion Status tab provides an overview of the components completed. The Table of Contents tab allows the user(s) completing the tool to select a certain component. It also details the developmental levels and selected abbreviations. Potential elements for TA are populated into the Potential Elements for TA tab.

List of Abbreviations	
Abbreviation	**Definition**
IHE	institution of higher education
LEA	local education agency
MTSS	multi-tiered system of supports
SEA	state education agency
SLP	state literacy plan
SLT	state literacy team
SMARTIE goals	specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable goals
TA	technical assistance

Component 1: Cover Page and Introduction	
a. Indicates publication and revision date.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Is the release date clearly shown on the cover page? 2. Does the introduction indicate when revisions will be made?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — SLP approval documents — SLT timelines for review
b. Provides the rationale for and purpose of revising the SLP.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Is the rationale for the SLP evident and concise? 2. Is a specific purpose for the SLP stated? 3. Is there sufficient evidence to indicate that the SLP needs to be revised?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Past SLPs — Literacy grant applications — Literacy-related legislation — Student data describing need

[1] The What Works Clearinghouse is a central and trusted source of scientific evidence on education-related programs, products, practices, and policies. It reviews the research, determines which studies meet rigorous standards, and summarizes the findings. It focuses on high-quality research to answer the question, "What works in education?"

Component 2: Infrastructure, Legislation, and Related Policies

a. Describes who contributed to the development and writing process of the SLP.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Has an SLT been created? Are the members and their roles delineated? 2. Are all contributors (both individuals and organizations) recognized? 3. Is the process for selecting contributors clearly communicated? 4. How are all contributors involved in the development and writing process? Are they identified? 5. Does the SLP describe the stakeholder selection process and how stakeholders are incorporated into the revision of the SLP?	— Organization websites — SLT application documents — The stakeholder and contributor selection process — Stakeholder and contributor identification

b. Describes literacy-related legislation and policies that reflect current practices (e.g., evidence-based strategies).

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the SLP include an inventory of all current policies and legislation that may affect literacy instruction in the state?	— SEA and LEA policy documents — Legislation

c. Connects policies and legislation with the SLP.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the SLP clearly explain how existing policies and legislation affect literacy instruction in the state? 2. Does the SLP consider the impact of the policies and legislation on all groups (e.g., disadvantaged children, birth–pre-K, grades K–5, and grades 6–12)?	— SEA and LEA policy documents — Legislation — Data on target populations

Component 3: Needs of Target Populations

a. Identifies needs of target populations, with data supporting why each need is necessary.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Are specific target populations identified? 2. Does the SLP explain the needs of each target population, including how the needs were assessed?	— Needs assessment data (e.g., data from document reviews, surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews) — Student achievement data in reading/language arts by subgroup

Component 3: Needs of Target Populations

b. Provides data on and insight into student subgroups.	

Guiding Questions:
 	
1. Does the SLP describe the state's pre-K–12 students by the following:
   a. Race/ethnicity
   b. Socioeconomic status
   c. Urbanicity
   d. English learner status
   e. Disability status
   f. Other relevant characteristics
	Possible Sources of Evidence:
	
	— Student achievement data in reading/language arts by subgroup
	— Student enrollment data
	— Census data
	— Graduation rates
	— Dropout rates
	— Common Core of Data[2]

c. Describes data on current teachers.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Do data on current teachers cover grade levels, disciplines, turnover rates, and other relevant factors? 2. Does the SLP describe how data on teachers differ among LEAs or school types? 3. Is an overview given of licensure within the state by grade and discipline? 4. Is the teacher evaluation system described (if mandated by the state)?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Instructional staff data by subgroup — Licensure requirements — Teacher evaluation requirements
d. Describes data on preservice teachers.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Does the SLP identify the supply of teachers and include data on preservice teachers? 2. Is information included on the SEA's relationships with IHEs teacher education programs? 3. Does the SLP examine the relationships among IHEs' curricula, state literacy standards, and evidence-based practices? 4. Does the SLP discuss IHE enrollment trends in preservice and postgraduate education?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Enrollment data and degree requirements for education programs at IHEs in the state — Projections of future teacher need by grade and discipline — Partnership agreements and activities with IHEs — Data from teacher preparation exams (e.g., Praxis)

[2] The Common Core of Data (CCD) is the U.S. Department of Education's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States. CCD is a comprehensive national database of all public elementary and secondary school districts and schools.

