Quick Start Guide for a Collaborative Planning Session on SLP Development

This resource can be used in conjunction with the State Literacy Plan Starter Kit to support State literacy leaders who are developing or revising their State literacy plans (SLPs). This can be used as a planning guide or a way to determine next steps in your SLP development process.

This document can guide your team throughout the process and encourages creativity, open communication, and teamwork. For example, a collaborative idea session, such as a whiteboard discussion, is a helpful way to brainstorm around a specific topic.

This tool is organized around the nine components typically found in a comprehensive SLP. Once you complete each section, you will have a basic outline or structure for the development of your SLP.

1. Cover Page and Introduction
2. Infrastructure, Legislation, and Related Policies
3. Alignment of SLP With Other State Literacy Initiatives
4. Needs of All Students
5. Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction
6. Goals and Activities
7. Implementation and Continuous Improvement at the Local Level
8. Continuous Improvement at the State Level
9. Resources and Tools

To learn more about SLPs and each of these components, please see the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) National Literacy Center's collection of SLP resources, including the SLP Starter Kit.

Component 1: Cover Page and Introduction

Cover Page. Who will design the cover? How will literacy leaders collaborate with the graphic design team? What imagery will appear on the cover, and how will that imagery complement the State context, including the State's literacy-related priorities?

A. **Introduction—Purpose.** Why is a new or revised plan needed? For instance, are there changes in student literacy needs either statewide or within specific grade levels or areas?

B. **Introduction—Priorities.** What priorities and information should the introduction highlight? Consider priorities from the governor's office, other State offices, State and local literacy teams, education leaders, and organizations that focus on literacy. List the information pertaining to these priorities below.

C. **Introduction—Audience.** List your SLP's potential audiences below (e.g., policymakers, administrators, educators, literacy teams, State and local educational agency [SEA and LEA] staff members, community stakeholders, families, and students). Should the introduction direct different audiences to particular sections or starting points in the SLP? [For more information, you might reference "Identifying Key Audiences" in the appendix of this document. If you have already completed that tool, you might want to reference it as you work on Component 1.

Next steps: Before moving on to Component 2, reflect on what you have written in each box. Does it cover the information that should be included in the introduction? If not, what is missing?

Component 2: Infrastructure, Legislation, and Related Policies

A. State Legislation. Literacy-related laws in your State may address the following:

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Literacy instruction and assessment:

- Early literacy
- Kindergarten readiness
- Reading at grade level by 3rd grade
- Secondary literacy
- Standards
- Evidence-based practices
- High-quality curricula/materials
- Assessment
- Reading interventions
- Tutoring and out-of-school-time programs

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Needs of all students:

- Literacy challenges, such as dyslexia
- Literacy instruction for bilingual education and English learners (ELs)

Educator development and support:

- Teacher preparation programs
- Licensure and credentialing requirements
- Professional learning
- Literacy supports (e.g., coaches, literacy specialists, mentors, and technical assistance)

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List your State's literacy-related laws, priorities, and focus areas below.

When developing and implementing an SLP, there are aspects of literacy-related legislation that should be carefully considered to ensure alignment, compliance, and effectivenesss.

B. Other State Policies. What other policies in your State affect literacy education? Consider, for example, the governor's priorities. List these policies below.

C. From Legislation and Policy to Practice. your State's literacy-related infrastructure. How do State-level organizations collaborate with LEAs? How do local or regional educational entities implement literacy instruction? What opportunities for collaboration with the State's other agencies could support literacy-related efforts? List these below and their potential roles in implementing the SLP..

Literacy-Related Organizations, Individuals, and Infrastructure	Role in Implementing the SLP

Next steps: Before moving on to Component 3, reflect on what you have written in each box. Does it sufficiently cover the infrastructure and laws and/or policies that you will need to address in the SLP? Are there actions required to engage the individuals, organizations, and agencies you listed?

Component 3: Alignment of SLP With Other State Literacy Initiatives

For your convenience, you can refer to the "Sample Inventory Spreadsheet of State Literacy Initiatives" section in the appendix of this document, which is from the SLP Starter Kit.

A. What are key commonalities across these literacy-related initiatives? Do any of these commonalities align with your SLP priorities and goals?

B. List strategies and initiatives in your State that have already been implemented and proven effective. Identify the leaders of these as potential collaborators on the SLP. Finally, consider what gaps these strategies and initiatives were designed to address and how they could be incorporated into the SLP.

Literacy-Related Organizations, Individuals, and Infrastructure Elements
Current initiatives that align with the proposed SLP:
Leaders of current initiatives who could serve as collaborators:
What gaps are these strategies and initiatives designed to address, and how could they be incorporated into the SLP?

Next steps: Before moving on to Component 4, review the responses to the questions. Are all initiatives that could impact the SLP identified? If there is uncertainty around this question, how can further information be gathered?

