Comprehensive Literacy State Development | **National Literacy Center**

State Literacy Plan Starter Kit
Phase Two: Understanding SLP Components

Comprehensive Literacy State Development | National Literacy Center

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Background

This is the second of four phases in the State Literacy Plan (SLP) Starter Kit—a companion to the technical assistance (TA) that state educational agencies (SEAs) can receive through the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) National Literacy Center to develop or revise their SLPs.

Phase One offers information about:

- The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) CLSD grant program, including background information on this TA initiative on SLPs;
- The components of an effective SLP; and
- The steps an SEA should take to prepare to develop or revise an SLP, including creating benchmarks, establishing a stakeholder group, forming a state literacy team, gathering data, and conducting a self-assessment.

Phase Two: Understanding SLP Components

How to Use This Document

- As illustrated in Figure 1, all states should first Review Phase One of the SLP Starter Kit. States without an existing SLP will most likely complete the entirety of Phase One, whereas states that are revising an existing SLP can complete the tools they feel are most relevant.

- States that are **revising an existing SLP** should then complete the SLP Self-Assessment Tool—while using the accompanying SLP Self-Assessment Tool User Guide—and then review Phase Two of the SLP Starter Kit for additional information.

- States that are **developing an SLP for the first time** should go straight from Phase One to Phase Two of the SLP Starter Kit.

Figure 1: SLP Development/Revision Flowchart

```
Phase One
   ↓
Does my state have an SLP?
   ↓              ↓
  No             Yes
   ↓              ↓
Continue to    Complete
Phase Two      Self-Assessment
                  ↓
               Continue to
               Phase Two
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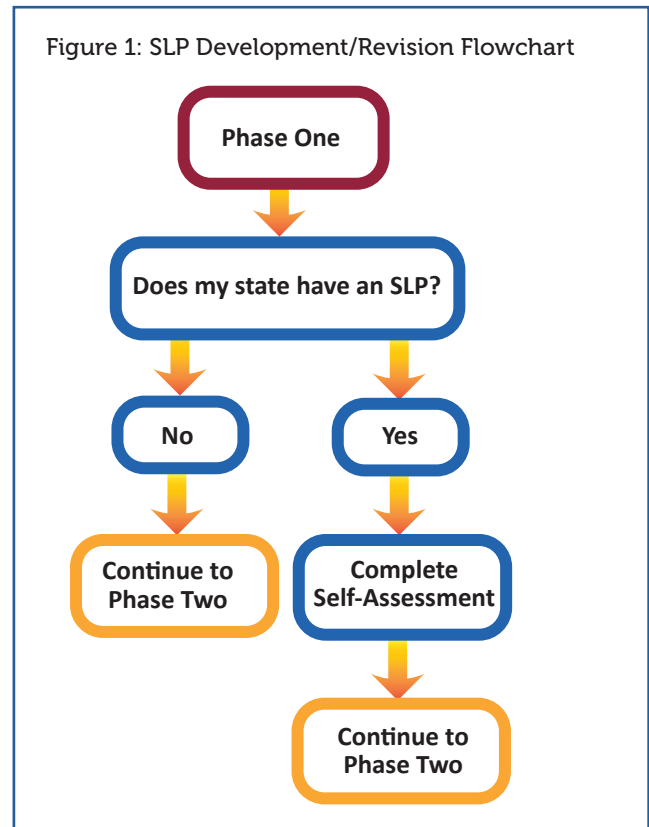
Phase Two of the SLP Starter Kit provides thorough explanations of each component of an SLP—its background, rationale, and application—and helps integrate a state's literacy needs and goals with the strategies you will include in your SLP to best address them, in sections titled "Additional Reflections." This toolkit also provides a list of additional considerations, as well as suggested resources for each component.

By the end of Phase Two, if you are creating an SLP, you will understand the components you need to include and what they might look like. If you are revising an SLP, you will understand how to improve its components. This information will prepare you for Phase Three, which will assist you with writing your SLP.

Component 1: Cover Page and Introduction

Background, Rationale, and Application

A cover page and introduction provide basic information about the importance of the SLP to the state's literacy initiatives and about the SLP's relationship to evidence-based literacy instruction. In addition, the introduction explains how the SLP can help the reader apply the recommended strategies and practices.

The cover page contains engaging graphics and essential information, such as the SLP's title and publication or revision date. Use the tips below to craft your Introduction.

- **Explain concisely** why the SLP is needed (or needs revising) in the context of your state's specific needs and evidence-based advancements in best practices.
- **Provide an overview** of how to use the document, including instructions on where to start and how to apply and implement the strategies and practices in the SLP.
- **Address the document to a broad audience** because a variety of stakeholders will encounter it.
- **Communicate**, as concisely as possible, how the components you chose to include in the SLP relate to one another as a cohesive plan.
- **Draft the introduction last** to ensure it accurately reflects the final document.
- **Provide a table of contents** listing major sections and subsections of the SLP.

Additional Reflections: Cover Page

For the cover page, your SEA should do the following:

- Use cover page design elements that will engage your users, with special attention to how and where you prominently display the release date.
- Plan for any future revisions (annually, for example).
- Include a mechanism that will remind designers to update the release date as your timeline comes into sharper focus.

Resources for Cover Page

- Review your SEA's standard operating procedure (SOP) for guidance on when to revise the SLP. Guidance may also be found in the state improvement plan or in legislation. See the box to the right for sample cover page text. You can choose to include the range of years that the plan will cover, or you can put the year the plan will be revised. You will also create a timeline for revisions for Component 8.

- Consult your graphic designers when selecting standard graphics, text, and other elements, such as the SEA's seal. If your SEA does not have its own graphics staff, consult with the governor's office or other agencies within your state for required elements and design ideas.

- Choose images that will appeal to your audience. For example, rather than stock photos of children, seek photos of children in front of well-known state landmarks or attractions.

Additional Reflections: Introduction

For the introduction, your SEA should consider:

- Researching literacy trends in your state and reflecting on how the data have changed in recent years. Identify how those data are meaningful to your readers, and outline bullet points that will drive your message.

- Crafting language that clearly conveys why your state is creating or updating its SLP. Examples can include state data on needs, new research (especially in the context of post-pandemic learning recovery), and building positive messaging that promotes buy-in.

- Articulating the SLP's purpose. Draw important distinctions from any prior SLPs, and provide users with a broad understanding of how implementation will change.

Resources for Introduction

- Summarize state data, such as standardized test scores or responses from qualitative surveys of local educational agencies (LEAs) and literacy leaders.

- Review recent state literacy grant applications in which up-to-date data describing literacy needs have been compiled.

- Summarize literacy-related legislation, initiatives, and policies in your state. Contact your Office of General Counsel for guidance on navigating legislation if it's not easy to locate online.

- Review past SLPs so that the new SLP aligns with the existing structure as appropriate.

- Access national data sources on literacy, such as The Nation's Report Card and ED's National Center for Education Statistics.

- Familiarize the team with federal legislation on literacy. (See the resource list under Component 2.)

Component 2: Infrastructure, Legislation, and Related Policies

Background, Rationale, and Application

Your state's **literacy infrastructure is a complex mechanism** of state governing bodies, including the SEA, Governor's office literacy initiatives, various state boards of education, literacy-focused public-private partnerships, state-level legislative committees, state literacy-focused advisory committees; and existing policies, practices, and legislation; students and families; community organizations; institutions of higher education (IHEs); and members of commerce and industry, all of whom are affected by literacy-related policies. Take time to understand critical relationships and intersections among these as you prepare to develop a comprehensive and effective SLP.

Legislation

Although SEAs are most likely familiar with federal legislation such as the Elementary and Secondary Education of 1965, as amended (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), below are some examples in which these laws may relate to your SLP.

To address **key requirements of the ESEA** regarding equal access to education—including for disadvantaged students and students with disabilities—an SLP should incorporate data for continuous improvement, as described for components 7 and 8, and demonstrate how implementation will offer equitable access.

Because there are common disabilities that affect literacy, consider using a universal design approach[1] within the practices included in your SLP. You can include more on universal design—and the role of multitiered systems of support (MTSS) in implementing this design—for components 4 and 6, which focus on alignment with existing initiatives and your literacy framework.

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[1] The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.

State legislation that indirectly or directly affects literacy education will be at the heart of your SLP. Almost every state has enacted laws proposing changes in literacy instruction in recent years. Much of this legislation prescribes the **adoption of evidence-based practices** and the use of evidence-based materials. Develop comprehensive background knowledge of legislation and policies to align the SLP with state priorities.

Recent state legislation around literacy might include these topics:

- Dyslexia
- Evidence-based practices
- Professional learning
- Reading interventions
- Early literacy
- Licensure and credentialing
- Teacher preparation
  Assessment
- Reading at grade level by 3rd grade
- Tutoring and out-of-school-time programs
- Curricula/materials
- Kindergarten readiness
- Standards
- Secondary literacy
- Literacy supports (such as coaches, literacy specialists, mentors, and technical assistance)
- Bilingual education/English learners/ multilingual learners

To aid your team's understanding of your state's legislation, engage discussions using these guiding questions:

- Which pieces of legislation reference literacy?
- What is the category of the legislation (e.g., evidence-based materials and curricula, family and community engagement, preservice teacher training, dyslexia, assessment)?
- What are the legislative priorities?
- Is funding tied to the legislation? How is the funding distributed?
- Who is responsible for implementing and monitoring the legislation?

Newly passed legislation or policies in your state may serve as the foundation for much of your SLP. Common components of the legislation or policies that should be highlighted and incorporated into the SLP include:

- **Scope:** the target audience and who is covered.
- **Objectives and goals:** what the legislation is designed to achieve—for example, promoting literacy or improving literacy rates.
- **Responsibilities of stakeholders:** roles of governmental agencies, educational institutions, teachers, and parents in promoting literacy.
- **Funding:** financial resources and funding mechanisms to support literacy initiatives and programs.
- **Implementation timeline:** when the legislation will take effect.
- **Requirements and incentives:** penalties for noncompliance and potential incentives for achieving literacy goals.

Policies

Finally, examine non-legislative policies in your state that relate to literacy. Sources include:

- The governor's priorities;
- Statutorily mandated reading or education councils; and
- Local control policies.

Even when there is not a mandate to accommodate practices set forth in these policies, aligning your SLP with the policies' language will help to ensure effective implementation. Where you *do* identify misalignment, consult the authors of the policy and your own literacy specialists to determine the best way to bring those pieces together harmoniously. This is addressed in detail for Component 4: Alignment of SLP With Other State Literacy Initiatives.
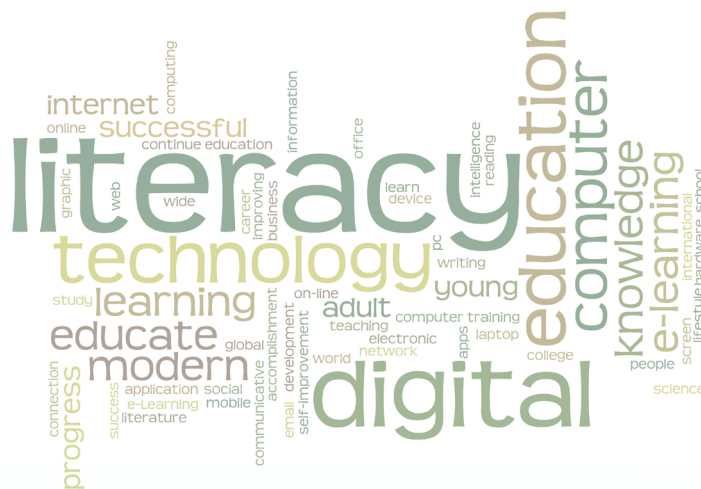
Additional Reflections: Infrastructure

Your SEA should consider:

- The full extent of groups in your state that *develop* your literacy priorities, legislation, and policies, such as government offices, education leaders, IHEs, and other organizations. Be sure a representative of each is part of your stakeholder group.

- The wide array of stakeholders in your state that *are affected* by legislation and policies, including students, parents, early childhood and K–12 educators, community organizations, and state commerce and industry. Be sure a representative of each is part of your stakeholder group to give all stakeholders a voice.

- The processes in your state for implementing literacy policies, including:

  - How the SEA collaborates with LEAs to implement statewide initiatives;

  - How local or regional educational entities implement literacy instruction; and

  - How the SEA can collaborate with the state's early childhood agencies and other agencies on early literacy efforts.

- The dynamics and relationships among all elements of the literacy infrastructure and how they can be accommodated in the SLP.

- The team members who contributed to your SLP design, along with their credentials and interests (e.g., an MTSS subject matter expert).

Additional Reflections: Legislation and Policies

In addition to the inventory of relevant legislation and policies, your SEA should consider:

- The ways legislation will affect development and implementation of your SLP.
- Who can serve on your SLP or stakeholder team to ensure legislation is being interpreted correctly.
- Language you might use to clearly convey the relationship between legislation and your SLP while maintaining flexibility for future legislative or policy changes.
- How different student groups may be affected by this legislation. Examine this by grade bands, geography, ability, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and other relevant factors.

Resources

- ED's Laws & Guidance page.
- An APM Reports article on how legislation related to reading instruction is changing across the country, with an interactive map.
- The Trial Urban District Assessment, which is a federally-funded initiative providing an essential measurement of student achievement in the United States. In mathematics, reading, science, and writing, academic achievement is reported for selected urban districts, as well as for the nation and the states.
- The Education Commission of the States' interactive map that allows the user to click on each state to view enacted and vetoed legislation. It provides information about issue areas, bill numbers, statuses, timelines, titles, and summaries of the bills.
- The National Center on Improving Literacy's State of Dyslexia page, which provides an interactive map with information about states' dyslexia-related legislation and policies. The organization's mission is to increase access to and use of evidence-based approaches to screen, identify, and teach students with literacy-related disabilities, including dyslexia.
- *County of Los Angeles Legislative Training Manual*, released in 2014. This training manual is designed to assist with understanding how state and federal programs are developed and implemented, the legislative process, how to analyze proposed legislation, and how to prepare bill analysis documents. Beginning on page 11, the manual identifies key components and how to analyze the context of a bill.
- The National Center on Improving Literacy's page dedicated to education-related legislation.
- The Biden–Harris administration's fact sheet on its 2024 agenda to improve student achievement.

Component 3: Needs of Target Populations

Background, Rationale, and Application

Gathering data in your state is crucial preparation for Component 3: Needs of Target Populations. The data serve as a baseline for your SLP and will help you measure success during implementation. Once you have gathered the relevant data as explained in Phase One of the SLP Starter Kit, use this section to better understand **how the needs are presented and addressed** in your SLP. The work conducted for this component will lead directly to Component 5, where you set the goals of your SLP.

Target Populations

State the target populations clearly in your SLP. Developing appropriate goals demands understanding how different populations and grade bands are affected by the SLP. Analyze the data to identify target populations for the work, such as students with disabilities, English learners, or students living in high-poverty areas of the state.

Addressing Literacy Gaps and Successes

Use root cause analysis to identify why target populations may not be achieving as highly as other groups. The reasons may be systemic or could be connected to national or regional events, such as a natural disaster or school closings during the COVID-19 pandemic. This analysis will provide a road map for how to address target populations. In addition, consider other literacy initiatives that have succeeded with these target populations to identify effective, evidence-based practices that your SEA could implement.

Other Literacy Needs

You may elect to identify a broader set of literacy needs by including groups such as K–12 student groups not identified as disadvantaged, teachers and preservice teachers, families, or students in transition programs. If resources allow, include strategies and goals to meet the needs of these groups, as well.

Additional Reflections: Needs of the Target Populations

In addition to identifying target populations, your SEA should consider:

- Pre-literacy needs of the children in your state who are 5 or younger. Federal early childhood education programs, such as Head Start, and state early childhood agencies are critical partners in helping to contextualize these needs and identify goals.

- Literacy needs of all K–12 students, including gaps, strengths, and goals.

- Literacy-related professional development needs of LEAs that reflect the demographics of the educator workforce and the variety of school types within the state.

- Any existing teacher evaluation system, including how it functions and how it can be addressed or updated to advance the SLP's goals.

- The existing relationship of the SEA with IHEs and their teacher education programs, including existing mechanisms for the state to review preservice teacher literacy curricula for use of evidence-based practices. Identify the strengths of and differences among programs to help set goals for preservice teachers.

Resources

- The <u>services</u> of the Children's Literacy Initiative, including webinars and coaching. The Children's Literacy initiative seeks to dismantle structural racism by providing Black and Latinx children with the anti-racist early literacy instruction, support, and advocacy needed to create equity in education.

- <u>"Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework,"</u> a 2017 working paper on education by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. This literature review centers on the implementation of education policy, exploring its definition, processes, and determinants. The report subsequently examines factors that impede or enhance the implementation process, categorizing them into four dimensions conducive to effective implementation: intelligent policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, supportive context, and a coherent implementation strategy.

- <u>"Using Root Cause Analysis to Inform School Improvement Planning,"</u> a webinar from the Regional Educational Laboratory Program (REL).

- The <u>webpage of the National Assessment of Educational Progress</u>, for contextualizing state needs.

- <u>"Education's long COVID: 2022-23 achievement data reveal stalled progress toward pandemic recovery,"</u> a research brief from the Center for School and Student Progress that contextualizes state needs.

- *<u>Governor's Pocket Guide to Early Literacy</u>*, a downloadable resource from the National Governors Association that directs policymakers to gaps in pre-literacy across the country.

Component 4: Alignment of SLP With Other State Literacy Initiatives

Background, Rationale, and Application

Component 4 builds on the work you did for Component 2. By **exploring common elements, strategies**, **and the means of synergizing efforts** among state literacy initiatives, you can ensure that implementation of your SLP will provide the greatest rewards for your target populations.

Take Inventory

Inventory all active local and statewide literacy initiatives, as well as those that include aspects your SLP will focus on, such as multilingual learners; diversity, equity, and inclusion; social–emotional learning; and a whole-child approach. A simple graphic organizer or spreadsheet will help you visualize the relationships among initiatives.

To create your inventory, enter each initiative's name in the left column, and work with your team to create columns to describe the initiative, as shown in Table 1 on next page. The first row of the table has been completed as a generic example.

Some suggested characteristics to include in the columns include:

- Leadership (the organization or agency that runs the initiative and the role or name of the person in charge);
- Whether the initiative is statewide or local;
- The grade level(s) served;
- The key role for implementation (e.g., principal or district literacy expert);
- Duration (legislation or funding may dictate an end date);
- Needs addressed, such as the target population or the gap that is being filled by the initiative;
- Goals;
- Evidence-based practices used;
- Measurement/reporting processes;
- Other stakeholders involved; and
- Data on effectiveness.

Although you may not include the spreadsheet in your SLP, it will help guide your thinking as you craft Component 4.

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Initiative Name	Leadership	Statewide or Local	Grade Level(s)	Duration	Funding	Needs Addressed	Goals	Evidence-Based Practices Used	Measurement/ Reporting rocesses	Other Stakeholders Involved	Data on Effectiveness
1. In-school volunteer reader program	Community Org A Program Manager	Local	K–5	No end date	$50,000/ year	Disadvantaged students	Increase reading proficiency	Phonemic awareness	State tests	Local schools	Available annually
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
6.											
7.											

Effectiveness of Initiatives

Once you have identified existing initiatives, connect with those leading them to gather data on effectiveness. This will help you determine which initiatives should be incorporated into the SLP and which may not need to be included. Conducting this outreach will also help begin to build relationships between the SEA and other literacy leaders throughout the state.

Incorporating Commonalities and Differences

Use the inventory to identify commonalities across initiatives. This will save time and resources by building on existing effective strategies. Work with the leaders of these initiatives to agree on ways the initiatives you want to include can be incorporated into the SLP's goals and activities. Similarly, analyze initiatives' goals and target populations to identify gaps in services. Discuss whether these gaps align with the SLP's goals and, if so, how the SLP could address the gaps.

Additional Reflections: Alignment of SLP With Other State Literacy Initiatives

In addition to creating your inventory of initiatives, reflect on these areas with your SLP team:

- How best to communicate the commonalities and differences among initiatives in your SLP.
- Other initiatives in the state that could affect literacy rates, such as those led by health and human service agencies, mental health service agencies, or juvenile justice agencies.
- How evidence does or does not drive other initiatives and how the SLP could promote the use of evidence widely.

Resources

- "Research on Continuous Improvement: Exploring the Complexities of Managing Educational Change," a paper by members of the Harvard Graduate School of Education published in *Review of Research in Education.* It can aid in decision-making in complex continuous improvement scenarios. This resource is for SLP development, not for inclusion in an SLP.
- *MTSS for All: Including Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities*, a resource published in 2020 by the National Center on Educational Outcomes and the TIES Center.
- "Understanding the History and Formation of MTSS," the first chapter in the 2022 book *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: A Practical Guide to Preventative Practice,* by Gary Schaffer, a professor of school psychology and counseling at Niagara University.

Component 5: Goals and Activities

Background, Rationale, and Application

The goals and activities you outline for Component 5 drive your SLP, and the work you completed in the prior components can help you build the goals and activities on sound data and contextual understanding. In turn, the goals and activities will help build your literacy framework for Component 6.

SMARTIE Goals

Using the SMARTIE approach to develop and articulate goals can help ensure you will be able to measure the success of your SLP over time.

SMARTIE goals are:

- **S**pecific: Identify exactly what or whom the goal measures (e.g., scores on 3rd grade reading tests).
- **M**easurable: Provide a clear numerical goal (e.g., 75%).
- **A**chievable: Focus on what could reasonably be achieved within the given time frame. Consider historical data and the needs that will be addressed.
- **R**elevant: Connect the goal clearly to a need you identified elsewhere in your SLP.
- **T**ime-Bound: State a specific date by which the goal will be achieved. This could be annual or at the end of the period covered by the SLP.
- **I**nclusive: Ensure goals are inclusive of all student groups.
- **E**quitable: Ensure goals address equitable access to opportunity for all.

A succinct goal should be included for each need identified for Component 3. Usually, one sentence per goal is sufficient. Also consider creating short-, mid-, and long-term goals that build on one another over time.
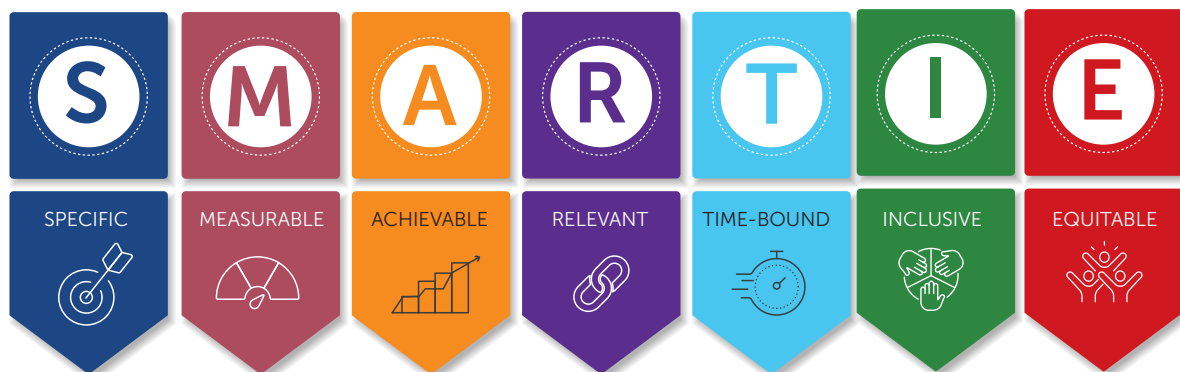
Identifying Activities

Once goals are identified, determine the evidence-based activities that will lead to achieving those goals. There may be multiple activities for each goal, and these activities could change over time as implementation becomes more entrenched. These activities will most likely focus on the approaches the SLP will take rather than specifying how implementation will look at the classroom level.

For each activity, consider:

- **Who** is responsible for implementing the activity? Whom will the activity effect?
- **What** will occur as the activity is implemented?
- **When** will the activity begin, and what is its duration?
- **Where** will resources and support for the activity come from? What resources should the SEA provide to LEAs to facilitate implementation?
- **Why** is this activity the best solution to achieving a goal?
- **How** will an activity's success be measured and reported?

Pilot Program

If time and resources allow, consider launching a pilot program with a few LEAs implementing the SLP's approaches. The results of the pilot program can then help guide which activities are most effective for target groups and what goals are reasonable within a specific time frame.

Continuous Improvement

Be sure to consider when the SLP outcomes will be assessed and used to modify and improve implementation and eventually revise the SLP. This will be further developed for Component 8.

Additional Reflections: Goals and Activities

Related to goals and activities, your SEA should also consider:

- What data will be collected over time to measure whether goals have been achieved.
- What support around data-based decision-making must be provided to those implementing the activities.
- Who within the SEA has overall responsibility for tracking outcomes of the SLP.
- How SLP progress and outcomes should be reported to stakeholders.

Resources

- The National Center on Improving Literacy's page to aid state agencies in developing and implementing state and local structures and procedures to address challenges that students with literacy-related difficulties face in learning.
- The Lead for Literacy Framework's Standards, Priorities, and Goals page, operated by Boston University's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development with funding from ED's Office of Special Education Programs.

Component 6: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction

Background, Rationale, and Application

The SLP should be grounded in evidence. One way to do this is to review and use current research to develop a theory of change and a logic model. A **theory of change** is a research-based statement of how the SLP will address existing needs. It helps design the approach by explaining how and why a change will occur without starting from an assumption of what the approach will be. A **logic model** is a graphic representation of your **theory of action**, which focuses on what the SLP will do to address the needs and achieve desired outcomes.

A logic model typically includes these components:

- Inputs or resources;
- Activities;
- Outputs that will result from the activities;
- Short-term outcomes;
- Mid-term outcomes; and
- Long-term outcomes.

Use the goals and activities developed for Component 5 to begin building your logic model—but ensure that the activities you selected are supported by the evidence base described in your theory of change.

The theory of change and logic model will also help you build the evidence-based literacy framework for your SLP by ensuring the approaches outlined in the SLP are always aligned with research and with the SLP's underlying theories.

More information on creating a theory of change and logic model will be provided in Phase Three of the SLP Starter Kit.
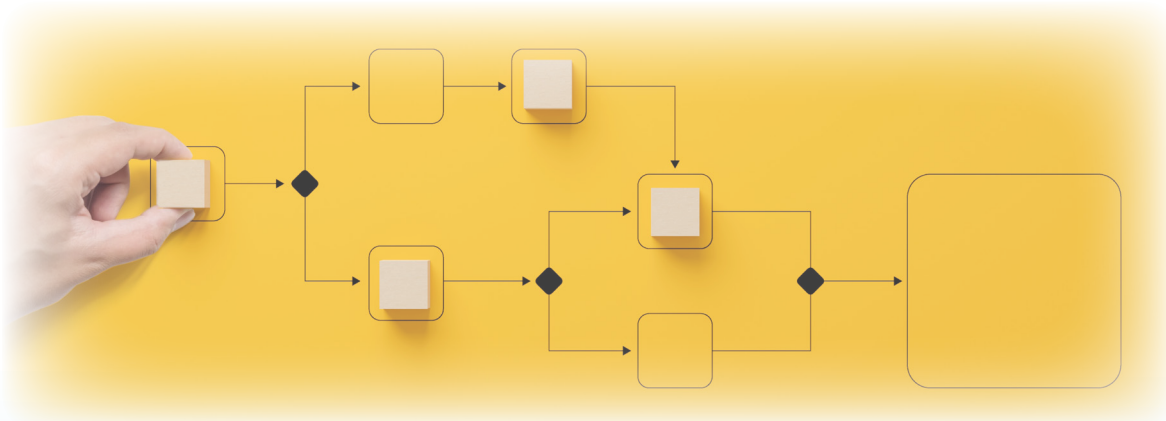
Building a Literacy Framework

Identify conceptual instructional strategies to facilitate the SLP's goals created for Component 5. The resulting literacy framework may describe evidence-based strategies in the following areas:

- Instruction in reading and writing across content areas;
- Instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, language structure, reading comprehension and fluency, and oral language;
- Expectations for writing (transcription and composition) instruction;
- High-quality, evidence-based print materials that cover the entire range of reading levels and reflect the interests of the children;
- Incorporation of MTSS;
- Differentiated instruction for individuals and small groups;
- Child communication with peers and adults;
- Practicing reading and writing;
- Assessments that are developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable to identify learning needs in children, inform instruction, and identify instructional outcomes;
- Motivating children to read and write;
- Universal design for learning principles;
- Working with student subgroups;
- Teacher collaboration in planning, instruction, and assessing a child's progress; and
- Linking literacy instruction to state academic standards.

Additional Reflections: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction

As you develop the framework, your SEA should consider:

- The administrative approval process and plan for how this will be navigated.
- Developing an outline of the framework that will guide the writing of this component.
- Where details of your evidence-based framework will be incorporated within each component.
- How best to address curricula and instruction delivery for all target populations.
- How you can convert important elements of your framework into high-quality print materials that will be descriptive and instructive for teachers and will facilitate implementation.

Resources

- The Title IV, Part A Technical Assistance Center's (T4PA Center) Evaluation Guide, which offers information on logic models and an explanation of SMARTIE goals. The T4PA Center operates on behalf of ED.
- "Logic models: A tool for designing and monitoring program evaluations," from ED's National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance and REL Pacific.
- The Lead for Literacy Framework, developed through a collaboration between Boston University's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development and ED.

Component 7: Implementation and Continuous Improvement at the Local Level

Background, Rationale, and Application

Decisions and responsibilities around SLP implementation and continuous improvement will reflect the culture and structure of your state's educational system. Implementation and continuous improvement at the state level are addressed for Component 8, but the guidance below will help your state consider how to frame local implementation.

The State's Role

Each state is different in terms of the level of control it has over local implementation, but within the SLP, the state can outline expectations and supports for LEAs. This includes identifying:

- Required or recommended timelines and steps for implementation;
- What professional development and other resources will be provided by the SEA;
- What level of oversight or assessment will be required or recommended;
- Who will have responsibility for data collection and reporting; and
- How continuous improvement will be incorporated into implementation.

It would be helpful for the SEA to have a plan for providing LEAs with needed support. What capacity do existing SEA staff members have to provide professional development and TA? Will additional staff members need to be hired, or will expert literacy consultants be used? If the latter, how will those experts be identified, vetted, and managed? If the SEA is recommending or requiring specific curricula or high-quality instructional materials, how will those be vetted and distributed to LEAs? What level of decision-making will LEAs have over hiring outside consultants or acquiring or developing curricula?

Local Control in States

In a state with a high level of local control, the SEA should focus on what it can control, such as the rollout and support of the SLP. In addition to describing the items discussed about the state's role, the SLP should focus on how the SEA will support LEAs and how LEAs can access important resources. In addition, the SEA should begin to think carefully about its dissemination plan: How will the plan's benefits to students be communicated to leaders of school districts and individual schools so there is buy-in for implementation? Describe some of this in the SLP so LEA staff members understand why they are being asked to implement these approaches and how the strategies complement existing work.

Additional Reflections: Implementation and Continuous Improvement

When discussing local implementation, your SEA should consider:

- Strategies to disseminate the SLP to LEAs, as well as ways to gather educator input during implementation to get feedback and build buy-in.
- How to clearly communicate about state assessments, timelines, and the use of outcome data. When possible, use existing state assessments to measure effectiveness. This is why aligning goals and activities with existing infrastructure is critical.
- What teachers will need during implementation and how the SEA could support those needs from the beginning.

Resources

- The _Implementing Evidence-Based Literacy Practices_ road map and an _explanatory video_, from REL Southeast.
- _Continuous Improvement in Education: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts_, from ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and REL Northeast & Islands.
- _Practical Measurement for Continuous Improvement in the Classroom: A Toolkit for Educators_, from IES and REL Southwest.
- _What Tools Have States Developed or Adapted to Assess Schools' Implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention Framework?_—from IES.

Component 8: Continuous Improvement at the State Level

Background, Rationale, and Application

Although this component focuses on internal SEA planning, the SLP should transparently communicate how the SEA will implement and support implementation and how data will be used for continuous improvement.

Establish Timelines

Your next SLP revision will result from your state-level continuous improvement cycle. Establish that finish line—which you have indicated on the cover or introduction of your document—based on a logical and realistic timeline for when sufficient data will be collected and analyzed to inform the next SLP revision.

You may also elect to make real-time adjustments to the SLP outside of the planned revision window under specific circumstances, such as SEA leadership changes, changes in legislation, new funding opportunities, and funding cuts. Explain what situations might trigger updates and how those changes would be communicated to stakeholders. Be aware that significant changes might require adjustments to existing implementation strategies and timelines.

Means of Improvement

Continuous improvement typically consists of four iterative stages: "plan," "do," "study," and "act." The SLP serves as the "plan" stage. Implementation and ongoing data collection cover the "do" and "study" stages. How you incorporate what you learned drives the "act" stage, which will lead to a new round of planning (i.e., your revised SLP).
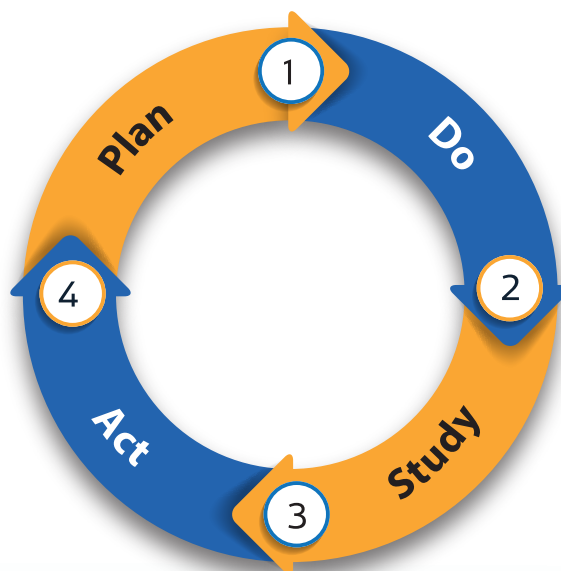
Consider ways that continuous improvement will be facilitated:

- Who will be responsible for monitoring data collection and reporting back on progress to the SLP team?
- Who will be responsible for making decisions based on those data?
- How will stakeholder feedback be solicited—e.g., through surveys or focus groups?
- How could funds be leveraged most effectively based on the resources or strategies that are shown to be most effective?

Schedule regular meetings to discuss progress with the SLP team and the stakeholder group, and use the rest of the SLP Starter Kit and the SLP Self-Assessment Tool throughout the process to ensure continuity in SLP revision, even as the team experiences staff turnover.

Additional Reflections: Continuous Improvement at the State Level

Your SEA may also want to do the following:

- If you used the Development Benchmark Tool for Developing an SLP or the Development Benchmark Tool for Revising an SLP in Phase One of the SLP Starter Kit, reflect on how accurate your estimated timelines were, and use that information to plan future revisions.
- Determine how to communicate a state-level response to data throughout the continuous improvement cycle.

Resources

- *Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement: Guidebook and Toolkit*, from the Education Development Center.
- *Continuous Improvement in Education*, a white paper from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. It attempts to map the landscape of this terrain by identifying and describing organizations engaged in continuous improvement and by highlighting commonalities and differences among them.

Component 9: Resources and Tools

Background, Rationale, and Application

The set of resources and TA materials you provide to LEAs will be customized based on all the decisions you have made within the previous eight components. The SEA will create TA materials for LEA use, and it might also be helpful for LEAs to be able to easily access external resources. The internal use of graphic organizers might help your team to consider how you will make this library navigable, useful, and impactful and how you will explain your resources and TA materials clearly in your SLP.

Providing Support

Explain what the SEA's role as an accessible resource to practitioners will look like. Some possibilities include:

- Determining a hierarchy of support. Your SEA may have a strong position on whether it wants to be a **first-line resource to LEAs or a last-line resource to LEAs**.

- Setting up a **helpline** (either an email address or a phone number), if feasible based on staff workload. The helpline could be staffed by a dedicated person who directs inquiries to the appropriate offices, or it could be staffed by a rotation of people who are assigned to the helpline for a certain number of hours per day or week. Determine how workload will inform staff availability before documenting a commitment to immediate response times.

- Establishing a structure for **delegating inquiries**. Identify possible categories of questions (e.g., high-quality instructional materials, data reporting) and identify who could best answer questions in each category.

- Determining how LEAs will be selected for in-person work, if the SEA is able to provide onsite support.

TA Materials

Your SLP should be supported by a collection of launch materials created by the SEA, which may be provided along with the SLP on a dedicated webpage. Consider these tools as options for what materials should be immediately available for implementation:

- Short practice briefs on evidence-based instructional strategies covering a variety of elements of literacy education and grade levels;
- Fact sheets or tools that highlight state standards, MTSS, or other key approaches; and
- Tools to facilitate required data collection.

Online Resources

Be sure to link to any online resources within the SLP for easy access. Resources should be current, evidence-based, and from reputable sources. The What Works Clearinghouse is a great place to start searching for evidence-based resources. Be sure you can justify why each resource is included based on how it supports the literacy framework within the SLP. You may choose to include a brief description and justification of each resource within the SLP. Also, determine whether hard copies need to be provided for specific populations or rural areas with less stable internet access.

Additional Reflections: Resources and Tools

Prior to completing this component, your SEA should reflect on:

- How your SLP bibliography supports the work. Users should have a clear understanding of why a resource has been used to develop the SLP.
- How hyperlink information will be maintained over time. This step is crucial to maintaining a fresh and usable resource library.
- Parameters for resource inclusion (e.g., within the past 10 years or only from government or nonprofit sources).

Resources

- IES's What Works Clearinghouse, which links to prescreened, high-quality educational materials from thousands of sources.
- ERIC, an ED-funded search engine for research papers and resources.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development | **National Literacy Center**

https://literacycenter.ed.gov/