Virginia Department of Education

Maximizing Potential in Literacy
Overall Reading Performance

- 2016-2017: 80
- 2017-2018: 79
- 2018-2019: 78
Standards of Learning Reading Data

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National Assessment of Educational Progress

NAEP Grade-8 Reading
Percent Proficient or Above


- Virginia
- National
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading: All Students

- 0-69%
- 70-74%
- 75-79%
- 80-84%
- 85-89%
- 90%+

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading:  Asian

- 0-69%
- 70-74%
- 75-79%
- 80-84%
- 85-89%
- 90%+

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading: African Americans

- 0-69%
- 70-74%
- 75-79%
- 80-84%
- 90%+

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading: Hispanic

- 0-69%
- 70-74%
- 75-79%
- 80-84%
- 85-89%
- 90%+

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading: Caucasian

- 0-69%
- 70-74%
- 75-79%
- 80-84%
- 85-89%
- 90%+

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading: Economically Disadvantaged

- 0-69%
- 70-74%
- 75-79%
- 80-84%
- 85-89%
- 90%+

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

**Reading:** English Learners

- 0-69%

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
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Broad Contributing Factors

- Recession era cuts to education often take time to show in results
- The recession had broader societal impacts, not just in education
  - More students living in poverty, but significantly more students are coming to school experiencing significant issues and trauma
- Teacher Shortage
  - Increase in provisionally licensed teachers with no prior training in teaching reading
- Pre-service educator preparation
  - Lack of in-depth education on science of reading
- Further re-segregation of students without resources to support equity and cultural competence
State and Local Factors

- Research available that 1 in 5 students, or 15-20% of the population, has a language based learning disability, such as dyslexia.
- A comprehensive reading program would include:
  - An explicit systemic approach to teaching students to read
  - Focus on the 5 components of reading - phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
  - Phonics instruction is a practice that is part of a comprehensive reading program in all grades (not just in K-2)

“The question of whether to include phonics instruction has been resolved. The answer is yes.”
At a Loss for Words
How a flawed idea is teaching millions of kids to be poor readers
Strategies such as the 3-cue system may have been seen as the primary way to teach reading over the past few decades. However, research suggests that a strong grasp in phonics and decoding must be mastered as a pre-requisite to word study and comprehension.


*Comprehension = decoding + understanding language*
New Focus on Reading in 2017 Standards

Reorganization of **important phonological and phonemic awareness** skills formerly under an Oral Language Strand (K-2). The skills provide the **foundation for literacy** and must be **included in classroom instruction** and should be a central strategy for students struggling with reading at any grade level.

Moved to reading strand:  
*Identify and produce rhymes; manipulate syllables; blend and segment phonemes*
We Must Teach How Text Is Structured

Teachers should collaborate across grade levels because the new standards spiral. Then, we must teach kids about how text is structured to be successful in areas like these...

Creation of standards requiring students to compare/contrast details between literary fiction and informational nonfiction texts (4th and 5th grade). Note a focus on longer passages as well in normed assessments.

Students will:

- Analyze similarities and differences between paired fiction and nonfiction texts
- Texts can be paired based on similar themes, topics, or patterns of events
- Pairings can include books, articles, poems, media, or graphics
Setting Example

2.7 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts.
   a) Make and confirm predictions.
   b) Connect previous experiences to new texts.
   c) Ask and answer questions using the text for support.
   d) Describe characters, setting, and plot events in fiction and poetry.

5.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry.
   a) Summarize plot events using details from text.
   b) Discuss the impact of setting on plot development.

7.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama.
   a) Describe the elements of narrative structure including setting, character development, plot, theme, and conflict and how they influence each other.

10.4 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze literary texts of different cultures and eras.
   a) Make inferences and draw conclusions using references from the text(s) for support.
   b) Analyze the similarities and differences of techniques and literary forms represented in the literature of different cultures and eras.
   c) Interpret the cultural or social function of world and ethnic literature.
   d) Analyze universal themes prevalent in the literature of different cultures.
   e) Examine a literary selection from several critical perspectives.
   f) Critique how authors use key literary elements to contribute to meaning including character development, theme, conflict, and archetypes.
Fiction Example: **Overarching standard**- The students will **read and demonstrate comprehension** of fictional texts…

- Notice how setting builds in complexity across grade levels
- In 2\(^{nd}\) grade, students describe the setting
- By the time students are in 5\(^{th}\) grade, they are describing the setting’s impact on plot development (*students must understand setting to be able to do this*)
- In 7\(^{th}\) grade, students must be able to describe all of the narrative elements and how they influence each other (*What they are doing with setting changes here- they are using it as a tool to discuss how it impacts other literary elements*)
- Notice that in 10\(^{th}\) grade, the SOL does not mention the word “setting,” but rather critiquing key literary elements and how the author’s use of them contributed to the meaning of the text (*the idea of “setting” is subsumed in this SOL but could be a key literary element that students are examining in a text*)
Some Additional Strategies for Tested Subjects

• Students need opportunities to read daily
• Students need to read extended pieces of text and grade level material
• NAEP and SOL Assessments have extended text pieces (info on how many etc.)
• All students need opportunities to read grade level text daily, including nonfiction and fiction pieces
• Schools should provide students with opportunities to read and compare paired passages (fiction and nonfiction) on the same topic as appropriate
• When students are analyzing ideas in two texts and searching for textual evidence to support their conclusions, they are engaging in deeper learning and thinking critically
• The strands of Communication and Multimodal Literacies, Reading, Writing, and Research are expected to be seamlessly integrated in the classroom
Deeper Learning

As always, our efforts must focus on deeply engaging students, building relevance, and encouraging excitement about learning.

Ensuring that every student can read is essential to a great education. Test scores are a by-product of great, engaging teaching not the goal.
Next Steps

• What does the literacy instruction block look like in your division? For example, the typical elementary reading block is 120 minutes long, what is happening during those 120 minutes?
• Develop a plan and identify the impact of phonics instruction in the division literacy program
• Collaborate and develop support for staff
  • Partner with neighboring divisions that have a strong approach to literacy instruction
Developing Solutions

• Problem of Practice
  ■ Not a teacher problem
  ■ Not a student problem

• There is a science of reading and a solid evidence base for reading assessment and instruction

• Development and execution of an explicit systemic approach to teaching students to read
Research

• Unlike with language, the brain is not wired to read. Children do not naturally develop reading skills through exposure to text.
• Teaching young kids how to decode through systematic phonics is the most reliable way to make sure that they learn how to read words.
• The focus on letter sound relationships increase brain activity that continues in future exposure to that word.
• Reorient practice in the classroom to integrate direct reading instruction.
Key Terms

• 5 components of literacy instruction
  ▪ **Phonemic awareness**; ability to listen to, identify and manipulate phonemes
  ▪ **Phonics**; relationship between sounds and written letters to enable decoding (with word study)
  ▪ **Comprehension**; ability to understand written text
  ▪ **Vocabulary**; knowledge of words and what they mean
  ▪ **Fluency**; ability to read text with accuracy, speed and intonation
2018-2019 SOL Pass Rate

Reading: Students with Disabilities

- 0-69%
- 70-74%

Note: Pass rates are calculated as the number of students passing the assessment divided by the number of students tested.
Intervention and Support through Instruction

• Structured Literacy
• Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) is a professional development course focuses on equipping teachers with knowledge and tools to focus on literacy skill development
• Multi Sensory language instruction
  ▪ Orton-Gillingham (OG) is a teaching approach focused on the connections between sounds and letters
What does this look like?

• Development of core instruction, the 5 components represented each and every day in reading instruction
  ■ Provision of direct reading instruction during reading blocks
  ■ What does this look like beyond elementary?
• Support of supplemental instructional programs and the role of staff (teachers, reading specialists other instructional staff)
• Using data to drive instruction and what is the instructional plan for students who are not responding to instruction?
Solution Oriented Next Steps

- Engage administrators and teachers in high-quality instruction and the impact it will have for every student
- Include phonics instruction in an overall literacy plan that is efficient, effective and timely for all students
- Critically examine the use and role of instructional staff and time delivering direct instruction to students
- “Helpful for all, harmful for none and crucial for some”
- Build skills that will form the base layer of student knowledge, deeper learning and achievement
What Has Led to Success?

• Impact of NAEP on federal and state policy
• Successful states have increased their focus on phonics instruction and developed data based approaches to addressing what they have seen in data
• VDOE is partnering with teacher preparation programs and Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) staff to improve the quality, quantity and validity of pre-service education for all teachers
Building Division Capacity

• Maximizing use of existing funding to support high quality instructional materials and approaches
  ▪ Title program supports (Title I, Title II and SIG funds)
  ▪ Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation
• Professional Development and Support - Board of Education’s Requests
  ▪ Teacher mentoring SOQ
  ▪ Reading Specialists in high-need schools (budget proposal) from SOQ proposal
Messaging and Communication

• VDOE is soliciting feedback from divisions on what is working or have unique challenges and how supports can be developed

• Examples across the Commonwealth
  ▪ Regional Partnerships
    Aligning efforts, improving efficiency, and sharing expertise and experiences
  ▪ High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)
    VDOE is launching an OER system in January 2020 that will provide instructional materials, including those rated as high quality by EdReports, in the system.
Support from the VDOE

- Training and Technical Assistance
- Comprehensive Literacy Webinars
- Comprehensive Literacy-English Instructional Plans
- 2019 VDOE English Deeper Learning Conferences
- Comprehensive focus and support of early childhood programs
- VDOE sponsored Reading Summit
  - January 2020
- OER launch January 2020
Early Childhood

• Increase access
• Improve quality
• Strengthen teacher workforce
• Think holistically and increase coordination
Next Steps

• Analyze practices in your division to ensure alignment to research, especially as related to phonics instruction
• Review and maximize use of existing funding streams
• Select HQIM
• Support regional collaboration
• Encourage teacher participation in Teacher Direct
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(will not activate until 1/2/20)

#VAis4Learners #EdEquityVA