Component 4: Needs of All Students

List the available sources and sets of data pertaining to your State's literacy-related needs—particularly data on the following:

- State achievement data, disaggregated by grade level
- Universal literacy screening of students in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2
- Students with disabilities (e.g., dyslexia)
- English Learners (ELs)

A. Based on these data, identify the literacy needs of students in your State and their current literacy achievement. You may want to consider what areas of your State and/or grade levels have the largest gaps in achievement.

Area/Grade Level	Current Literacy Achievement	Needs

B. How do legislation, policy, and proposed SLP priorities align with those needs?

C. Are there needs that are not addressed in current laws and policies? How could the SLP priorities be revised to meet the needs of all students?

Next steps: Before moving on to Component 5, review the students you identified in this section. Do they provide a comprehensive picture of the needs in your State? If not, revise your responses as needed.

Component 5: Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction

A. **Theory of Change.** A theory of change is a research-based statement of how the SLP will address existing needs. Identifying a theory of change presents an evidence-based hypothesis of what will cause the change needed to solve the current problem. This should be based on evidence that supports the theory of change. The theory itself may be only a few sentences that summarize the SLP's vision and purposes. You may have an existing statewide or literacy-specific theory of change.

Below, articulate an evidence-based theory of change, which will serve as the primary rationale for your SLP, and identify the references and/or data that support your theory of change.

Theory of Change:
References/Data:

B. **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.

The sections in the logic model could include:
- Inputs. These are the resources available to implement the program. Common inputs include personnel, money, equipment, supplies, and in-kind donations.
- Activities. These are the activities that the initiative will conduct to reach the outcomes.
- Outputs. These results of activities are often measured in amounts of something produced or provided.
- Short-Term Outcomes. These are typically the expected results within the first year.
- Mid-Term Outcomes. These are the expected results about one to three years after the initiative begins.
- Long-Term Outcomes. These outcomes will be achieved approximately four to seven years after the initiative begins.
- Context. This is a short summary of the current situation that describes the need, whom the need affects, and why the need should be addressed.

You can use the box below to capture your initial thoughts during brainstorming. The logic model template can be used to further develop this section of your SLP.

C. **Framework**. How will you articulate the evidence-based framework in your SLP? An evidence-based literacy framework included within your SLP can provide clarity, specificity, and guidance about your State's requirements and recommendations for the literacy-related strategies and approaches to be implemented. You can use the space below to briefly outline your evidence-based framework .

Outline of Evidence-Based Framework

    I.

    II.

    III.

    IV.

    V.

Next steps: Before continuing to Component 6, identify what still needs to be refined. For example, do you need additional information for the theory of change or evidence-based framework? Does the logic model need to be streamlined.

Component 6: Goals and Activities

The information you gathered on theory of change, logic model, and/or framework in Component 5 can guide the development of this section. Use the below chart to identify the specific goals, target outcomes, activities, and implementation timeline that should be included in your SLP.

A. Goals, Target Outcomes, Activities, and Implementation Timeline

Goal	Target Outcome	Activities	Implementation Timeline

Next steps: Before beginning work on Component 7, do the goals, target outcomes, and activities identified cover all aspects that should be addressed in your SLP?

Component 7: Implementation and Continuous Improvement at the Local Level
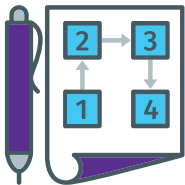
This section describes how your SEA will support local implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the SLP. The information you enter below can serve as the foundation of your outline for Component 7.

Description	Action Item
Structures and Timelines: Describe recommended implementation steps and timelines, and share aligned templates and guidance to support local planning.	
Professional Development and Capacity Building: Describe high-quality professional learning opportunities for educators and literacy leaders and ongoing support for evidence-based practices.	
Coaching and Technical Assistance: Describe how you will deploy regional literacy specialists or coaches, and provide tailored technical assistance aligned to district needs and plan fidelity.	
Data Collection and Monitoring Structures: Define roles for data collection and progress monitoring, and provide tools and dashboards for LEAs to analyze data and inform next steps.	
Funding and Resources: Describe how you will support LEAs with guidance on using braided funding (e.g., Title I–IV) and offer targeted grants for implementation and capacity-building efforts.	
Collaboration and Networking: Describe how you will facilitate regional or statewide learning networks to foster cross-district collaboration and the sharing of effective practices.	
Alignment Across Transitions and Systems: Describe how you will help LEAs align their literacy work across grades and integrate with early learning, college, and workforce readiness efforts.	
Continuous Improvement and Sustainability: Describe how you will develop a process for reflective review (e.g., plan–do–study–act cycles), and promote innovation, long-term planning, and sustainability.	

Next steps: Before moving on to Component 8, review your responses in this section. Consider how to align State-level implementation and continuous improvement processes with those at the local level.
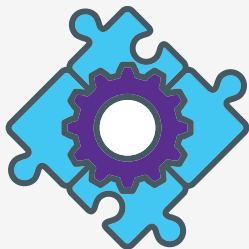
Component 8: Continuous Improvement at the State Level

This section of the SLP describes how an SEA can plan for implementation, support implementation, and collect data to inform continuous improvement. The information that you enter below can serve as the foundation of your outline for Component 8 in the SLP. Remember that embedding structures for continuous improvement within the SLP can help ensure that it remains a living document that actively informs educational practices.

Describe the continuous improvement process:	
• Establish timelines for the SEA's continuous improvement cycle.	Description:
• Monitoring SLP progress.	Description:
• Collect, review, and analyze literacy-related data.	Description:

Describe the continuous improvement process:

• Make data-based decisions to address areas of need.	Description:
• Report outcomes to stakeholders and solicit stakeholder feedback.	Description:
• Hold periodic meetings to discuss SLP progress with the State literacy team and stakeholders.	Description:

Next steps: Before moving on to the final component, take a moment to review the information you have drafted for the previous components. Use these ideas to support development of Component 9.

Component 9: Resources and Tools

An SLP should include the resources and technical assistance materials for LEAs and others to help them understand and implement the SLP. Some SLPs also include a "hierarchy of support" that describes where individuals should direct questions or request help. Identifying and including helpful resources will ensure successful planning and implementation at the local level.

Below list any materials that will need to be developed or revised to support your SLP – e.g., a local literacy plan template.

For more information, please see Component 9 in the SLP Starter Kit.

Appendix: SLP Tools

While these tools are available in the SLP Starter Kit, the tools referenced in this guide are also included here for ease of access.

Identifying Key Audiences

Key Audience	Activities/Modes for Communication	Timeline

Sample Inventory Spreadsheet of State Literacy Initiatives

(Blank Downloadable Version Follows)

Initiative Name	Source of Initiative	Lead Agency	Target Audience	Focus Area	Alignment to SLP	Timeline/ Duration	Effectiveness Data
Reading Forward	SEA	SEA and community partners	Families and early childhood providers	Early literacy awareness and readiness	Supports family engagement and early literacy goals	Ongoing since 2013	Improved early literacy scores in districts based on State K–3 reading assessments and school readiness benchmarks
State Pre-K Expansion	Legislation and SEA partnership	SEA office of early childhood	Children ages 3–5	Kindergarten readiness and literacy	Improves early literacy readiness, aligned with SLP objectives	Annual grant cycle	Increased kindergarten readiness rates measured by the State's early learning assessment and pre-literacy skills surveys
Read Across Languages	SEA policy directive	SEA office for ELs	ELs (pre-K–12)	Bilingual literacy instruction	Provides targeted support for ELs, aligned with SLP priorities	Launched in 2020, ongoing	Enhanced EL reading proficiency per the State English language proficiency assessment and district literacy benchmarks
AI Literacy for Tomorrow	SEA innovation initiative	SEA office of digital learning	Students and educators (grades 6–12)	Integrating AI literacy skills into core curriculum	Supports digital literacy and critical thinking goals outlined in the SLP	Pilot launched in 2024, full rollout in 2025–2027	Improved student engagement and technology literacy based on pre- and post-program surveys and digital project assessments
Literacy Coaching Network	SEA grant-funded program	SEA, in collaboration with LEAs	K–5 teachers and instructional coaches	Instructional support and coaching	Builds educator capacity aligned to evidence-based practices	5-year implementation period	Improved K–5 reading scores on State-mandated early reading assessments and literacy screener tools
MTSS State Framework	Legislative mandate	State cross-divisional offices	All students, with tiered support needs	Tiered literacy support framework	Provides system-level infrastructure for MTSS implementation based on data	Statewide rollout began in 2019	More consistent implementation of tiered interventions based on student needs and MTSS fidelity checks and district-wide data.
LETRS Professional Learning	Collaboration of SEA Title II and literacy offices	SEA, LEAs, and approved LETRS providers	K–5 educators and coaches	Science of reading–aligned professional development	Strengthens instructional knowledge base across districts	Ongoing professional learning program	High completion rates and positive teacher feedback collected through professional development surveys and observation rubrics
University Partnership on Literacy Instruction	SEA and higher-education partnership	SEA and local universities	Preservice teachers and faculty members	Alignment of educator preparation programs with SLP	Supports teacher preparation aligned with SLP components	Annual collaboration since 2021	Better alignment of teacher prep with literacy standards shown in course syllabi audits and new teacher readiness surveys
Public Library Family Literacy Program	Municipal initiative with SEA support	City public library and local schools	Parents, families, and early readers	Home literacy engagement	Engages families in literacy outside of school settings	Launched in 2017, ongoing	Stronger family literacy engagement measured by event attendance records, library card sign-ups, and parent feedback forms

Blank Downloadable Version: Inventory Spreadsheet of State Literacy Initiatives

Initiative Name	Source of Initiative	Lead Agency	Target Audience	Focus Area	Alignment to SLP	Timeline/ Duration	Effectiveness Data

Logic Model Template

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes

Context: