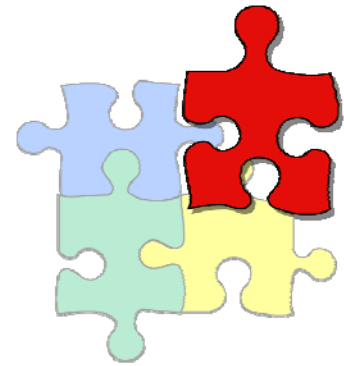


## Improving Reading Performance



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### Overview

Examination of reading performance should address all students. The overall PK–12 reading program should include comprehensive, differentiated reading instruction in the classroom along with additional services for students who need more support in order to succeed. Some students need intensive, usually short-term instruction tailored to address specific weaknesses. All reading instruction must align with local curricula, be evidence-based, and target specific student weaknesses determined by performance on multiple reading measures. Furthermore, reading strategies should be embedded across all content areas.

For a complete perspective on AYP, along with additional contacts and the entire AYP Handbook, visit: [http://dpi.wi.gov/ssos/ayp\\_handbook.html](http://dpi.wi.gov/ssos/ayp_handbook.html).

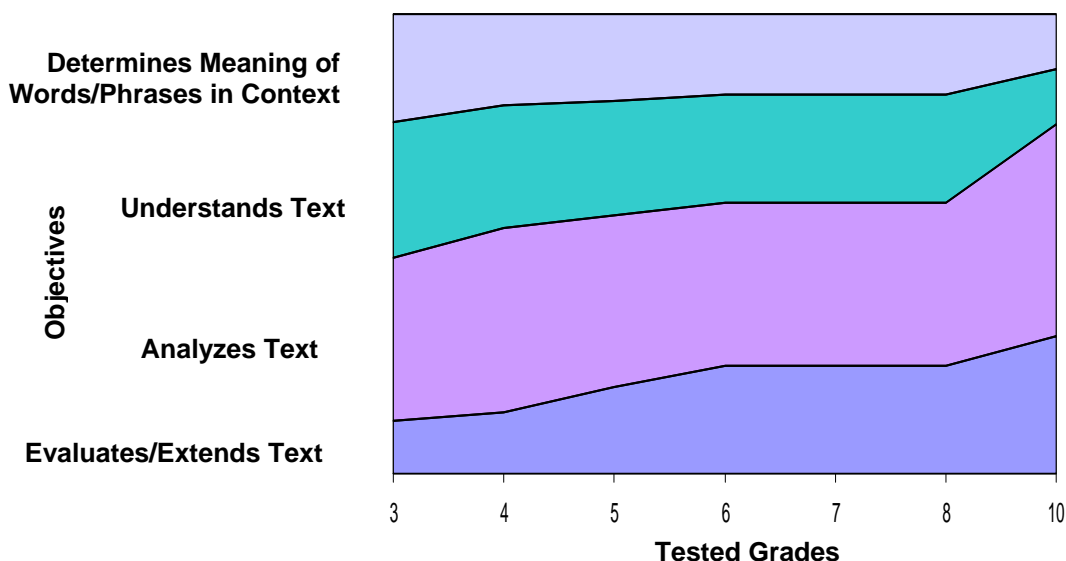
### Action Options

#### *Focus on standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment*

- As you develop local curricula, use resources available from DPI such as *Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for English Language Arts and Planning Curriculum in English Language Arts*.
- Be aware of effective instructional practices such as reciprocal teaching, strategic instruction model, questioning the author, literature circles, and use of graphic organizers, and ensure that all staff have opportunities to learn how to use these practices and also have time to discuss these practices with colleagues.
- Develop intensive writing programs, because many skills involved in writing also help improve reading skills and comprehension. Students benefit from increases in the amount and quality of writing instruction.
- Follow the instructional time recommendations in the chart Minimum Allocated Instructional Time: Recommended by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/cal/timeallo.html>. For example, at grades 3 and 4, consider allocating 600 minutes per week based on a six-hour school day, 500 at grade 5, and 425 at grade 6. Provided that quality instruction is offered at the appropriate instructional level, research suggests that time on task should improve performance. Instruction specifically designed to strengthen reading and writing abilities should be integrated into other subject areas, such as science and social studies.
- Differentiate instruction and provide opportunities for students to access learning centers that include activities with a range of skill levels.
- Provide access to Into the Book, <http://reading.ecb.org/>, a multimedia teaching resource designed to enhance reading comprehension for K-3 students. This resource focuses on eight research-based comprehension strategies. Watch engaging 15-minute videos, and encourage students to try the online interactive activities. “Behind the Lesson” provides a guide for using the classroom video series. Delve into the strategies with nine short professional development videos, lesson plans, research, and more.
- Ensure that reading materials are available in a wide range of difficulty, in a variety of genres, and with representations of all students. Because students are expected to read long as well as short passages on the state reading examinations in grades 3–8 and 10, provide opportunities for students to develop the ability to sustain reading and respond to comprehension tasks up to 50 minutes on their own.

- Know the reading strengths and weaknesses of all students. Monitor reading progress of students on a regular basis using data from multiple measures. Analyze all data to determine needs, and use scientifically based reading research to outline strategies for improvement.
- Use resources available from DPI such as “Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations Reading Framework” and “NCLB and Reading Framework PowerPoint” available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/wkce.html#Reading>.
- Use the WKCE Reading Assessment Blueprint, which graphically portrays the distribution of score points across the test item bank for grades 3–8 and 10 to help educators understand the emphasis of test content across grades. Notice that all four test objectives (determines meaning of words/phrases in context, understands text, analyzes text, and evaluates/extends text) are tested in each grade, but the emphasis changes across grades. For example, the distribution of score points for the “evaluates/extends text” objective increases across grades whereas the emphasis on “determines meaning of words/phrases in context” decreases.


### WKCE Reading Assessment Blueprint



#### *Support one another as professionals*

- Ensure that professional development opportunities align with the needs identified by the data on achievement.
- Visit schools with successful reading programs. Develop a plan to observe key components and interview people at the school.
- As related to their professional goals, encourage educators to attend conferences such as the New Wisconsin Promise Conference, Wisconsin State Reading Association Convention, and Wisconsin Title I Association Conference, participate in task forces, and serve on boards of professional organizations.
- Foster internal communication and ensure that educators have time to plan together.
- Provide time and opportunities for the district reading specialist to work with staff to improve teaching of reading. Encourage the reading specialist to model best reading practices, temporarily team with classroom teachers to improve instruction, or both.

*Offer support for struggling students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL)*

- Successful district reading programs provide a constellation of reading services aligned with local curriculum to meet the needs of all students. For example, along with the core reading program, a district may provide a supplementary program from a commercial publisher, a one-on-one intervention program, a buddy tutoring program, an after-school reading program, a summer reading program, author visits, book discussion groups, and read-ins for parents or guardians and their children.
- Implement early intervention programs and develop strategies to address the reading needs of those students in preschool and the early elementary grades. Ensure that supplemental and intervention instruction complements and extends the comprehensive reading instruction.
- Develop early reading programs using research-based principles such as the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement’s (CIERA) *Improving the Reading Achievement of America’s Children: 10 Research-Based Principles*. These principles focus on home language and literacy experiences, preschool programs, skills that predict later reading success, primary-level instruction, primary-level classroom environments, cultural and linguistic diversity, children who are identified as having reading difficulties, proficient reading in third grade and above, professional opportunities, and entire school staffs. Download this document from the CIERA Web site at <http://www.ciera.org/library/instresrc/principles/index.html>. 
- Capitalize on research findings. For example, Judith Langer at the Center on English Learning and Achievement at <http://cela.albany.edu/> identified the following six issues that show differences between higher performing and more typically performing middle and secondary schools: approaches to skills instruction, test preparation, connecting learning, enabling strategies, conceptions of learning, and classroom organization.
- Incorporate the 15 key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs into your middle and high school reading programs as shown in the report, *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* developed by the Alliance for Excellent Education. The elements are divided into two sections: instructional improvements and infrastructure improvements. Used together, these elements were found to be part of a successful adolescent literacy program. Link to this report and additional useful reports from the Alliance at [http://www.all4ed.org/publication\\_material/reports](http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/reports). Additional reports include:
  - Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners*—A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.
  - Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement.*
  - Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high school*—A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Use published and online toolkits to improve adolescent literacy instruction. For example, use the DPI Adolescent Learning Toolkit, [http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/pubsales/litrcy\\_5.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/pubsales/litrcy_5.html), designed to help middle and high school educators strengthen and improve instruction for their adolescent students, specifically in reading and math. Link to the Council of Chief State School Officers’ Adolescent Literacy Toolkit available at [http://www.ccsso.org/projects/secondary\\_school\\_redesign/Adolescent\\_Literacy\\_Toolkit](http://www.ccsso.org/projects/secondary_school_redesign/Adolescent_Literacy_Toolkit). The Adolescent Literacy Toolkit is part of a project to help states build capacity to implement promising secondary school redesign policies and practices. Also, link to AdLit.org at <http://www.adlit.org/> to find resources for parents and educators of adolescents.

- Know the strengths and weaknesses of each reader. Use screening assessments to determine which students are most in need of support. Once they are identified, administer individual diagnostic assessments to the struggling readers to determine exactly what each must learn to be successful. Develop plans based on the data. One example of a source for testing instruments is the Reading Assessment Database for Grades K–2, available at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Web site, <http://www.sedl.org/>.
- Encourage collaboration among all staff members who provide services to students. Review models of providing services that include elements such as Title 1, special education, and support for English Language Learners. Select a model that best meets the needs of students identified for additional reading support in your district. Support students in the regular education classroom as much as possible.
- Identify students with disabilities and students who need ELL services and provide services for those who qualify. Focus on prevention to lessen special education referral rates. For additional information, please refer to these AYP Handbook sections—“Instructional Strategies that Support the Success of Students with Disabilities,” and “Instructional Strategies that Support English Language Learners.”
- Provide access to Internet resources such as author Web sites; companion Web sites related to public television series at Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Kids, <http://pbskids.org/>; online book discussions on the Read On Wisconsin Web site for students in elementary, middle, and high school; TeachingBooks.net; and other appropriate Web information for children and teens. Read On Wisconsin, at <http://readon.wi.gov/>, is a statewide book club for everyone who enjoys reading and talking about good books. TeachingBooks.net, at <http://www.teachingbooks.net/enter/>, is a time-saving portal to thousands of online resources you can use to explore children's and young adult books and their authors.
- Use community members or older students as tutors. Develop business partnerships that would supply tutors or support tutoring projects.
- Arrange for students to be able to check out books from school and classroom libraries for use over the summer. Perhaps the library could open for several hours every other week so children could return materials and select different books.



*Provide information about early reading to parents or guardians*

- Encourage parents to read to their babies, toddlers, and young children every day—for babies and toddlers, at least three times daily for a total of at least 15–20 minutes a day, and more for four- and five-year-olds. Suggest reading during a quiet time each morning, at bedtime, and one additional time during the day. Also explain how to work with your local librarian or library media specialist to find books that especially engage babies and toddlers. Encourage parents to check out numerous books for their children at each visit to the library. Suggest that parents ask friends and relatives to give children books for special occasions such as birthdays and holidays to demonstrate that reading is a valuable activity.
- Provide information to help parents realize the amount of time good readers have devoted to reading. Children enter school with vast differences in exposure to and interaction with print material. Good readers have been listening to and handling books for years before starting school. Parents can underestimate the amount of time future good readers spend listening to, interacting with, and talking about books. Review related information at the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement Web site, specifically Inquiry Strand 2, Home and School, at <http://www.ciera.org/library/reports/inquiry-2/index.html>.

- Suggest that parents encourage their toddlers to select books that interest them. Encourage parents to point out and name things in books that toddlers see in their daily lives. From the earliest ages, include both fiction and nonfiction books and print material. Encourage and praise book-handling behaviors such as retelling a story to a favorite stuffed animal while turning the pages of a book.
- Encourage parents to provide access to appropriate online reading and learning activities at home or at the local library. Also, provide information about and encourage access to appropriate software that promotes love of reading and early reading skill development. Find helpful reading Web links for children on the Between the Lions Web site, <http://pbskids.org/lions/>. The site is related to the award-winning PBS television series of the same name that is designed to foster literacy skills of four- to seven-year-olds while demonstrating the joys of reading.

### *Encourage students to spend more time reading and enjoying reading*

- Consider providing a summer reading program. Summer support is especially important for struggling readers. Good readers read during the summer and often have many experiences that enrich their reading. Poor readers rarely read over the summer. They get further and further behind. Change that pattern for poor readers.
- Encourage people to join existing book clubs; if a book club doesn't exist, be sure to start one. Think about using before-school, during-school, or after-school programs that focus on reading, or establish a "lunch bunch" for children to get together to talk informally about books while eating lunch.
- Start a bookstore where children can select books at low cost or free for their personal use. Order books inexpensively through group book clubs, purchase books at reduced rates at book sales, and explore the possibility of participating in Reading Is Fundamental located at <http://www.rif.org/>.



### *Apply for grant funding*

- Use grant funding to help fund programs that you otherwise can't afford. Establish a grant writing team and write your first grant; the more grants you write, the better you'll get at writing and being awarded grants. Ask colleagues who are successful grant writers to help you.
- Check the DPI Web site for information about grant programs such as: Even Start Family Literacy, [http://dpi.wi.gov/titleone/esfl\\_index.html](http://dpi.wi.gov/titleone/esfl_index.html); and Responsive Education for All Children (REACH), <http://dpi.wi.gov/reach/>. Check the U.S. Department of Education Web site for information about grant programs such as Early Reading First, <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/index.html>, and Striving Readers <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/index.html>.

### *Support libraries*

- Think about the message your community sends to its residents about the importance of literacy. If there is a local library, promote it and ensure that every child has a library card. Think about both barriers and incentives for students using libraries.

# Resources for Improving Reading Performance

## Publications

All DPI literacy guides at  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pubsales/litrcy.html>

## Web Sites

**Alliance for Excellent Education** promotes high school transformation to make it possible for every child to graduate prepared for postsecondary education and success in life.  
[http://www.all4ed.org/adolescent\\_literacy/index.html](http://www.all4ed.org/adolescent_literacy/index.html)

**Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC)** is a unique examination, study, and research library of the School of Education at UW-Madison.  
<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/>

**Educational Communications Board (ECB)** is committed to ensuring that public radio and television programs and services are made available throughout Wisconsin and that they reflect and respond to the educational and cultural needs of the state’s residents.  
<http://www.ecb.org/>

**Ideas** provides educators access to teacher-reviewed, Web-based resources for curricula, content, lesson plans, and professional development.  
<http://ideas.wisconsin.edu/>

**International Reading Association** is a professional organization of those involved in teaching reading to learners of all ages that includes teaching tools, publications, online articles and discussions, grants, news, and more.  
<http://www.reading.org>

**Into the Book** is designed to improve K-3 students’ reading comprehension and support professional development related to K-3 literacy.  
<http://reading.ecb.org/>

**LEARNS** is a partnership of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and the Bank Street College of Education (BSC) that includes an interactive Web site created to prepare Corporation for National and Community Service members and volunteers to tutor elementary students in reading.  
<http://www.nwrel.org/learns/>

**National Reading Panel Report** includes the Report of the National Reading Panel, “Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction.”  
<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>

**Learning Point Associates:** Literacy improves students’ reading achievement by providing assistance to state education agencies, intermediate state educational units, and local school districts in defining and implementing research-based best practices in literacy.  
<http://www.learningpt.org/page.php?pageID=12>

**Reading Rockets** is a national multimedia project that looks at how young kids learn to read, why so many struggle, and how caring adults can help.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/>

**ReadWriteThink** includes lessons, standards, Web resources, and student materials.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/>

**TeachingBooks** is a fee-based site, free to Wisconsin residents, designed to generate enthusiasm for books and reading by bringing authors, illustrators, and engaging resources about books for children and teens to every school, library, and home.

<http://www.teachingbooks.net>

**Wisconsin Library Association** brings together and supports people from all types of libraries.

<http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/>

**Wisconsin State Reading Association** promotes excellence in reading.

<http://www.wsra.org>

**Wisconsin Title I Association** is a dedicated group of educators committed to promoting and enhancing the quality of Title I programs throughout Wisconsin.

<http://www.wt1a.com/>

## Professional Development Events

International Reading Association's (IRA) annual convention is held in May. IRA provides numerous additional professional development opportunities.

<http://www.reading.org/>

New Wisconsin Promise Conference is held annually in January.

<http://dpi.wi.gov/nwp/conference.html>

University of Wisconsin Reading Symposium is held annually in June and is sponsored by UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW Oshkosh, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-Whitewater; Cardinal Stritch University; and Wisconsin State Reading Association.

Wisconsin State Reading Association's (WSRA) annual convention is held in February. WSRA also provides institutes and local council events.

<http://www.wsra.org>

Wisconsin Title I Association conferences are held each spring and fall.

<http://www.wt1a.com/>