Component 4: Alignment of SLP With Other State Literacy Initiatives	
a. Identifies all initiatives happening to advance literacy in the state.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Is each literacy initiative described? 2. Are initiatives from agencies other than the SEA considered (e.g., health and human service agencies, mental health service agencies, and juvenile justice agencies)?	— Initiative documentation from SEA, LEAs, and other literacy or early childhood agencies in the state
b. Specifies how the initiatives meet students' and teachers' needs.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the SLP include both accomplishments and gaps in student and teacher outcomes? 2. Are all state literacy initiatives aligned to meet the needs of all student subgroups and teachers in all grade bands?	— Outcome data from initiatives — Comparison with needs assessment data
c. Specifies how each literacy initiative aligns and integrates with the SLP.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Is it clear how each literacy initiative described aligns with the SLP? 2. Is it clear how the SLP brings together and supports all these initiatives? 3. Is the connection between the SLP and state literacy standards evident?	— Initiative documentation from SEA, LEAs, and other literacy or early childhood agencies in the state — The purpose section of the SLP — Literacy standards
d. Identifies current, evidence-based state literacy standards.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Are the current state literacy standards identified and incorporated into the SLP? 2. Are the current literacy standards supported by evidence?	— Literacy standards — Evidence-based resources — Subject matter experts

Component 5: Goals and Activities	
a. Provides goals of the SLP and information on what the SLP will achieve.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are specific goals and baseline measures identified? 2. Does each goal have a time frame for completion? 3. Are the goals written out in SMARTIE format?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — The SLP's goals and logic model — Resources on SMARTIE goals or other measurement methods
b. Articulates how each SLP goal relates to student and teacher data.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Is it clear why the goals were chosen based on current data? 2. Is it clear what data the goals are intended to change?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Needs assessment data — Student achievement data in reading/language arts by subgroup
c. Describes how the goals align with literacy-related legislation, standards, and initiatives within the state.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are the goals relevant to and supportive of literacy-related legislation, standards, and initiatives? 2. Is there a state appropriation to implement the literacy initiatives? If so, is the appropriation described?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Literacy-related initiatives, standards, and legislation — State demographic information — Needs assessment data — State appropriations documents

Component 6: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction	
a. Provides an evidence-based logic model (theory of change).[3]	
Guiding Questions: 1. Is an evidence-based logic model (theory of change) included? 2. Does the logic model (theory of change) articulate resources, activities, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes that are logically connected? 3. Does the logic model (theory of change) accurately reflect the SLP's goals?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Logic model templates and examples — SLP goals

[3] Theory of change

Component 6: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction
b. Outlines evidence-based instruction in reading and writing across content areas.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Is instruction for both reading and writing as described developmentally appropriate, contextually explicit, and systematic? 2. Is reading and writing instruction integrated across content areas to support understanding?	— Literacy standards — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts

c. Describes evidence-based instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, language structure, reading comprehension and fluency, and oral language.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Is each aspect of literacy sufficiently explained? 2. Does the SLP define each instructional strategy identified?	— Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts

d. Includes evidence-based expectations for writing (transcription and composition) instruction.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Is writing instruction developmentally appropriate? 2. Does the SLP explain how writing instruction will include a clear purpose and critical reasoning appropriate to the topic and purpose? 3. Does the SLP explain how and how frequently writing opportunities should be integrated into instruction? 4. Does the SLP describe how instructional staff members should provide feedback to students about writing? 5. Do the expectations include transcription (e.g., spelling and handwriting) and composition (e.g., ideation)?	— Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts

Component 6: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction	
e. Identifies and makes available high-quality, evidence-based print materials that cover the entire range of reading levels and reflect the interests of children.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are the materials publicly available and easy for instructional staff members to access? 2. Do the materials reflect the diverse needs of the state's children?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Subject matter experts — Experienced instructional leaders — Libraries — Online databases (e.g., What Works Clearinghouse, Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR)
f. Uses evidence-based differentiated instruction for individuals and small groups.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are strategies for differentiated instruction explained? 2. Are resources provided to support differentiated instruction?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts
g. Encourages and provides evidence-based strategies for child communication with peers and adults.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Does the SLP list opportunities at school and at home for children to use language with peers and adults? 2. Are strategies for families and instructional staff members to encourage and support language use included?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts — Experts and organizations focused on family engagement and home-based learning
h. Includes evidence-based strategies for practicing reading and writing.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are specific reading and writing strategies described? 2. Are reading and writing examples and resources provided?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts

Component 6: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction	
i. Describes evidence-based assessments that are developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable to identify learning needs in children, inform instruction, and identify instructional outcomes.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are assessments developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable? 2. Are options provided for screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments? 3. Does the SLP offer ways to adapt instruction based on assessment results? 4. Does the SLP include strategies for monitoring student progress?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts — External evaluators
j. Offers evidence-based strategies to motivate children to read and write.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are evidence-based motivational strategies and resources provided? 2. Do the strategies help children to read and write in self-directed learning?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts
k. Includes universal design for learning[4] principles.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Is the universal design for learning framework explained? 2. Does the SLP provide strategies for integrating universal design for learning into instruction? 3. Are examples and resources provided to facilitate the implementation of the principles of universal design for learning?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts
l. Includes evidence-based instructional strategies for working with student subgroups.	
Guiding Questions: 1. Are strategies provided for working with all student subgroups? 2. Do strategies promote equitable instruction and assessment?	Possible Sources of Evidence: — Evidence-based literacy resources — Subject matter experts — Equity experts

---

[4] Universal design for learning

Component 6: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction
m. Emphasizes teachers' collaboration in planning, instruction, and assessing a child's progress.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Are common planning times integrated into the SLP to review student data and adjust instruction? 2. To what extent does the SLP describe professional learning communities to identify appropriate instructional strategies?	— District academic calendars — Teacher contracts — Evidence-based literacy resources — Standards for professional learning for teachers

n. Links evidence-based literacy instruction to state academic standards.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Are district pacing guides included to align instructional standards and curricula? 2. How does the SLP describe instruction for navigating, understanding, and writing about complex subject matter?	— District pacing guide — State curricula — State academic standards

Component 7: Implementation and Continuous Improvement at the Local Level
a. Describes how the state assesses students' progress in literacy.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the SLP describe how and when students' literacy will be assessed? 2. Does the SLP describe the state assessment that will be used? 3. Is a timeline given for when data will be collected each year? 4. Does the SLP explain how teachers should use data to modify instructional strategies and develop other supports to improve literacy rates?	— SLP creation documents — State assessment documentation and policies — External evaluators — Student data

Component 7: Implementation and Continuous Improvement at the Local Level	
b. Details MTSS or other evidence-based intervention strategies and assessments.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the SLP explain how MTSS should be used to support literacy practices? 2. Are the SLP's goals and literacy framework aligned with MTSS or another evidence-based model? 3. Does the SLP explain how MTSS should be used for continuous improvement?	— Evidence-based literacy and MTSS practices and resources — Subject matter experts — SLP goals — State literacy standards — Student data
c. Describes evidence-based professional learning for teachers.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the SLP provide ways LEAs can support teachers' professional learning and ensure that the implementation of learned strategies is effective? 2. Are resources provided on how to assess classroom implementation? 3. Are strategies given for how LEAs can provide effective professional learning (e.g., coaching)? 4. Are professional learning priorities or topics that support achieving the SLP's goals stated and evident?	— Evidence-based literacy resources — Professional learning models — Professional learning experts — External evaluators — SLP goals

Component 8: Continuous Improvement at the State Level	
a. Provides a timeline for future revisions of the SLP.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the plan clearly lay out how often the SLP will be revised?	— SLP creation documentation
b. Details how to measure the effectiveness of the SLP.	
Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Are specific outcome measures that include benchmarks and dates identified to help determine the SLP's effectiveness? 2. Does the SLP explain how outcome data will be used to improve the SLP?	— SLP creation documentation — The SLP's goals and logic model — External evaluators

Component 8: Continuous Improvement at the State Level
c.   Describes how the SLP will be evaluated.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Is the process for evaluating the SLP clear? 2. Does the process for evaluating the SLP include ongoing/regular reviews?	— SLP creation documentation — SLT application documents — Feedback from LEAs — Data from multiple measures that assess how LEAs are meeting student needs

Component 9: Resources and Tools
a.   Provides a bibliography of evidence-based articles.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Does the bibliography provide supporting evidence for all the strategies described in the SLP? 2. Do the hyperlinks in the bibliography work? 3. Are articles current (from within the past 5 or 10 years)?	— Libraries — Online databases (e.g., the What Works Clearinghouse, Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR)

b.   Provides tools and resources for LEAs to review.

Guiding Questions:	Possible Sources of Evidence:
1. Are the resources evidence based as defined by the What Works Clearinghouse? 2. Are the resources free and easy to access? 3. Are the resources categorized by topic area? 4. Do the hyperlinks to the resources work?	— Libraries — Online databases (e.g., the What Works Clearinghouse, Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR)