Kansas Education Framework for Literacy



KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

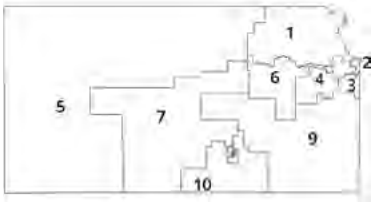
Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

February 28, 2025

Kansas State Board of Education

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SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success

Kansans CAN

MISSION

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

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Jan. 25, 2025

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Overview

The Kansas State Board of Education places a high priority on student literacy. Reflecting this commitment, Kansas has made remarkable gains over the past six years creating alignment to the science of reading, specifically structured literacy, across all areas of education.

Since 2018, Kansas education has implemented nearly all recommendations contained within the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia's final report and Kansas schools are actively transitioning to the use of structured literacy methodology for literacy instruction for students.

The pace of academic recovery resulting from the pandemic has been slow, but Kansas is seeing some bright spots. Recent Kansas state assessment scores show that fewer students are scoring at the lowest level (level 1), and more students are reaching the highest levels of 3 and 4. Additionally, chronic absenteeism rates that reached an alarming high in 2021 are beginning to return to pre-pandemic rates. While this movement is modest, it is an encouraging sign that student performance is trending in the right direction.

Unfortunately, these gains are not enough nor are they happening quickly enough for Kansas students. Educators (birth through higher education), policymakers, parents and community members know they must commit to addressing literacy with a sense of urgency.

To understand Kansas' literacy initiative, it is important to first understand that Kansas is working on the statewide implementation of four, high-leverage fundamental elements of teaching and learning that it believes must be present in all schools to make meaningful and sustained academic gains. Among them, structured literacy is first and foremost.

Referred to as the **Four Fundamentals**, these include:

- **Structured literacy**: We align literacy instruction in pre-K-12 to the science of reading and assure teachers and administration are well-trained and knowledgeable in the elements and implementation of structured literacy. science of reading
- **Standards alignment**: We align lessons, instruction, and materials to Kansas standards and clearly identify what students must know and be able to do. This includes interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive skills in pre-K-12.
- **A balanced assessment system**: We assess students for risk and standards in pre-K-12 and use data to adjust instruction. We have a deep understanding of the purpose of each assessment and how to use the data to raise achievement.
- **Quality instruction**: We have a culture of high expectations in our classrooms and provide each student access to grade level standards and content through high-quality instructional materials in pre-K-12.

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has developed a coherent framework for the implementation of these fundamentals, which is reflected in its new accreditation process, and is providing direct supports to ensure the success of each district. When practiced with consistency and fidelity, these fundamentals provide the base on which all student achievement is built.

Structured Literacy

Kansas educators and legislators alike agree that early literacy must remain a key priority for schools. Considerable work has already been done, and even more is in progress to create and sustain strong literacy practices in Kansas based on the science of reading.

During its February 2024 meeting, the Kansas State Board of Education adopted the following position statement.

> *The Kansas State Board of Education requires all accredited schools in Kansas to use evidence-based methodology fully aligned with the science of reading, specifically Structured Literacy, to provide literacy instruction for students. The Kansas State Board of Education prohibits the use of practices and pedagogy identified in research to be counterproductive to reading acquisition. In addition, the State Board recommends literacy specific universal screening measures, and diagnostic, formative and summative assessments to be utilized by accredited schools and school districts.*

Educator Preparation Providers (EPP) and Licensure

Educator Preparation Program Reviews

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) are peer reviewed every seven years, as part of each provider's accreditation process, to ensure alignment to the preparation program standards. In 2021, KSDE identified five science of reading criteria that specific early childhood, elementary and special education preparation content areas are to address. EPPs were required to submit assurance forms that educator candidates' knowledge and skills are assessed in these five areas.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, EPPs were required to provide an assurance that Science of reading concepts were included in their literacy-aligned programs. As of fall 2022, license and endorsement areas for early childhood, elementary and special education include five Science of reading criteria as part of their regularly scheduled program reviews.

SCIENCE OF READING CRITERIA

1. Understand the four-part processing system of proficient reading and writing.
2. Identify and explain aspects of cognition and behavior that affect reading and writing development.
3. Explain major research findings (i.e., The Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope) regarding the contribution of linguistic and cognitive factors to the prediction of literacy outcomes.
4. Understand/apply in practice the general principles of structured literacy teaching, including explicit, systematic, cumulative, teacher-directed instruction.
5. Understand that higher levels of literacy include syntax, paragraph organization, and discourse structure.

In fall 2023, EPPs were required to submit an updated assurance form identifying where Science of reading concepts are taught in literacy-aligned programs. KSDE added Restricted licenses that lead to an English Language Arts 6-12 license to the list of program areas expected to address the Science of reading.

KSDE's Early Literacy/Dyslexia Program Manager serves on all literacy-connected reviews to provide continuity of expectations and to train reviewers on science of reading expectations.

Revision of Standards for the Preparation of Teachers

KSDE and the public and private educator preparation program providers began updating preparation expectations and program standards in November 2019, for K-6 teaching licenses, English Language Arts endorsements, Reading Specialist teaching licenses and Special Education teaching licenses to ensure alignment with the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) standards.

Kansas Reading Specialist standards were revised in 2020 to align with the International Dyslexia Association and the International Literacy Association standards.

In 2023, the Elementary PreK-6 preparation standards were revised to clarify the high expectations we have regarding teachers being prepared with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to align practice to the science of reading. In addition, a committee of experts from PreK-12 and higher education representatives are currently revising the Early Childhood Unified Birth to Kindergarten and Birth to Grade 3 preparation standards.

EPP Professional Development

KSDE has provided EPP faculty the opportunity to participate in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training at no cost. LETRS® provides the training needed for early childhood and elementary educators and administrators to gain expertise in practices aligned with the Science of reading. This training is an essential support for EPP faculty who are dedicated to providing rigorous instruction aligned with the science of reading.

Licensure Testing Requirements

The Kansas State Board of Education has adopted a more rigorous, elementary content exam developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS), (7002) which is more closely aligned to the science of reading. To receive their initial teaching license (elementary), preservice educators will take, and pass, this exam.

KSDE Literacy Initiatives

KSDE Literacy Advisory Council

KSDE has created a KSDE Literacy Advisory Council that meets four times a year and is comprised of representatives from institutes of higher education (both private and regent), parents, education organizations including the International Dyslexia Associations of Kansas and Missouri, The Reading League (Kansas), advocacy organizations, elementary and secondary teachers and administrators and KSDE staff. Members represent systems of all sizes and all regions of the state. The purpose of this council is to assure the work of the Kansas Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia continues to move forward and expands to provide support for all students.

Kansas Dyslexia Handbook

In response to recommendations made by the Kansas Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia, KSDE in 2021published the Dyslexia Handbook[1] to provide guidance and information to a broad spectrum of educators and stakeholders. This document includes information on screening, evidence-based reading instruction, structured literacy and reading intervention recommendations. KSDE updated this resource in 2023.

Kansas Dyslexia Screening Program

Kansas' comprehensive screening program[2] extends beyond what many states do. Because some students do not present with reading difficulties until they are older and are asked to navigate more complex texts, Kansas requires students be screened, three time a year, beginning in kindergarten through the fall of ninth grade, with appropriate diagnostic assessments informing early intervention. Students who are identified at risk for reading difficulty will continue to be screened beyond ninth grade, while receiving appropriate interventions based on screening and diagnostic data.

1 Kansas State Department of Education. (2023). Dyslexia Handbook. https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/CSAS/CSAS%20Home/Kansas%20Dyslexia%20Handbook.pdf

2 Kansas State Department of Education. (2023). KSDE Dyslexia Screening Protocol K-12 (2023-2024). https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(A-E)/Dyslexia/2023-2024%20KSDE%20Dyslexia%20Screening%20Protocol.pdf

Required Structured Literacy/Dyslexia Training

Kansas requires annual structured literacy/dyslexia training[3] for teachers and additional training for teachers new to the profession (or new to Kansas). Teachers identified for this training include:

- All teachers endorsed elementary education.
- All teachers endorsed early childhood unified.
- All teachers endorsed high incidence special education in teaching in grades K - 12.
- All teachers endorsed English Language Arts grades 5 - 12.
- All teachers endorsed as reading specialists.
- All professionals endorsed as school psychologists.
- Highly recommended that paraeducators receive the training.

In keeping with the most current research, the KSDE Required Initial Dyslexia Training modules were revised and the updated for the 2024-2025 academic year. Modules include:

- KSDE Requirements and District Expectations
- Introduction to Dyslexia. What it is … and What it is Not
- How the Brain Learns to Read
- Structured Literacy
- Information for Transformation (Using Data to Inform Instruction)

LETRS® Training

Since 2021, the Kansas State Board of Education allocated up to $25 million to fund the training of all early childhood, elementary and special education teachers in the science of reading through the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®) program[4]. To date, nearly 12,000 educators have received or are in the process of receiving this intensive training. In addition, KSDE is funding the training of Local Certified Facilitators (LCFs) to allow systems of over 500 students the opportunity to have their own trained LETRS® facilitator to provide systems flexibility in provision of LETRS® training within the local system. One cohort of 25 new facilitators, was trained in December of 2024, with more cohorts scheduled for facilitator training during spring and summer of 2025.

KSDE LITERACY LEADERSHIP CADRE

Those who have been trained as a Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading (LETRS®) facilitator, are invited to participate in the KSDE Literacy Leadership Cadre. This group offers a networking opportunity for all facilitators while providing updates from KSDE and LETRS®. Developing these literacy coaches will help sustain the structured literacy initiative into the future by building educator expertise in using skills and strategies learned in LETRS® when implementing district selected high quality instructional materials. Members meet virtually for an hour per month and will be invited for additional professional learning at the Kansas Literacy Summit held in conjunction with the KSDE Annual Conference.

3 Kansas State Department of Education. (n.d.). Structured Literacy and/or dyslexia training: Required and recommended student and staff training. KSDE. https://www.ksde.gov/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Student-Staff-Training/Prevention-and-Responsive-Culture/Structured-Literacy-and-Dyslexia-Training

4 TASN works with technical assistance providers throughout Kansas. | KSDE TASN. (n.d.). https://ksdetasn.org/letrs

Updated English Language Arts Standards

Kansas, in 2023, updated its English Language Arts Standards[5] to more clearly reflect the science of reading and the adoption of structured literacy as the explicit, evidence-based model for reading instruction.

Structured Literacy Instructional Guidance

KSDE's Structured Literacy Instructional Recommendations[6] is another tool provided to school leaders and teachers to address what effective reading instruction looks like. The guidance defines the structured literacy framework as well as the components of structured literacy.

Structured Literacy Components Checklist

Additionally, KSDE has developed the Structured Literacy Components Checklist[7] along with professional learning opportunities to support school leaders and teachers in the analysis of current literacy instructional practices and their alignment with the science of reading. The checklist encompasses the necessary components and principles of structured literacy discussed within the guidelines.

Professional Development

KSDE's Early Literacy/ Dyslexia team provides districts professional development opportunities, resources and onsite consulting based on the most recent research on evidence-based practices aligned to the Four Fundamentals. Regular offerings also are provided through the KSDE Early Literacy/ Dyslexia Newsletter[8] as well as recent professional learning opportunities delivered collaboratively with educational service centers throughout the state. Educators who seek assistance with any literacy concern or problem in practice can utilize the team's Literacy Lifeline[9] and receive assistance via virtual consultation or emailed response.

KESA 2.0

KSDE has developed the state's new school improvement framework that was implemented for the 2024-2025 academic year.

This comprehensive framework aligns the Four Fundamentals (structured literacy, standards alignment, balanced assessment system and quality instruction) with the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation model and provides a team approach to providing targeted supports to systems.

5 Kansas State Department of Education. (2023a). English Language Standards.. https://community.ksde.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=NXA9zpwVVtI%3d&tabid=5301

6 Kansas State Department of Education. (2025). Structured Literacy: instructional recommendations. https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(A-E)/Dyslexia/StructuredLiteracyInstructionalRecommendations.pdf?ver=2025-02-13-131950-193

7 Kansas State Department of Education. (n.d.). Structured Literacy Components Checklist. https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/CSAS/CSAS%20Home/KSDE%20Structured%20Literacy%20Components%20Checklist.pdf

8 KSDE Early Literacy/ Dyslexia. (n.d.). https://sites.google.com/ksde.org/ksdeearlyliteracydyslexia/home

9 Literacy lifeline. (n.d.). Google Docs. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvuYjlZOb9l-I6jodgAZb0kFn2GYU_ndyJ82mB9MzdebvP0Q/viewform?pli=1

High-Quality Instructional Materials Training

Not only is it important for districts to adopt high-quality instructional materials, but educators must also be well trained in using these materials within the structured reading framework.

In partnership with TNTP, KSDE is supporting the fundamentals of standards alignment and quality instruction through the selection and implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). In support of KSDE's vision for standards alignment, which specifies clarity for what students must know and be able to do, KSDE will support the selection and implementation of HQIM through the development of an instructional materials dashboard and guidance for instructional materials selection and implementation. The dashboard will allow school systems to identify the HQIMs being utilized across the state and collaborate with other school systems on how to best implement instructional materials at each grade level and core content area.

Additionally, guidance will be provided on the selection of instructional materials that ensure alignment to state standards. Implementation guidance will include establishing and maintaining the conditions that enable teachers to effectively use instructional materials to support the vision for standards alignment.

Finally, KSDE's efforts to support standards alignment and quality instruction will include classroom observation tools that enhance the facilitation of instruction that reflects high expectations for each student and meaningfully engages all students with standards-aligned materials. All of this will happen through professional learning for teachers and leaders across Kansas that will be available at regional service centers beginning in 2025.

Kansas Seal of Literacy

The Kansas State Board of Education has established the expectation that Kansas early childhood, elementary and special education teachers, as well as administrators, instructional coaches, reading specialists, and school psychologists - those who are directly delivering literacy instruction or making decisions related to the provision of literacy instruction will demonstrate knowledge of structured literacy to renew their professional license by July 1, 2028. Options for demonstrating this knowledge include the successful completion (mastery level) of KSDE approved training programs or exams approved by the Kansas State Board of Education. Additional information is available on the KSDE website Teacher Licensure page, specific to the Seal of Literacy science of reading requirements[10].

10 Science of Reading Licensure Requirements. (n.d.). https://www.ksde.gov/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Teacher-Licensure-TL/Science-Of-Reading-Licensure-Requirements

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