

Early Literacy Program Review Tool

2025-2027 Biennium

Please make a copy of this document for your district use.

For 2025-2027 Integrated Application, the Early Literacy Program Review Tool is a **required** part of the needs assessment process. This is separate from the optional Integrated Needs Assessment Tool in Appendix E. *Please note: Virtual charters and YCEP/JDEPs are not eligible for early literacy funds and are not required to complete this portion of the needs assessment.*

This resource connects the content of [Oregon's Early Literacy Framework](#) to the required review of the applicant's early literacy program.

Directions

This review is developed to help applicants think deeply into the design of their efforts.

STEP 1: Read the [Oregon Early Literacy Framework](#), which describes the research about reading and the practices that are research-aligned and culturally responsive.

STEP 2: Reflect on and discuss with your teams each section below (1-8) (Appendix optional). Applicants should consider including perspectives from across the early literacy program (i.e., teachers, administrators, students, families) when completing this reflection.

STEP 3: Determine if there were any major changes or shifts to your responses since the 23-25 application process. In the integrated application, you will be asked to explain any changes or updates to your literacy program connected to these indicators.

Additional Considerations

These indicators are an initial resource that draws from key ideas and recommendations from Oregon's Early Literacy Framework and are not exhaustive of all of the depth in the Framework. Therefore, the primary source for reflection should be the full text of each section of the Framework. If, when reviewing the Framework, another portion of the section stands out as it relates to the early literacy program, do draw from it in discussion with the Needs Assessment team as well.

Indicators represent a well-established early literacy program that has benefitted from deep learning and support.

After discussing sections 1-8 with your team, consider reviewing the district's readiness for implementation (see Appendix A). Readiness for implementation will help with identifying next steps for early literacy program improvement. Note that Appendix A is optional, but highly recommended.

Your team's notes for this Program Review will not be submitted, but is a required component of the needs assessment process and will help you respond to the integrated application.

Example response for the application question about changes or updates to your literacy program.

The following example response illustrates how an applicant could provide a summary of changes in the Integrated Guidance application:

Example: Generally, our program review and assessment of our implementation of the practices described in Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework remain the same, with a few areas of notable progress and new areas of growth. Previously, work in foundational skills was an area of growth. We have since adopted a new, high-quality foundational skills curriculum and provided professional development for teachers in what foundational skills instruction looks like across early grades. We have seen the impact of this in assessment data showing growth by 25% more students proficient in key foundational skills areas, as measured by DIBELS. While culturally responsive instruction has been a focus for us, we still see that focal student groups, particularly students of color and their families, express a need for a stronger sense of belonging, including how they see themselves in the books and instructional materials available at school. Across the other elements of the Framework, our progress and reflection remains largely unchanged.

Program Review Tool Outline

Program Review Tool Questions

1. Student Belonging
2. Family and Community Partnerships
3. Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development
4. Reading Models Based in Research
5. Foundational Skills
6. Writing, Reading, Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge
7. Core Instruction & Assessment
8. Reaching All Learners

Appendix A: Readiness for Implementation (Optional)

Vision

Materials

Data

Team

Time

Program Review Tool Questions

1. Student Belonging

[\(Framework Section 1, pg 8.\)](#)

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Student belonging and safety is prioritized as a foundation for learning.
- Educators approach instruction with an assets-based lens, providing high expectations with responsive and specific feedback and support (warm demanders, teaching with students' "academic prowess" at the center).
- Educators understand their role in working toward a shared vision for literacy.
- Educators are provided time and support to examine biases to ensure literacy engagement, growth and achievement for every child.
- Instruction builds awareness of various perspectives, addressing the experiences of diverse populations, while also exposing and disrupting negative stereotypes that may be present in materials.
- Curriculum and materials reflect and honor student identity, home languages, and culture.
- Social and emotional learning is provided in the classroom, allowing children to practice peer-to-peer listening and speaking, and normalizes the "risk, fail, try again" stamina that supports literacy achievement.

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Student Belonging indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

2. Family and Community Partnerships

([Framework Section 2, pg 13.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Families are honored as students' first teachers and are seen as important allies in advancing student learning.
- Families, caregivers, and communities are actively engaged to support literacy learning inside and outside the classroom.
- Early learning and [Kindergarten Guidelines](#) are an integral resource for planning.
- Educators understand the progressions of what children know and are able to demonstrate in early childhood, at kindergarten entry, and at the end of kindergarten.
- Caregivers are provided information on developmental milestones and support to supplement and reinforce literacy learning at home.
- Early education and care providers have a framework for planning high-quality facilitated play and individualized instruction and support services.
- Elementary schools have well-equipped libraries, staffed by full-time, certified teacher-librarians.
- Educators collaborate with community systems of care (e.g., community-based organizations) to provide opportunities for formal and informal learning.

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Family and Community Partnerships indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

3. Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development

([Framework Section 3, pg 19.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Educators and families understand that a child’s ability to read and write is predicated on oral language because of the primary role oral language plays in laying the groundwork for foundational literacy skills.
- Children are actively taught to blend sounds into words, and segment words into sounds (phonemic awareness).
- To the greatest extent possible, educators provide opportunities to practice and develop oral language in students’ home languages, as well as English.
- Educators learn about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children in their care and value each child’s linguistic strengths.
- Indigenous languages are honored.
- Educators use storytelling to bring life to students’ (and their ancestors’) histories, cultures, and traditions.
- Educators are aware that language varieties are linguistically equal, and use strategies to support multi-dialectal students.

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Oral Language as the Root of Literacy Development indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

4. Reading Models Based in Research

([Framework Section 4 pg 24.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Educators understand that reading research, often termed “the science of reading,” studies how reading skills develop and helps us to understand what happens in the brain when students learn to read.
- Educators are aware of- and draw from- multiple models of reading (i.e., the Five Pillars of reading, the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, the Four-Part Processing Model, and the Active View of Reading) to inform curriculum and instruction.
- Educators understand that, generally, these reading models emphasize the interaction between word-identification and language comprehension.
- Educators understand that the above interaction results in reading comprehension through knowledge of the English writing system; linguistic knowledge; background knowledge; and the type of text, nature of the task, sociocultural context, and executive functions.

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Reading Models Based in Research indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

5. Foundational Skills

([Framework Section 5 pg 32.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Literacy instruction centers access for all children to experience and practice the full range of literacy skills: phonemic awareness, explicit systematic phonics, vocabulary and language development, comprehension and fluency.
- Foundational skills instruction is part of the core curriculum and materials and are aligned to Oregon’s English Language Arts and Literacy Standards for K-5.
- Foundational skills instruction is integrated into protected daily literacy instruction, with opportunities to practice and apply these skills up to and beyond grade five as necessary.
- Educators follow a clear, intentional scope and sequence based on the learning progression for foundational skills.
- Sufficient instructional time is spent on teaching foundational skills, including related practice with decodable texts and writing.
- Educators employ explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and responsive teaching of the language and literacy skills needed to be a successful reader and writer, recognizing this approach is beneficial for all, and critical for students experiencing reading disabilities, including dyslexia.
- When working with multilingual learners, educators develop oral language, phonological awareness, and vocabulary across each language.
- Education leaders review, adopt, and support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (i.e., materials that provide explicit and systematic instruction and diagnostic support in concepts of print, letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, word awareness and vocabulary development, syntax, and fluency).

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Foundational Skills indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

6. Writing, Reading, Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge

([Framework Section 6 pg 43.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Educators provide a text rich environment and connections across texts. Selection of complex and diverse texts purposefully supports comprehension development.
- Educators provide explicit vocabulary instruction on grade-level words including child-friendly explanations and opportunities for children to review and use new words over time (e.g., discussion of texts, discussions of content area learning, semantic maps).
- Students spend a substantial portion of their day engaged in listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts.
- Literacy content is well-rounded and includes a broad range of topics and subject areas, including science and social sciences to build background knowledge and support comprehension across subjects.
- Educators continually reflect on the question, “Whose knowledge is being privileged, and how do we ensure we are working from the background knowledge of each student and developing shared understandings?”

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Writing, Reading, Comprehension, Vocabulary, & Background Knowledge indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

7. Core Instruction & Assessment

([Framework Section 7 pg 54.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Instructional materials are approved by ODE or meet the minimum criterion for adoption
- Educators avoid “curricular chaos” by aligning instructional materials, strategies, language of instruction, and routines to create a connected literacy learning experience for students.
- All students have ample opportunities to read and/or listen to complex texts that provide an appropriate level of rigor, align with grade-level standards, and support the purpose of instruction.
- Formative assessment process is used by educators and involves students in the course of learning, to respond to, and adjust instruction for growth.
- Educators use early literacy tests, such as universal screeners, as a starting point to get curious about potential areas of growth and by looking at additional data sources to get a clearer picture of students’ literacy development.
- Multiple assessment methods are used by educators for their intended purpose, to help both educators and students understand where students are in their learning process and identify next instructional moves.

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Core Instruction & Assessment indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

8. Reaching All Learners

([Framework Section 8 pg 62.](#))

Indicators in a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program:

- Multilingual learners are given full access to the core curriculum, and provided with comprehensive language development and explicit vocabulary instruction
- Educators make connections between English and a child’s home language so that they can leverage existing knowledge and skill, and whenever possible create opportunities for children to learn to read in their home language.
- Specific approaches are used to support language development and core curriculum access such as sheltering instruction, compacting the curriculum, and providing dual language programs.
- Formative and summative assessments are offered in the student’s home language and English.
- Striving readers have access to extended learning programs that use research-aligned strategies and are provided by licensed teachers or qualified tutors.
- Striving readers have access to high-dosage tutoring programs that use qualified tutors and developmentally appropriate practices
- Prevention of, and intervention for, early reading difficulties includes a systematic approach for providing increasingly intensified and individualized instructional support informed by multiple data sources and matched to students’ areas of strength and need.
- Instructional support for students with reading and writing difficulties is provided *in addition to* high-quality core literacy instruction.
- Explicit, systematic, evidence-based instruction is provided by qualified educators across all tiers of support.

What areas of strength and areas of growth regarding Reaching All Learners indicators are identified in your early literacy program?

Appendix A: Readiness for Implementation (Optional)

The [Early Literacy Playbook](#) and [accompanying comprehensive rubric](#) outline the how of literacy improvement. There are [five essential practices](#) that speak to the implementation process:

- **Vision**
- **Materials**
- **Data**
- **Team**
- **Time**

While embedded within the indicators, they are called out here because schools that have seen improvements in reading engage in these practices. Additionally, the Playbook outlines a phased process for incorporating each of these elements into your early literacy program. As a resource, it should be used to help you organize your actions and budget accordingly.

Vision

Essential practices to support a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program include:

- The school/system has a *written vision for early literacy* that:
 - Is anchored in the science of reading research;
 - Reflects the mindset that every student, especially those in focal groups (i.e., students of color, students experiencing poverty, multilingual learners, and students experiencing disabilities) can read proficiently by the end of 2nd grade; and
 - Includes a focus on leveraging and building students' linguistic and cultural assets (e.g., primary language, language dialects, language varieties).
- All stakeholders have a *clear understanding of the vision* for early literacy, including their individual role in working toward that vision, which is consistently reflected in team communication, collaboration, and instructional decision making

Taken as a whole, to what extent are the Vision indicators embedded in your early literacy program?

Materials

Essential practices to support a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program include:

- Core curricular materials are anchored in the science of reading and include a systematic and explicit foundational skills program as well as content-rich reading materials that support knowledge building.
- The core curriculum, tests, formative assessment practices, and instructional resources in use are closely aligned.
- Curricular materials are reviewed¹ based on whether they are culturally responsive and, where needed, supplemented to ensure students experience belonging within their learning environment.
- Intervention programs in use are structured and systematic; they amplify and accelerate learning from core materials.
- Assessment practices and materials contribute to planning for whole- and small-group learning experiences that move every student toward reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiency.

Taken as a whole, to what extent are the Materials indicators embedded in your early literacy program?

¹ Note: For more information about instructional materials in Oregon and additional helpful resources, please see the [Instructional Materials Toolkit](#).

Data

Essential practices to support a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program include:

- A coherent, comprehensive, and continuous assessment system includes:
 - A universal screener that assesses all students' performance on a common measure of foundational skills;
 - Progress monitoring tools to determine how students are progressing in relation to their individual goals and student growth targets;
 - A diagnostic assessment that pinpoints the specific skills students have mastered and/or where specific students may need further instruction and practice; and
 - Interim tests and formative assessment practices (e.g., from observation, informal records, the curriculum, anecdotal records) to assess students' mastery of what is being taught.
- Assessment and evaluation honor multilingual learners' (MLs') primary languages and current English proficiency levels. There is a written policy to ensure that MLs are not held back in the curriculum sequence or small-group work based on primary language influence or current English proficiency level.
- Each student has clear, individual learning goals and learning targets that teachers, students, and families/caregivers understand.
- There is a clear and efficient data cycle process in place that supports leaders and teachers in collecting and analyzing student data, as well as adjusting instruction based on what is and is not working. The process includes:
 - ensuring that all educators providing or supporting early literacy instruction are included (e.g., K–5 and language development teachers);
 - gathering collected data from multiple types of assessment (e.g., funds of knowledge information from families/caregivers, universal screener, progress monitoring, interim tests, curriculum assessment, teachers' observation notes about skills individual students have and have not yet mastered);
 - collaboratively analyzing data from each type of assessment alongside student goals to determine what is working and what may need to be refined to support students in moving toward skill mastery; and providing (core + more) for students based on clear entry and exit criteria with an emphasis on exiting students as flexibly and quickly as possible.
- Student data is disaggregated and analyzed by demographics; team members use this data to ensure that the needs of students in focal groups are centered when making instructional decisions (see *Assessment and Data Consideration to Reach All Learners*).
- Families and caregivers are kept up-to-date on their child's progress toward goals and play an active role in supporting their child's journey to becoming a skilled reader.

Taken as a whole, to what extent are the Data indicators embedded in your early literacy program?

Team

Essential practices to support a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program include:

- Each school has an *early literacy team*, composed of (but not limited to) school and system leaders, coaches, teachers, interventionists, and coordinators of special populations (e.g., MLs) who:
 - Strategically and collaboratively support whole- and small-group core instruction as well as interventions to ensure that students meet their goals;
 - Evaluate the implementation of early literacy strategies through analysis of a variety of data sources (e.g., student assessment, staff surveys) and classroom walkthroughs using an observation tool to identify trends and areas of strength and opportunity; and
 - Plan for and provide targeted support based on data collected.
- Early literacy team members and all early literacy educators:
 - Have the content knowledge and instructional skill set necessary to use data to move every student, especially those in focal groups, toward reading, writing, listening, and speaking proficiency; and
 - Engage in ongoing professional learning, including training and coaching in the science of reading, practices for supporting all learners (e.g., students who are emergent bilingual), the specific curricular resources in use, and relevant classroom observation tools
- A subset of members serve as the early literacy leadership team and are responsible for ensuring that early literacy initiatives are implemented effectively and continuously improving.
- Members understand their roles and responsibilities.

Taken as a whole, to what extent are the Team indicators embedded in your early literacy program?

Time

Essential practices to support a research-aligned, culturally responsive literacy program include:

- School and system schedules allocate consistent and protected time for students to engage in core literacy instruction that includes foundational skills, language comprehension, and differentiated small-group instruction.
- School and system schedules allocate consistent and protected time for teacher professional development in early literacy.
- School and system schedules provide the appropriate amount of time for language instruction educational program services such as bilingual education or English language development (ELD) programs and services.
- Members of the early literacy leadership team have *protected time* to:
 - Conduct regular, collaborative whole- and small-group classroom walkthroughs, meet and analyze data, and reflect on intervention program effectiveness. The amount of time a school or system decides to protect will depend on local context;
 - Engage in weekly, ongoing professional learning; and
 - Engage in the data cycle process.

Taken as a whole, to what extent are the Time indicators embedded in your early literacy program?