Maryland's Keys to Comprehensive Literacy

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"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."

- Frederick Douglass, Marylander

Introduction

What do Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, Nancy Pelosi, Johns Hopkins, and Francis Scott Key have in common? They all called Maryland home, which is what Maryland is – a home. It may be small in geographical size, but Maryland has always had big plans, from its influence in the nation's founding, to its defense during the War of 1812, to its creation of the national anthem, and to its continuous drive to propel all Maryland citizens to be their best. Just as Francis Scott Key watched as the resilient soldiers of Fort McHenry defended the country against British attack, today Maryland fights to ensure all its children from birth through grade 12 succeed in school and in life, with attention to the needs of the state's most disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities. That goal is best realized through advancing pre-literacy skills; reading and writing skills; and the use of technology and technology applications including technology literacy, computer literacy, and informational literacy.

Core Beliefs

Maryland has long recognized that for students to be college and career ready, they must have strong literacy skills. Literacy, including the ability to comprehend language and then later text, starts at birth when parents or guardians talk with and read to their children not simply for bonding, but also to help build foundational literacy skills, acquire new vocabulary, and reach developmental milestones. Maryland believes that students need systematic engagement with a

variety of texts beginning at birth and continuing throughout their educational journey to high school and college and career. A comprehensive literacy program provides equitable opportunities for all children and youth, especially those living in poverty, English learners, and those with disabilities.

Vision

The Maryland State Department of Education envisions a world class system supporting the preparation of all students for college, career, and community success to live independent, fulfilling, and productive lives in the 21st century.

Mission

The Maryland State Department of Education provides leadership, support, and meaningful engagement with parents, families, and communities, integration of evolving technologies, and accountability for effective systems of public education, library services, and rehabilitation services with a focus on excellence, equity, and efficiency.

Definition of Literacy

"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. The ability to read, write, and communicate connects people to one another and empowers them to achieve things they never thought possible. Communication and connection are the basis of who we are and how we live together and interact with the world." (Why Literacy?)

In order to help children develop a strong early literacy foundation and build on those skills, Maryland expanded its approach to literacy by integrating multiple content areas in its definition of literacy. "Disciplinary Literacy is the use of discipline-specific practices to access, apply, and

communicate content knowledge, and, in Maryland, it is a shared responsibility. Literacy skills are an important part of every academic discipline; however, each discipline relies on different types of texts, writing styles, and language to convey ideas and learning. For students to be fully prepared for the challenges and expectations of college and career, it is critical that they develop literacy skills in all content areas." (MDK12) In June 2010, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts K-12 and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12. These standards represent a shift in approaches to reading to clearly identify and include reading and writing standards in the content areas of Science /Technical Subjects and History/Social Studies as companions to the English Language Arts Standards. The Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in each discipline.

Maryland's Literacy Initiatives

Maryland's expectations of what children should know and be able to do in language and literacy are defined by three documents: *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age* http://olms.cte.jhu.edu//olms2/data/ck/sites/3910/files/HealthyBeginnings2015.pdf; *Maryland Early Learning Standards* *http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/maryland-early-learning-standards;* and *Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards* for *PreK - 12 (MCCRS) http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/commoncore/*.

Healthy Beginnings was developed by the Maryland State Department of Education and articulates the early learning standards for children birth through three-years-old. The document is intended for use by families with, or early childhood practitioners caring for, infants or very young children. It provides information on expectations for pre-literacy and language skills, as

well as activities that caregivers can do to begin building those skills at home. *Maryland Early Learning Standards* cover the domains of language and literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, health, physical education, fine arts and social foundations for children from birth through age eight and includes the prekindergarten to grade 2 portion of the *Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS).* The MCCRS were developed by the Maryland Department of Education to align to the K-12 Common Core standards that were adopted in 2010. Prior to the creation of a formal literacy plan, Maryland strategically supported and advanced literacy in the state's 24 local educational agencies (LEAs). In 2004, the state was part of the U.S. Department of Education's *Reading First* initiative to support kindergarten through grade 3 literacy and reading proficiency by third grade. Schools were included in the grant based on high poverty and low reading scores on standardized tests.

Reading First served 43 schools, including 5 non-public schools in Baltimore City and Allegany, Garrett, Prince George's, Montgomery, Baltimore, Dorchester, and Somerset counties. *Reading First* funds provided local school systems with evidence-based reading programs, professional development, reading coaches, and intervention teachers for schools with students most at risk for school failure. Often, reading instruction was part of the evaluation of all teachers across all content areas. In addition, a cross-divisional state team created a *Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework* to provide guidance to all 24 LEAs in the state.

During the initiative (2004–2010), proficiency rates on program outcome measures increased in all LEAs and in all three grades levels targeted by *Reading First*. (Table 1)

Table 1: Overall Pass Rates in *Reading First* Schools in Maryland

	Percentage of students scoring at proficient levels in reading				
	Year 1 (2004-2005)	Year 2 (2005-2006)	Year 3 (2006-2007)	Year 4 (2007-2008)	Year 5 (2008-2009)
Overall	**50%**	**53%**	**56%**	**59%**	**59%**
Grade 1	52%	56%	57%	59%	58%
Grade 2	49%	51%	55%	57%	57%
Grade 3	50%	55%	56%	62%	61%

In 2010, Maryland received a U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top Grant. Under this grant, Maryland continued its focus on literacy and expanded the continuum through grade 12. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Curriculum Frameworks and Clarification Statements were developed by Maryland educators. These documents detail for educators the skills necessary for students to demonstrate proficiency in each grade level standard in Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, and Language. The MCCRS ELA/Literacy standards are available at http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/curriculum/reading/index.html.

Embedded in MCCRS, teachers in all subject areas are expected to build discipline-specific literacy into daily instruction. The disciplinary literacy standards are intended to support students' mastery of existing content standards in history, social studies, science, or technical subject classrooms by providing real-life applications for critical reading and comprehension

skills.

Developing Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan: Making Equity a Priority

Given Maryland's long history of supporting literacy at all levels, beginning in June 2017, the Maryland Literacy Team compiled demographic and trend academic data to evaluate whether existing state-level activities were meeting needs of all children. This led to the Literacy Team's plan to engage in timely and meaningful consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and examine relevant data to determine the needs of students, schools, and/or educators, to find out what Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and community-based programs have in place, and determine what is needed to ensure equity in literacy is achieved for all of Maryland's children. In making this guarantee a reality, two surveys were created in June 2017 and distributed to all local education agencies and community-based programs with the goal of gathering feedback regarding literacy needs as the first step in establishing a formal Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The Literacy Team used data from the Comprehensive Literacy Plan Needs Assessment to develop Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The surveys generated data from nearly 850 respondents across Maryland, including child care providers, parents, teachers, administrators, directors, coordinators, resource teachers, content coordinators, and grade level experts. Generally, results showed a strong sense of knowledge and application of the MCCRS and Early Learning Standards (Birth to age 8) across settings, with most responses falling in the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories. Areas of need from both the K-12 survey and the Birth to Five survey included the need to include parents, community programs, and other partners within the LEA in professional learning for literacy; and time to plan for or attend literacy meetings and collaborative planning. Finally, when 137 narrative responses were disaggregated

to find patterns and trends, the need for additional training and resources became apparent. The Maryland Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP), *Maryland Keys to Comprehensive Literacy* was developed based on the results of the needs assessment. The Maryland CLP was submitted with MSDE's application for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant in July 2017. In August 2017, MSDE formed a workgroup of stakeholders to review, provide feedback, and edit the draft CLP. The US Department of Education (US Ed) notified MSDE on September 27, 2017 of the grant award. In December of 2017 US Ed provided feedback on the Maryland draft CLP and gave permission for dissemination of the draft to the state LEAs. A final CLP was submitted to US Ed in January 2018.

In summary, Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan is based upon stakeholder feedback, as well as survey, demographic, and academic data sets, which provide the foundation for ensuring equitable practices. *(See surveys in Appendix B)*

Rationale and Theory of Action

Keys to Comprehensive Literacy

As a result of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the State has established five keys to guide Maryland's CLP. Based on identified needs, the CLP identifies the following five keys as essential to increased literacy achievement for all students. In the CLP, the keys are later divided into subsections. In most Keys, the division is arranged from Birth to Age Five, Kindergarten to Grade Five, Grade Six to Grade Eight, Grade Nine to Grade Twelve. The divisions demonstrate Maryland's commitment to literacy development that begins with birth and continues through high school, college, and career.

Key 1 Instructional Leadership
The leadership on every level (state, local school systems, schools and early childhood programs) must recognize and tap into the needs, strengths, and concerns of the community; the cultural makeup of its citizens; and the equity issues which impact the state, school, and local educational agency. These driving forces of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan are reflected in the leadership, the instruction, and the training that is provided. Components of Instructional Leadership include identifying and encouraging teacher leaders; establishing leadership ladders; providing opportunities for regular literacy meetings, data dialogues, joint planning; and monitoring and assessing progress.

Key 2 Strategic Professional Learning
Clear, systematic, needs-based professional learning is vital to impact student growth. Maryland's CLP embraces the whole child, from birth to Grade 12. This occurs through strong partnerships with families and guardians, early childhood educators, PreK-12 teachers, higher education faculty and staff members, birth to 5 organizations, and other community stakeholders, as part of a high-quality and sustained system of professional development for educators. Together state and local teams will establish and disseminate needs-based professional learning in a variety of mediums to local educational agencies, K-12 Educators, Birth to 5 programs, and local communities. The team will also establish a system for addressing the needs of individual students through data dialogue, peer coaching, and mentoring.

Key 3 Continuity of Standards and Evidence-based Instruction:
With the adoption of the MCCRS and the *Early Learning Standards*, educators have developed an understanding of the progression of standards from birth through 12th grade and across content areas. Working with local school systems, community-based programs, local Early Childhood Advisory Councils, public libraries, and institutions of higher education, Maryland will expand its vision of literacy to include the continuum of birth to grade 12 to engage all groups and to increase alignment. True equity of instruction cannot be achieved until all students receive instruction aligned to standards and delivered with fidelity.

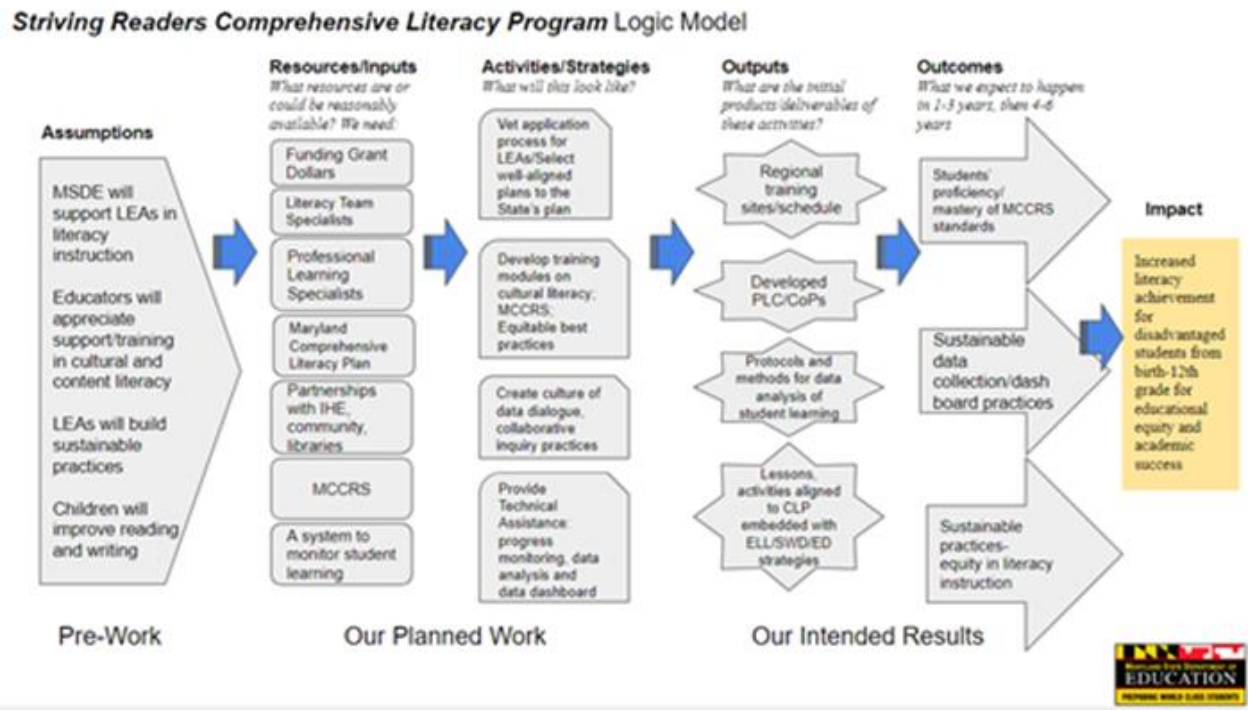
Key 4 Comprehensive System of Assessments:
Assessments provide information on various forms of instruction, student knowledge, and achievement. A comprehensive system of assessments includes state, local, school, and teacher assessment data. This data is analyzed in collaborative teams using data-dialogue, peer coaching, and mentoring to guide and refine evidence-based instruction. A comprehensive assessment system allows for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student.

Key 5 Tiered Instruction and Interventions:
Maryland has adopted regulation for the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all classrooms. This approach provides choice and individualization for students which, in turn, allows teachers to provide tiered instruction. In addition, Maryland developed a structured Response to Intervention Framework in 2008 that was adopted statewide. The state's tiered system

of support will continue to be refined and include all children, and will provide enrichment and intervention models to achieve comprehensive literacy for all.

Theory of Action

MSDE will support LEAs in evidence-based literacy instruction. All Five Keys become part of an LEA Comprehensive Literacy Plan and are implemented with fidelity within each school. The program is monitored and adjusted by an instructional leadership team comprised of administrators, teacher leaders, parents, students and community members to meet the diverse needs of children. Structures are in place to sustain the literacy program for all children birth to grade 12, with a focus on disadvantaged groups. Once all educators are trained to continuously enable students to succeed, Maryland's children will improve in reading and writing.



Continuous Improvement Process

Measuring the effectiveness and impact of initiatives and innovations will be a common and ongoing activity by the state. If the impact is positive, an LEA can continue the program with the goal of ensuring replicability and sustainability; yet, if the innovation is not determined successful, then LEAs must make improvements or seek assistance from the State, as necessary.

Ensuring educators and educational leaders participate in ongoing training in collecting and using formative and summative data is paramount to ensuring a standardized approach to data collection. This continuous improvement process *(see Figure 3*) must be iterative and cyclical to truly identify how baseline data has changed over time. With baseline data collection of ELA/L reading scores and other supporting academic data at the initial stage (Plan), the State and participating LEAs can verify growth or achievement over time by collecting the same type of data at the mid-year and end-of-year time periods (Improve). This process, when implemented with fidelity, can lead to continuous improvement. Sharing this among LEAs and schools will lead to a sustainable and successful Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Continuous Improvement Process

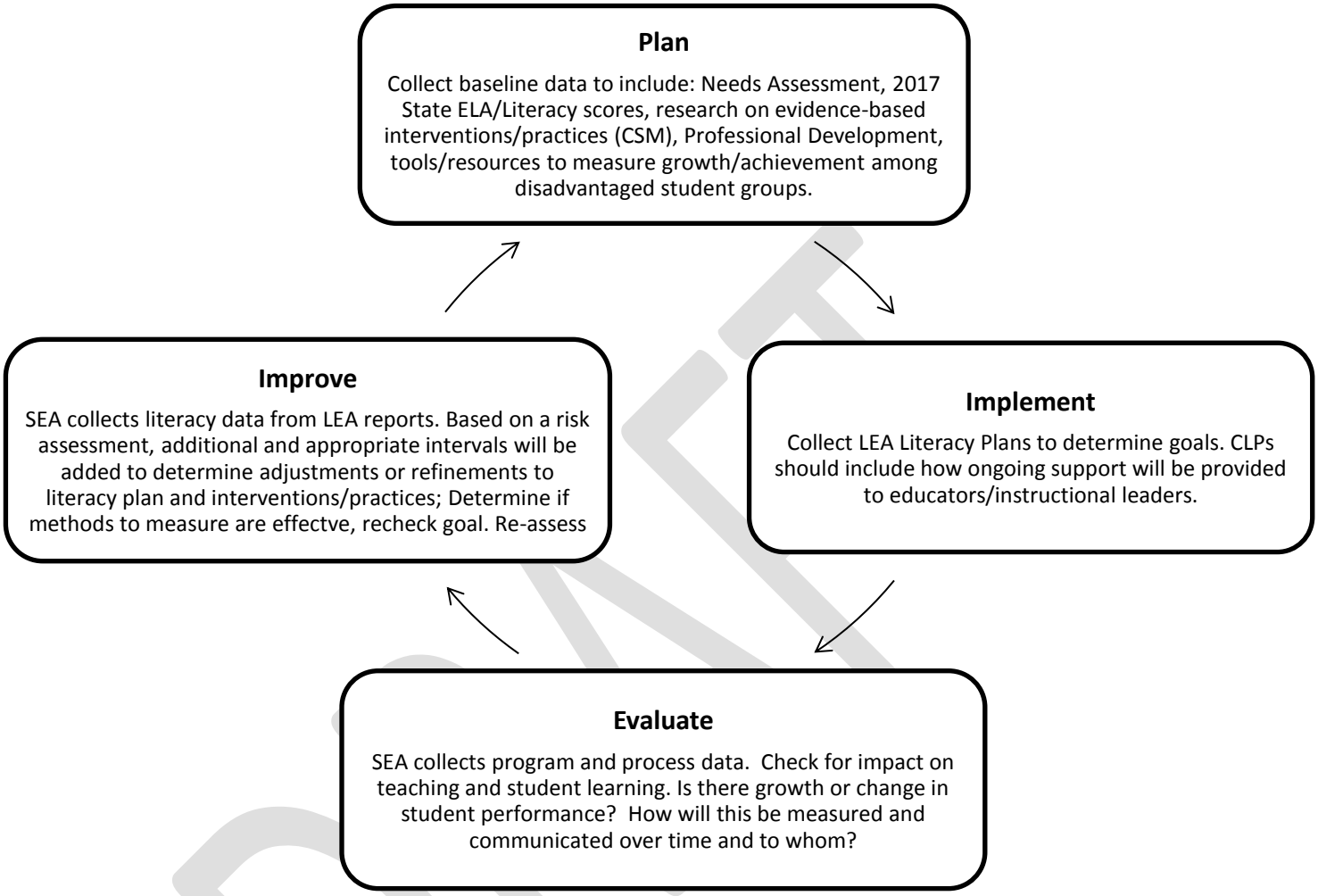


Figure 3: SEA data collection plan for continuous improvement

Measures of Progress

Performance Outcome	Performance Measure
The percentage of participating four-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills	LEAs will determine an evidence-based assessment to gather data to report on four-year-old oral language growth. MSDE currently provides the Early Learning Assessment as an optional performance measure. LEAs can choose to use the Early Learning Assessment or another evidence-based assessment.
The percentage of participating fifth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State English Language Arts/Literacy assessments	MSDE will use the PARCC assessment as the performance measure to determine the percentage of participating fifth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on a statewide assessment in English Language Arts/Literacy.
The percentage of participating eighth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State English Language Arts/Literacy assessments	MSDE will use the PARCC assessment as the performance measure to determine the percentage of participating eighth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on a statewide assessment in English Language Arts/Literacy.
The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State English Language Arts/Literacy assessments	MSDE will use the PARCC assessment as the performance measure to determine the percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on a statewide assessment in English Language Arts/Literacy.

Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan Provides Equity for All

Rigorous Standards and Increasing Diversity

The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards require an increase in the rigor and deep analysis that has driven instructional shifts in English Language Arts/Literacy. Consequently, Maryland replaced its assessment system with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) with its benchmark administration occurring during SY 2013-14. Maryland uses PARCC to determine students' knowledge in reading and writing in grades three through eight, and in grade ten. Kindergarten students are assessed annually on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in four domains: literacy, mathematics, social foundations, and physical well-being and motor development, generating a composite score indicating readiness for kindergarten.

PARCC and KRA Assessment results have indicated achievement gaps in performance of subgroups of disadvantaged students compared to the performance of all students.

As Maryland prepared to meet more rigorous academic goals through the introduction of increasingly challenging and complex standards, texts and assessments, the State was recognizing the realities of Maryland's changing demographics, including ethnicity, language, and percent of students living in poverty. Shifts in racial and ethnic composition indicate Maryland is a diverse state with minorities accounting for 48.5% of the state's population in 2016. By making equity a priority, Maryland is committed to advancing literacy skills for all children from birth through grade 12. Thus, the State will assist districts in aligning or modifying comprehensive literacy plans with the State plan, with a focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged children using data, including a needs-based assessment.

Strategies to Address the Needs of Disadvantaged Students

State level professional development will include the identification and implementation of evidence-based instructional interventions/programs, data analysis for instructional modifications, and infusion of culturally relevant instructional materials. The LEA instructional program must include frequent, repeated, developmentally-appropriate practices such as:

- instructional strategies in reading and writing across content areas;
- intentional instruction in foundational literacy skills, including print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, vocabulary, and fluency;
- explicit instruction in authentic and purposeful writing;
- high-interest, diverse, high-quality print and non-print materials;
- differentiated instructional approaches, including individual and small group instruction and discourse;
- opportunities for using and developing vocabulary;
- valid and reliable assessments systems, including screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tools;
- strategies to enhance children's motivation to read and write and children's engagement in self-directed learning;
- principles of universal design for learning;
- professional development around strategies and practices for increased literacy achievement;
- alignment to Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

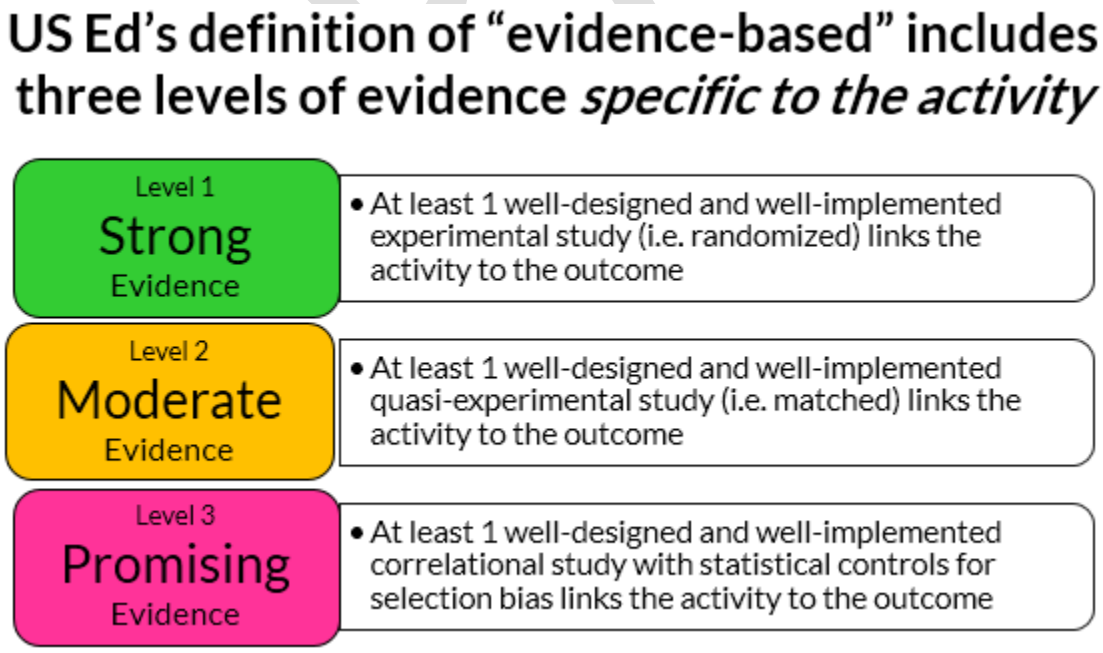
Evidence-Based Practices

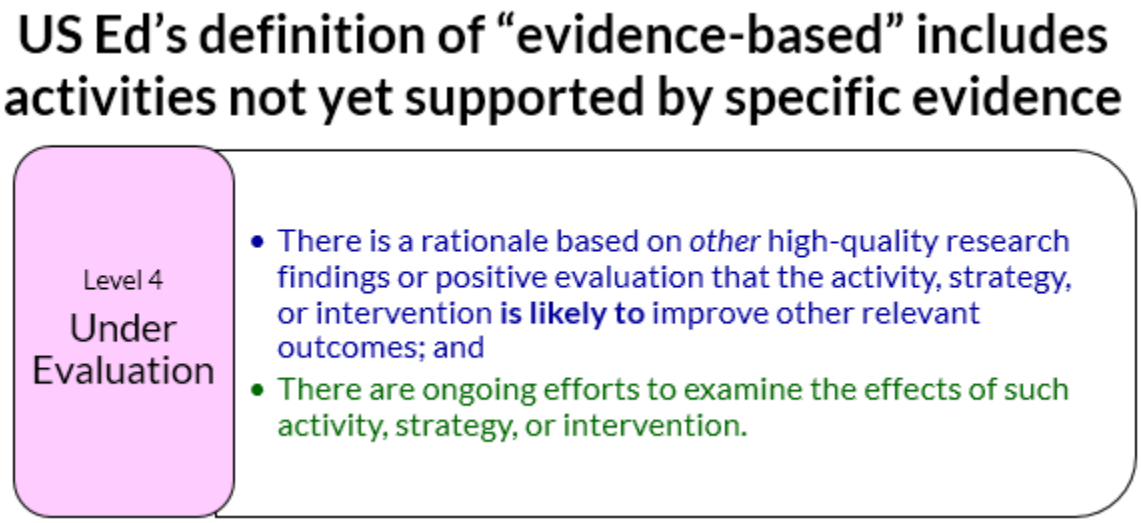
The term "evidence-based practices" is used frequently in Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. These practices are different from research-based practices in a vital way: research-based means there are theories behind the strategies or practices, but the research is simply in theory and not supported through proof. Evidence-based practices are proven effective and have the support to back them up. According to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the definition of "evidence-based" activities, strategies, and interventions is as follows:

An "evidence-based" activity, strategy, or intervention:

(i) demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on [one of three levels of evidence, or]

(ii) demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.





All practices used to support students must meet Level 1, 2, 3, or Level 4 with ongoing efforts to examine the effects on student outcomes.

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Key 1
Instructional Leadership

Key 1 Instructional Leadership

Purpose: The intent of this key is to develop instructional leaders who are knowledgeable about evidence- based literacy practices and can analyze the strengths and needs of the school and its community. Instructional leaders articulate clear goals, encourage innovation, support professional development and collaboration, and monitor teaching and learning. Leaders will implement a system for effective schoolwide literacy instruction that will narrow achievement gaps.

Birth to Grade Twelve

Instructional leaders should be provided with the knowledge and resources to build effective collaborative literacy initiatives beginning at birth and continuing through grade twelve.

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Support for leaders can include the following:

- the blending of multiple funding sources such as Preschool Development Grants, Child Care Development Funds, and Title I, IIA, and Title III funds to support literacy;
- the identification of community-based child care providers' professional development needs to create a plan for feeder system capacity building;
- the identification of community child care and Head Start program staff to participate in joint professional learning opportunities with public school prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers;
- the creation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that include prekindergarten teachers, EL teachers, special educators, and literacy staff to foster collaborative learning, analyze prekindergarten data and kindergarten readiness data to determine progress of individual students and school / systemwide programs, and to make

evidenced-based decisions to provide support and/or intervention to students with literacy achievement gaps;

- collaboration with and resources from a variety of organizations to support dual language learners (English learners who range in age from birth through five years old and who are learning two or more languages), and their families and guardians;
- methods to work with public libraries and community resources to build literacy;
- models of world language immersion programs to support the literacy development of ELs and native English speakers (Thomas & Collier, 2012);
- collaboration with local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (ECAC) and local educational agency and school leaders in the implementation of the local ECAC's literacy and family engagement campaigns; and
- collaboration with the public libraries' family engagement efforts to bring parents into literacy rich environments.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

Support for leaders can include the following:

- implementation of effective analysis of literacy screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcomes data for each student to differentiate instruction and provide any needed supports for learning;
- development of a School Progress/School Improvement Plan which includes literacy goals based on data analysis for the coming school year and input from the students, families, and community partners that are representative of targeted student groups- English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Economically Disadvantaged Students;
- development and implementation of a coaching model to support teachers' use of

evidenced-based instructional strategies and supports;

- methods to work with public libraries and community resources to build literacy;
- creation of Professional Learning Communities to support professional development of staff in the use of evidenced-based instructional strategies and supports;
- identification of evidence-based high-quality literacy curriculum to be implemented with fidelity, and ongoing progress monitoring;
- collaboration and resources that promote the language development of English Learners (ELs) and support the students' home languages;
- models of world language immersion programs to support the literacy development of ELs and native English speakers;
- effective School Progress/School Improvement Plans which are designed to reflect the needs of the school population; and
- ways to address the equity and access issues that exist for students, families, and stakeholders.

Grade Six to Grade Eight

Effective leadership in upper grades targets literacy as a school priority and communicates a vision for embedding literacy across disciplines—a vision where, every day in every classroom, adolescents are reading, writing, and talking about print and nonprint materials. To achieve this vision, principals build learning communities and structure opportunities for school wide collaborative learning.

Areas to consider include:

- provide and protect time for teacher teams to meet regularly to study the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, analyze student data and work products, plan

instruction, reflect on instructional practices, and determine instructional modifications;

- engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy plan for helping all readers to improve their literacy skills;
- create opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines;
- methods to work with public libraries and community resources around literacy initiatives;
- provide teachers with job-embedded professional learning opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities; and
- include reading/literacy specialists or literacy coaches as integral members of the learning community.

Support for leaders can include the following:

- effective Student Services Teaming (SST) to ensure standardized data collection, and implementation/documentation of recommended evidence-based practices, with progress monitoring;
- strategic planning for instructional leadership teams within a school to meet monthly;
- ways to use the School Progress/School Improvement Plan in instructional decision making;
- regular data sharing with school administrators and with local educational agency level representatives regarding literacy;
- strategies for growth, as developed in grade-level teams;
- supports for team leaders who meet with resource teachers from curriculum offices to meet the needs of all students;
- best practices for formal and informal observations;

- feedback that is grounded in the goals of the School Progress/School Improvement Plan;
- professional learning within the school and within a local educational agency that is based on the goals outlined in the School Progress/School Improvement Plan;
- resources that enhance language development and access to grade-level content for ELs;
- models of world language immersion programs to support the literacy development of ELs and native English speakers;
- fostering relationships with students, parents, and community members; and
- methods to work with public libraries and community resources around literacy initiatives.

Grade Nine to Grade Twelve

Adolescents deserve a culture of literacy in their schools and a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement. School leaders play an important role in supporting efforts across disciplines to integrate appropriate adolescent literacy instruction. Effective leadership is essential for creating a safe school climate that supports students' literacy development, and provides an encouraging and culturally relevant climate. Areas to consider include the following:

- engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy action plan for helping struggling readers close their literacy achievement gap;
- engage and challenge all readers to use and adapt literacy skills and strategies to meet their needs in different contexts;
- create opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines;
- provide teachers with job-embedded professional learning opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities; and

- include reading/literacy specialists or literacy coaches as integral members of the learning community.

Support for leaders can include the following:

- the formation of teams consisting of school administrators, content leaders and specialists, special education leaders, EL leaders, and school counselors;
- designs for a strategic plan to improve literacy based on the goals of the School Progress/School Improvement Plan;
- informal and formal observation tools to provide teachers with regular feedback and support;
- revisiting the School Progress/School Improvement Plan to evaluate progress and establish new goals based on student data;
- resources that enhance language development and access to grade-level content for ELs.
- methods for developing literacy skills in English as well as other languages;
- models of world language immersion programs to support the literacy development of ELs and native English speakers;
- methods for fostering relationships with students, parents, and community members; and
- methods for working with public libraries and community resources around literacy initiatives.

Instructional Leadership Goals

Key 1: Consider using this here: The leadership on every level (state, local school systems, schools and early childhood programs) must recognize and tap into the needs, strengths, and concerns of the community; the cultural makeup of its citizens; and the equity issues which impact the state, school, and local educational agency. These driving forces of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan are reflected in the leadership, the instruction, and the training that is provided. Components of Instructional Leadership include identifying and encouraging teacher leaders; establishing leadership ladders; providing opportunities for regular literacy meetings, data dialogues, joint planning; and monitoring and assessing progress.

MSDE Goals for Instructional Leadership	**Birth to Age 5 System of Early Care and Education**	**K - Grade 5**	**Grades 6-8**	**Grades 9-12**	**Timeline**	**Key Contributors**
To develop instructional leaders who are knowledgeable about evidence-based literacy practices	Summer Academies EIP Webinars	Summer Academies EIP Webinars	Summer Academies EIP Webinars	Summer Academies EIP Webinars	Summer 2017 – Summer 2018 Winter 2017 – Spring 2018	Content Offices Professional Learning Team
To support LEAs in analyzing the strengths and needs of the school and its community	 Implement Central Office Communities of Practice in LEAs	Data Workshops Implement Central Office Communities of Practice in LEAs	Data Workshops Implement Central Office Communities of Practice in LEAs	Data Workshops Implement Central Office Communities of Practice in LEAs	Fall 2017 Spring 2018	Professional Learning Team Assessment Office

To support LEAs and the members of the System of Early Care and Education in developing strategies for monitoring teaching and learning	Summer workshops	Summer workshops	Summer workshops	Summer workshops	Summer 2018	Professional Learning Team Content Offices
Participate in multi-state collaboratives and provide supports from these collaboratives to LEAs	CCSSO School Leadership Development and Support Workgroup CCSSO Engaging Teacher Leaders to Inform Policy and Improve Instruction Workgroup Learning Forward	CCSSO School Leadership Development and Support Workgroup CCSSO Engaging Teacher Leaders to Inform Policy and Improve Instruction Workgroup Learning Forward	CCSSO School Leadership Development and Support Workgroup CCSSO Engaging Teacher Leaders to Inform Policy and Improve Instruction Workgroup Learning Forward	CCSSO School Leadership Development and Support Workgroup CCSSO Engaging Teacher Leaders to Inform Policy and Improve Instruction Workgroup Learning Forward	2018-2020	MSDE Staff

Established Programs/Initiatives

The State Superintendent of Schools has established the Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement to provide targeted support to Maryland's lowest-performing schools and to foster the growth of effective leaders. The office provides in-school professional learning experiences to future and current school leaders that focus on the skills and knowledge required to be successful in the principalship. This shared leadership structure within the school building aims to lessen the burdens of principal displacement and re-assignment. The flagship programs in the Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement are the Aspiring Leaders Institute and the Governor's Promising Principals Academy. Both programs provide intensive yearlong training with job-embedded professional learning experiences that are designed to support local school systems in strengthening the leadership pipeline.

School teams, led by principals, attended the 2017 Summer Symposiums for Pre-K to Grade 2 along with community-based childcare provider representatives. Participants learned about recent brain research to enhance their knowledge of developmentally appropriate Essential Instructional Practices (EIP). The monthly Principals' Newsletter is disseminated to leaders across the state to share professional learning opportunities offered both virtually and face-to-face.

Enhancements/Improvements for LEAs to Consider

The State encourages LEAs to form literacy teams at the school level and meet as a vertical team by feeder school to establish some continuity in literacy goals and strategies. An EL teacher would be assigned to the same cluster of feeder schools to best support the needs of that specific population and to build relationships with providers part of the system of early childhood

education and teachers from PreK-12. Child care providers and Head Start teachers could also be invited to participate at the elementary level. Elementary school leadership participating in local Early Childhood Advisory Council meetings and literacy initiatives can help build coherence from Birth-Grade 5. This would provide community members and parents with a forum to have a more open dialogue with all stakeholders regarding students' needs. Additionally, collaboration between feeder schools on the elementary, middle, and high school levels, including general and special education, should be a required intervention as part of the School Progress/School Improvement Plan, facilitated by the individual school and local educational agency leaders. Through learning walks and collaborative data analysis, teachers will be more equipped to design instruction that is tailored to the specific needs of students and ease the student transition instructionally from child care programs to elementary, middle, and high schools.

Key 2

Strategic Professional Learning

Key 2 Strategic Professional Learning

Purpose: Clear, systematic, needs-based professional learning is vital to impact teacher and student growth, and occurs through strong partnerships with families and guardians, early childhood providers and general and special educators, PreK-12 teachers, higher education faculty and staff members, birth to 5 organizations, and other community stakeholders, as part of a high-quality and sustained system of professional learning. Together, state and local teams will establish and facilitate needs-based professional learning in a variety of mediums to local educational agencies, PreK-12 educators, birth to 5 programs, child care teachers and directors, and local community groups that support families. Teams will also establish a system for addressing the needs of individual students through data dialogue, peer coaching, progress monitoring and mentoring.

Maryland Birth to Grade 12 Programs/Initiatives

Child Care Credentialing

To promote high quality literacy and language acquisition for early learners, MSDE supports professional development in the early childhood community by training the state-approved Child Care trainer pool on current literacy research and best practices in order for them to effectively train early childhood educators and staff. Professional development includes information on evidence-based, culturally relevant literacy practices, implementing state-approved curriculum, implementing evidence-based interventions, and supporting families in developing the child's literacy skills.

Statewide Professional Learning Focused on Early Learning

Statewide professional learning opportunities will focus on supporting all school and community

staff including, principals, assistant principals, child care and Head Start Directors, and teachers of early learners by providing professional development on essential practices related to research, skills, and strategies to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps as early as possible. Professional learning topics will include:

- research on the brain development of young children;
- developmentally appropriate instruction;
- impact of PreK-2 instruction on future learning;
- needs assessments;
- personalization;
- data analysis;
- peer coaching; and
- mentoring.

Professional Learning Program for Maryland Educators

The program acknowledges the dedication of Maryland educators to advance best practices aligned to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. This program allows Maryland educators to document and manage their own professional learning by choosing activities based upon their professional needs aligned to the needs of their students. The program also enables Maryland educators to earn Maryland State Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credit for those activities.

Professional Learning Online Courses

Maryland offers online courses for Maryland educators at every level through the eConnect portal

https://msde.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_tab_group_id=_104_1

Maryland Teacher Leadership Summit

The Maryland Teacher Leadership Summit is designed to promote and develop teacher-led initiatives across the state. Modeled after the successful National Teach to Lead Summit, the Maryland event:

- spotlights and supports a group of teacher-led initiatives across Maryland;
- provides teacher-led teams with hands-on training to refine program models, identify supports, and communicate initiatives to key stakeholders; and
- promotes teacher leadership among key local systems-level stakeholders, including superintendents, principals and national and local partners who advise and support teacher-led teams to refine innovative proposals.

Maryland Go Open

Maryland will share free openly licensed digital resources with all stakeholders. This effort will:

- identify current and relevant quality resources that support UDL practices;
- verify accessibility of resources;
- reduce redundancy of efforts;
- provide engaging and interactive resources;
- support personalized teaching and learning; and
- provide anytime, anywhere access.

As a #GoOpen state, Maryland will:

- adopt/implement a statewide technology strategy that includes the use of openly licensed resources;

- develop and maintain a statewide repository;
- publish OER resources to the Learning Registry;
- participate in a community of practice; and
- create a webpage to share the commitment to and progress for #GoOpen.

Maryland Collaborative Model for Peer Coaching

The Maryland Collaborative Model for Peer Coaching (MdCMPC) is an effort designed to spread a culture of professional growth by empowering teachers to use their expertise without leaving the classroom. A statewide, teacher-developed peer coaching model has been created that can be customized for local educational agencies and schools for improving 21st century teaching practices, supporting deeper learning, and fostering collaboration.

EdCamp

Colleagues join together to collaborate and create innovative professional learning. EdCamp is comprised of sessions that are determined by participants on the day of the event. Everyone is both a learner and a leader. Anyone can be a presenter or facilitator. Participants are encouraged to join and lead sessions that meet their unique needs as educators.

Formative Assessment for Maryland Educators (FAME)

FAME is a yearlong collaborative professional development process that consists of five self-study modules, application activities, communities of practice, leadership support, and support from the MSDE formative assessment specialists. The goals of FAME are to encourage and support teacher reflection and dialogue around the topic of formative assessment, help teachers revise and refine their current practices within their own classrooms and schools, and create lasting change in schools and LEAs.

Curricular Support Materials Collaborative

The Maryland District Curricular Support Materials Collaborative (CSM) aims to foster peer-to-peer networking and sharing of information about curricular resources across local educational agencies. By using an online tool, Maryland content supervisors can quickly and easily identify helpful, vetted materials.

Classroom Focused Improvement Process

The Maryland Classroom Focused Improvement Process is a statewide protocol for school-based collaborative teams to conduct strategic data analysis and data dialogue to guide instruction using asix-step process for increasing student achievement. The process is planned and carried out by teachers meeting in grade level, content, or vertical teams as a part of their regular lesson planning cycle.

Many of these initiatives and programs are already underway in Maryland. The following chart identifies the number of participants in current statewide professional learning opportunities.

Initiatives and Participation

Current Professional Learning Initiatives	Statewide Educator Participation
Child Care Credentialing	10,751 Individuals Trained (Jan.–Mar. 2017)
Statewide Pre-K – Grade Two Educator Symposia	964 Educators (Summer 2017)
Blackboard Professional Development Online Courses	238 Educators (Spring 2016 - Spring 2017)
Maryland Teacher Leadership Summit	52 Educators
Maryland Go Open	Educators statewide (February 2016-ongoing)
Maryland Collaborative Model for Peer Coaching	98 Educators

EdCamp	325 Educators
Formative Assessment for Maryland Educators (FAME)	1955 Educators (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)
Curricular Support Materials Collaborative	2017-present
Classroom Focused Improvement Process	Ongoing

Strategic Professional Learning Goals

Key 2: Maryland's CLP embraces the whole child, from birth to Grade 12. A high-quality and sustained system of professional learning occurs through strong partnerships with families and guardians, early childhood educators, Prek-12 teachers, higher education faculty and staff members, libraries, birth to 5 organizations, and other community stakeholders. Together state and local teams will establish and disseminate needs-based professional learning in a variety of mediums to local educational agencies, K-12 Educators, Birth to 5 programs, and local communities.						
MSDE Goals for Strategic Professional Learning	**Birth to Age 5 System of Early Care and Education**	**K - Grade 5**	**Grades 6-8**	**Grades 9-12**	**Timeline**	**Key Contributors**
To create a high-quality and sustained system of professional learning	Plan and implement needs based professional learning Utilize partner organizations such as Ready At Five to provide early literacy professional development Sponsor Pre-K- 2 Symposiums, conferences, and	Plan and implement needs based professional learning Sponsor Symposiums, conferences, and	Plan and implement needs based professional learning	Plan and implement needs based professional learning	2018-2020 Ongoing Summer 2018, 2019, 2020	Professional Learning Team Professional Learning Team, DECD Professional Learning Team,

	workshops on developmentally appropriate, evidence-based instructional practices	workshops on developmentally appropriate evidence-based instructional practices				Content Teams
To build preservice and in-service teacher capacity	Streamline the approval process for Language and Literacy professional development Increase the number of childcare providers who are credentialed through MSDE Increase the number of providers seeking Child Development Associate (CDA) credential				2018-2020 2018-2020 2018-2020	DECD DECD DECD

		Partner with Maryland Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to revise elementary teacher certification course frameworks	Partner with Maryland Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to revise secondary teacher certification course frameworks	Partner with Maryland Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to revise secondary teacher certification course frameworks	2016-2018	ELA staff, Certification Office
To support job-embedded, peer-to-peer professional learning		Facilitate Peer Coaching Collaboratives	Facilitate Peer Coaching Collaboratives	Facilitate Peer Coaching Collaboratives	Ongoing	Professional Learning Team

Enhancements/Improvements for LEAs to Consider

Support from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, special education offices, and Title I should be given to individual schools as needed and as requested by the school administrators. More frequent learning walks by these offices and other support specialists, as well as strategic planning time to meet with teams of teachers would promote regular professional development and timely feedback that is specifically tailored to the literacy needs of that specific school or grade level.. These specialists could also coordinate with LEAs and community-based programs to professional learning for child care, Head Start, parents, and community members, utilizing parent advocates, interpreters, and support personnel.

Key 3

Continuity of Standards-based Instruction

Key 3 Continuity of Standards-based Instruction

Purpose: Working with local school systems, community-based programs, local Early Childhood Advisory Councils, public libraries, and institutions of higher education, Maryland will expand its vision of literacy to include the continuum of birth to Grade 12 to engage all groups and to increase alignment.

Birth to Grade Twelve

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Young children need to be engaged in language and literacy interactions throughout the day. These activities should be occurring through everyday experiences such as communicating with friends and family, traveling in the car or through the neighborhood, and through daily household activities. They also need to be read to and have opportunities to discuss the text and the vocabulary, opportunities to explore pretend reading, and engage in open-ended questions and talk. As children move into prekindergarten, classroom activities should build phonemic awareness, print concepts, initial alphabet knowledge, and language comprehension, including vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and knowledge of text and sentence structures. All these activities should occur through natural opportunities including play-based or center-based learning.

To promote continuity of standards-based instruction, MSDE will continue to:

- strengthen partnerships among system of early care and education and local educational agencies;
- identify and promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career-Ready

Standards and Early Learning Standards across content areas;

- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and ESOL Programs; and
- provide appropriate accommodations and curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of all students.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

Literacy knowledge and skills developed in kindergarten through third grade predict later literacy achievement. Classroom instruction can have an enormous impact on the development of literacy knowledge and skills. The instruction in these early grades, especially K-2nd grade should reflect developmentally appropriate instruction that allows for play-based, center-based, and or project-based learning. Kindergarten should build on those same areas that began in prekindergarten, including moving from initial alphabet knowledge to full alphabet knowledge and from phonological awareness to phonemic awareness. Beginning around 1st grade, children should also begin building fluency in context and automatic word recognition. 2nd graders begin understanding general and specific purposes for reading. In grades three to five, students also need to build knowledge of the strategies for reading. To promote continuity of standards-based instruction, MSDE will continue to:

- identify and promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and Early Learning Standards across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and ESOL Programs; and
- provide appropriate accommodations and curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of all students.

Grade Six to Grade Eight

Adolescents need many opportunities to work with print and nonprint materials to make meaning

and build relationships in their academic and social worlds. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) provide a shared interdisciplinary approach to ensure middle school students meet the end-of year-expectations that will enable them to be college and career ready. To successfully support adolescent literacy development, we must provide access to engaging and motivating content and instruction to support their continued development.

Areas to consider include the following:

- provide opportunities for adolescents to work with print and nonprint materials;
- offer web-based learning experiences;
- provide appropriate professional development for middle school educators;
- implement assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate strengths as well as needs; and
- differentiate instruction to include culturally responsive pedagogy as our classrooms become increasingly diverse learning environments.

In order to promote alignment of standards-based instruction, MSDE will continue to:

- identify and promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and ESOL Programs
- provide appropriate curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of adolescent students; and
- collaborate with institutions of higher education that prepare teachers to include literacy standards with those that guide content preparation in their courses.

Grade Nine to Grade Twelve

Adolescents have many interests and opportunities that involve some form of literacy experiences, including the use of traditional print materials, the Internet, social media, instant messaging, texting, video games, and reading and writing in the workplace. The academic literacy demands required in school need to connect with the literacy practices in adolescent's lives. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) provide a shared interdisciplinary approach to ensure high school students meet the end-of-year expectations that will enable them to be college and career ready.

Content area teachers play a key role in building the disciplinary knowledge and strategy use that will help students learn from complex discipline specific print and nonprint materials.

Areas to consider include the following:

- encourage collaboration between teachers with expertise in literacy and all content areas inclusive of the academic disciplines, the performing arts, and the technical subject areas;
- include the use of traditional and non-traditional print materials, including the Internet, social media, instant messaging, texting, and video games, all of which can be used as tools for understanding academic content as well as forming social relationships; and
- differentiate instruction to include culturally responsive pedagogy as our classrooms become increasingly diverse learning environments.

In order to promote alignment of standards-based instruction, MSDE will continue to:

- promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and ESOL Programs;

- provide appropriate curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of adolescent students; and
- collaborate with institutions of higher education that prepare teachers to include literacy standards with those that guide content preparation in their courses.

Continuity of Standards-based Instruction Goals

Key 3: Working with local school systems, community-based programs, local Early Childhood Advisory Councils, public libraries, and institutions of higher education, Maryland will expand its vision of literacy to include the continuum of birth to Grade 12 education to engage all groups and to increase alignment. True equity of instruction cannot be achieved until all students receive instruction aligned to the standards and delivered with fidelity.						
MSDE Goals for Continuity of Standards-based Instruction	**Birth- Age 5 System of Early Care and Education**	**K- Grade 5**	**Grades 6-8**	**Grades 9-12**	**Timeline**	**Key Contributors**
To expand the vision of literacy to engage all groups to include the continuum of birth to grade five and the alignment from grade six through grade 12	Support the system of early care and education and LEAs to align programs to Maryland content standards and Early Learning Standards	Support LEAs to align curriculum to Early Learning Standards and Maryland content standards	Support LEAs to align curriculum to Maryland content standards	Support LEAs to align curriculum to Maryland content standards	2018-2020	Content Offices Offices of Early Learning
Form a Curriculum Support Materials (CSM) Collaborative to review and catalog instructional materials in use	Provide information regarding best practices in use	Provide information regarding best practices in use	Provide information regarding best practices in use	Provide information regarding best practices in use	2018	Professional Learning ELA Staff

Support districts in implementing the Early Learning Standards and Maryland Content Standards	Continue collaboration with UMD to develop an evidence-based Infants, Toddlers, 3s, and 4s online curricula	Develop and provide integrated curriculum frameworks and resources that are aligned with Maryland Content Standards, including but not limited to, MCCRS (ELA, Math, History, and STEM), the Next Gen Science Standards, the C3 Standards, and the Early Learning Standards	Develop and provide integrated curriculum frameworks and resources that are aligned with Maryland Content Standards, including but not limited to, MCCRS (ELA, Math, History, and STEM), the Next Gen Science Standards, and the C3 Standards	Develop and provide integrated curriculum frameworks and resources that are aligned with Maryland Content Standards, including but not limited to, MCCRS (ELA, Math, History, and STEM), the Next Gen Science Standards, and the C3 Standards	2018-2020	DECD Content Offices
Increase knowledge of effective, evidence-based literacy instruction for all students	Provide support to system of early care and education in using online and print resources	Provide professional learning on aligning instruction to standards	Provide professional learning on aligning instruction to standards	Provide professional learning on aligning instruction to standards	2018-2020	DECD

	Provide support to system of early care and education, and LEAs on the use of center-based learning Partner with LEAs, Ready At Five, Child Care Resource and Referral Centers (CCRC), and the Early Childhood Advisory Councils to develop family engagement literacy strategies				2018-2020 2018-2020	Professional Learning Content Offices DECD
Participate in multi-state collaboratives and provide instructional supports from these collaboratives to LEAs	CCSSO Birth to Age 8 Networked Improvement Community	CCSSO KEA Action Network CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup	CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup	CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup	2018-2020	MSDE Staff

	CCSSO Early Learning SCASS	CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS New Teacher Center	CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS New Teacher Center	CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS New Teacher Center		

Established Programs/Initiatives

The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards Curriculum Frameworks were developed by Maryland educators to unpack the Common Core State Standards and identify the essential skills and knowledge that a student would need to master the grade specific standards. The Frameworks are intended to guide the development of standards-aligned curriculum and to foster a continuum of developmentally appropriate instruction. Along with the MCCRS Clarifications documents, these teacher-developed resources help build common understandings and valuable insights into what a student must know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency with the standards. With the MCCR Standards, teachers in all subject areas build discipline-specific literacy into daily instruction. Maryland's disciplinary literacy framework identifies essential skills for accessing, analyzing, and evaluating content-rich informational texts and presenting evidence-based conclusions in argumentative and explanatory writing, emphasizing research. The disciplinary literacy standards are not meant to replace existing content standards in the history, social studies, science, or technical subject classrooms, but rather to support them. Library Media Specialists continue to build strong partnerships with local libraries to provide students with reading and research opportunities that support the growth of all learners. Elementary schools with Judy Centers are using text and email to promote active family engagement with literacy skill development. Programs like Raising a Reader have been implemented in elementary schools in Pre-K classrooms using previous Race to the Top funds.

Enhancements/Improvements for LEAs to Consider

Additional time needs to be allotted for vertical team co-planning so that teachers from the pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school levels can collaborate and share evidence-based

practices as students transition from one school to the next. Additional time also must be allotted for teachers to plan across content areas and to collaborate with other schools with similar populations to share best practices. Literacy teams need to be clearly established within the school and these teams need to collaborate with others on the local educational agency and state level to review curriculum, share best practices, and ensure alignment and rigor to the standards and ensure a deeper understanding of what the standards intend to achieve. LEAs could consider adding secondary reading coaches in each middle and high school to support teachers' understanding of the standards and the alignment of reading instruction from grade level to grade level and to address the needs of diverse learners. Elementary level teams should also provide opportunities to include child care and Head Start members and should partner with their local Early Childhood Advisory Councils to participate in local literacy campaigns and promote outreach efforts to engage parents. Models of schools and programs successfully using evidence-based online literacy apps and resources should be shared with LEAs, child care, and Head Start programs.

Key 4

Comprehensive

System of

Assessments

Key 4 Comprehensive System of Assessments

Purpose: A comprehensive system of assessments includes state, local, school, and teacher assessment data. A comprehensive system of assessment allows for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student and should include the appropriate balance of screening tools, diagnostic tools when needed, progress monitoring of students receiving interventions, and tools to measure outcomes.

A comprehensive system of assessment also includes a formative assessment process. The Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) defines the formative assessment process as follows: "Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners." Further guidance from CCSSO recommends that effective use of the formative assessment process requires students and teachers to integrate and embed the following practices in a collaborative and respectful classroom environment:

- clarifying learning goals within a broader progression of learning;
- eliciting and analyzing evidence of student thinking;
- engaging in self-assessment and peer feedback;
- providing actionable feedback; and
- using evidence and feedback to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals or next instructional steps.

Maryland began mandating testing in the late 1980s. The data gathered from those initial assessments guided the improvement of instruction for students across the state. As students mastered the standards that had been established, educators realized that the standards needed to be raised, and as a result, Maryland began developing a system of assessments that reflected increased academic standards. See the chart below for the history of Maryland assessments.

Previous Maryland Assessments

Assessment	Birth to Age Five	K - Grade Five	Grade Six-Grade Eight	Grade Nine - Grade Twelve
Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)		Last administered to 2013-2014 kindergartners		
MSA		Administered in grades three through five	Administered in grades six through eight	
Maryland Functional Testing Program (MFTP)				Last administered in 2003-2004
Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) English and math				In 2013, the algebra and English assessments were replaced with PARCC exams to align with MCCRS.

Current Birth to Grade 12 Assessments

Early Learning Assessment

The Early Learning Assessment is a formative assessment tool available to all child care, Head Start, and LEAs for use with children from 36-72 months.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

The new Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards raised the bar for all school-age students, including kindergarteners. As a result, in 2014 Maryland developed Ready for Kindergarten (R4K), Maryland's Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment System under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant in partnership with MSDE, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education, the Ohio Department of Education, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and West-Ed based on Maryland's Prekindergarten standards. The R4K system helps identify the supports children need to be successful in school. R4K data is used to inform teachers, families, schools, programs, and the state so together we can meet the needs of every child. R4K has two components:

- Early Learning Assessment (ELA) (36 to 72 months) measuring the learning progress of young children in seven domains of learning -- social foundations, language/literacy, mathematics, physical well-being and motor development, science, social studies, and the fine arts.
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) measuring school readiness in four domains -- social foundations; language/literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being and motor development.

The KRA is the required state assessment measuring kindergarten readiness and given during the

first 6 weeks of school. Every jurisdiction must assess, at minimum, a representative sample of entering kindergarteners. Twelve jurisdictions chose to conduct a census administration in the 2017-2018 school year, assessing all entering kindergarteners.

The KRA provides information regarding school readiness levels, making it possible to determine if entering students have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to succeed in kindergarten. The KRA can:

- provide student level data by giving teachers rich information about each assessed child's knowledge, skills, abilities, and learning needs;
- inform families through the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Individual Student Report (ISR) which is provided to the family of every assessed child;
- instruct community leaders and policy makers by gathering important information about how well-prepared their children are for kindergarten; and
- advise school leaders and early childhood programs by offering schools and programs information about the learning needs of assessed children.

The KRA also identifies the individual needs of children, enabling teachers to make informed instructional decisions and produces reports for children with disabilities that align with Maryland's online Individualized Education Plan (IEP) system.

PARCC

The PARCC tests, which resulted from the PARCC Consortium created through a multistate collaborative effort, are considered end-of-course exams. For students in grades three through

eleven, PARCC assessments are given toward the end of the school year. For the English test, students read passages from real texts (fiction and nonfiction) and sometimes watch video or listen to audio. Students write, using what they've learned from the passages and multimedia to support their arguments. For students in high school, PARCC assessments are typically given to students after they complete most of Algebra 1, geometry, or Algebra 2 in math and their 10th or 11th grade English courses. The PARCC tests in English Language Arts/Literacy measure writing at every grade because it is key to showing readiness for the next level of academic work or college and career readiness.

The following chart identifies students who met or exceeded expectations on statewide assessments.

Meets or Exceeds Expectations 2016-2017

Student Level	All Students	Special Education Students	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged Students
Kindergarten (KRA Literacy Domain)	40%	19%	16%	27%
Grade 3 (PARCC ELA/L)	39.8%	10.4%	6.5%	21.4%
Grade 4 (PARCC ELA/L)	41.9%	8.4%	3.1%	23.2%
Grade 5 (PARCC ELA/L)	41.4%	6.7%	1.6%	22.9%
Grade 6 (PARCC ELA/L)	38.4%	5.1%	1.5%	19.4%

Grade 7 (PARCC ELA/L)	43%	5.9%	2.3%	23.2%
Grade 8 (PARCC ELA/L)	38.9%	4.7%	1.5%	20%
Grade 10 (PARCC ELA/L)	50.7%	10%	2.5%	29.1%

Maryland Integrated Science Assessment

Maryland has replaced the Maryland School Assessment with the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA), which is administered every spring to students in fifth and eighth grade. The test was first administered in the 2016-17 school year.

Maryland High School Assessments

The Maryland High School Assessment Program dates back to 1989, when the Governor's Commission on School Performance reported on the issues of high-quality assessment. The Government and Biology HSAs are intended to meet the testing requirements for Maryland high school graduation as well as the high school testing requirements for federal law.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is an English language proficiency assessment administered to English Learners (ELs) identified in kindergarten through 12th grade. It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English and assesses ELs' skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

MSAA

Maryland's Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) is designed to assess skills in English Language Arts and Mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades

three through eight and grade eleven. This represents a very small number of students. The MSAA is based on alternate achievement standards which have been derived from and are aligned to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS). The overall goal of the MSAA is to make sure that all students achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-school options.

Alt-Maryland Integrated Science Assessment

The Alternate Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (Alt-MISA), also known as Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom the general education science assessment (MISA) is not appropriate, even with accommodations. The Alt-MISA is based on alternate achievement standards which have been derived from and are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Comprehensive System of Assessments Goals

Key 4: A comprehensive system of assessments includes state, local, school, and teacher assessment data. A comprehensive system of assessment allows for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student.						
MSDE Goals for Comprehensive System of Assessments	**Birth- Age 5 System of Early Care and Education**	**K- Grade 5**	**Grades 6-8**	**Grades 9-12**	**Timeline**	**Responsible Party**
Determine and report to stakeholders readiness for and progress toward college and career readiness for all Maryland students	Use valid and reliable assessments to determine readiness for and progress toward literacy development	Use valid and reliable assessments, including KRA and PARCC, and other content standards approved assessments	Use valid and reliable assessments, including PARCC and content-standards approved assessments	Use valid and reliable assessments, including PARCC and other Department approved college and career readiness assessments	Summer 2018-2020	Assessment and Accountability Office
Provide workshops, webinars, and resources regarding interpretation of various assessment data	Provide training on developmentally appropriate	Regional Data Workshops Provide training on developmentally appropriate	Regional Data Workshops	Regional Data Workshops	Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 2018-2020	Professional Learning and Assessment Professional Learning ELA staff

	assessment tools and practices Provide resources to align assessments to student needs	assessment tools and practices Provide resources to align assessments to student needs			2018-2020	DECD Professional Learning ELA Staff DECD
Support district level assessment initiatives	Promote awareness of, and access to, professional development around the use of the ELA	Solicit and facilitate Peer Collaborative teams Train and support Formative Assessment (FAME) cohorts	Solicit and facilitate Peer Collaborative teams Train and support Formative Assessment (FAME) cohorts	Solicit and facilitate Peer Collaborative teams Train and support Formative Assessment (FAME) cohorts	2018-2020 2018-2020	Professional Learning Professional Learning
Participate in multi-state collaboratives and provide assessment supports from these collaboratives to LEAs	CCSSO Birth to Age 8 Networked Improvement Community	CCSSO KEA Action Network CCSSO Supporting Students Below	CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup	CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup	2018-2020	MSDE Staff

	CCSSO Early Learning SCASS	Grade Level Workgroup CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS	CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS	CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS		

Established Programs/Initiatives

MSDE reviews and recommends publisher-developed curriculum that aligns with the Maryland Early Learning Standards for programs for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) and comprehensive curriculum (ages 3, 4, and 5).

The Guidelines for Healthy Child Development and Care for Young Children (Birth - Three Years of Age) was compiled in 2004 by a workgroup composed of early childhood professionals, to be compatible with the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) and the Maryland State Curriculum, making the guidelines an important part of a Birth-Grade 12 learning continuum. In 2009, the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Early Childhood Development began a revision of these guidelines and changed the name to Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age. The revision process was intended to ensure that the information continued to meet the goals of being family-friendly, accurate, and developmentally appropriate. National experts were used to review the materials for accuracy and appropriateness with developmental milestones. Both a searchable online version and a mobile accessible version are available for parents and caregivers. The documents can be viewed at http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/healthybeginnings and http://pfs.cte.jhu.edu/pf/pfs/healthy-beginn.

In 2018, a curriculum for 4-year-olds aligned to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and developed with the University of Maryland in partnership with Apple will be made available at no cost to all child care, Head Start, and public prekindergarten programs. In subsequent years, curriculum for 3-year-olds, infants, and toddlers will also be made available.

Enhancements/Improvements for LEAs to Consider

Creative scheduling must be put into place to ensure that there is common planning time among grade level teams to analyze data and share best practices. These common planning meetings should also include EL teachers and special educators, as well as a school administrator, as needed. Resource teachers from the local educational agency level should be regularly invited to common planning meetings to provide additional support. A balanced plan for assessment needs to be created/adjusted at the local educational agency level that includes screening, diagnostic tools, progress monitoring, and outcomes tools to assess standards for each grade level throughout the entire school year.. The progress monitoring program should provide data that can be analyzed from the beginning of the school year. Schools need to use the individual and school data on these assessments to plan for improvement based on an aligned statewide data analysis planning model. These assessments should be shared in the needs assessment and as part of the School Progress Plan. Local educational agency level offices will continue to monitor the assessments and their alignment to the standards. The Early Childhood, ESOL program, and Special Education offices will also receive data reports and provide support as needed.

Key 5

Tiered Instruction and Interventions

Key 5 Tiered Instruction and Interventions

Purpose: Maryland has adopted regulation for the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all classrooms. This approach provides choice for students, which, in turn, allows teachers to differentiate lessons and activities, and differentiation is a key to tiered instruction. In addition, Maryland developed a structured Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework in 2008 that was adopted statewide. The state's tiered system of support will continue to be refined, will include all children, and will provide enrichment and intervention models to achieve comprehensive literacy for all. Instruction must be supported by strong evidence-based research and must include frequent, repeated, developmentally appropriate practices such as:

- instructional strategies in developing skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing across content areas;
- targeted instructional approaches and strategies to increase the language development and access to grade-level content for ELs;
- intentional instruction in foundational literacy skills, including phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, print concepts, vocabulary, and fluency;
- explicit instruction in authentic and purposeful writing and opportunities for discourse;
- high-interest, diverse, high-quality print materials;
- differentiated instructional approaches, including individual and small group instruction;
- opportunities for using and developing vocabulary;
- valid and reliable system of assessments including screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tools;

- strategies to enhance children's motivation to read and write and children's engagement in self-directed learning;
- principles of Universal Design for Learning;
- professional development around evidence-based strategies and practices for increased literacy achievement;
- alignment to Maryland Content Standards and the Early Learning Standards; and
- collaboration with the local ECACs Birth-2nd Grade literacy campaigns, including strong partnerships with the public libraries, and participation in family engagement literacy strategies used by the ECACs.

Birth to Grade 12

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Early differences in language development, which contribute to reading development, begin in infancy and grow larger over time. Thus, emphasis on supporting language development in children in early childhood is critical. Rich language experiences are needed to support the development of vocabulary, comprehension, and syntactic construction. While the requirement to administer developmental screening to all children enrolled in licensed child care programs is currently on hold, some early childhood programs and pediatricians provide developmental screening to young children and use these data to seek additional interventions if needed. Intervention in the earliest years includes families as their child's first teacher.

Maryland's Early Childhood Engagement Framework outlines goals and strategies to support family engagement initiatives implemented by early care and education providers including building family capacity to support their children's school readiness. Partnerships with

organizations that support the provision of high quality early care and education including MD Childcare Resource Network, Maryland State Child Care Association, MD EXCELS, Maryland State Family Child Care Association and the ECACs serve as a link to early education and care providers that may be leveraged to build capacity for data analysis, instructional planning and family engagement in literacy initiatives.

The language and literacy data for children available through developmental screenings and other assessment tools such as the Early Learning Assessment and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will guide providers in their instructional planning and in seeking additional interventions if needed. Maryland has a list of recommended screening tools that could be used in early learning programs.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

As students enter kindergarten, all local educational agencies utilize the KRA to determine student readiness. The data from this assessment drives instruction for early learners. Students in many cases are first identified in kindergarten as students in need of receiving free or reduced meals (FARMs), ELs, or students with special needs. This demographic information, as well as the students' academic and emotional readiness for school, is used to plan instruction that will meet each child's needs. The aggregated data allows schools, the local educational agency, and the state to make decisions regarding equity in instruction.

Grade Six to Grade Twelve

LEAs use mandated testing information to drive and differentiate instruction and to provide remediation or enrichment instruction as necessary. Additionally, teacher reports, team meetings, and conferences with counselors, parents, and students provide additional information

regarding ways to meet the needs of all students. This data will be viewed with research supporting learning of disadvantaged students, ELs, and students with special needs to improve equity.

Tiered Instruction and Intervention Goals

Key 5: Maryland has adopted regulation for the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all classrooms. This approach provides choice and individualization for students which, in turn, allows teachers to provide tiered instruction. In addition, Maryland developed a structured Response to Intervention Framework in 2008 that was adopted statewide.						
MSDE Goals to support Tiered Instruction and Intervention	**Birth- Age 5 System of Early Care and Education**	**K- Grade 5**	**Grades 6-8**	**Grades 9-12**	**Timeline**	**Responsible Party**
Provide professional learning for LEA staff, on Multi-Tiered System of Support to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities	Provide a variety of statewide professional learning activities	Provide a variety of statewide professional learning activities	Provide a variety of statewide professional learning activities	Provide a variety of statewide professional learning activities	2018-2020	Special Education and Content Staff
Provide resources for implementing multi-tiered systems of support	Provide support to system of early care and education programs in their administration of developmental screening tools and their analysis of the data				2018-2020	Special Education and Content Staff

		Revise and transform Maryland's Response to Intervention (RTI) framework into a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Provide implementation rubric for revised MTSS framework	Revise and transform Maryland's Response to Intervention (RTI) framework into a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Provide implementation rubric for revised MTSS framework	Revise and transform Maryland's Response to Intervention (RTI) framework into a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Provide implementation rubric for revised MTSS framework	2018-2019 2018-2019	Special Education and Content Staff Special Education and Content Staff
Provide technical support		Provide training for the monitoring and reporting required in Specialized Intervention Services Act of 2017 Provide training and resources on progress monitoring for	Provide training for the monitoring and reporting required in Specialized Intervention Services Act of 2017 Provide training and resources on progress monitoring for	Provide training for the monitoring and reporting required in Specialized Intervention Services Act of 2017 Provide training and resources on progress monitoring for	2018-2020 2018-2020	Special Education and Content Staff Special Education and Content Staff

		Multi-Tiered System of Instruction	Multi-Tiered System of Instruction	Multi-Tiered System of Instruction		
Participate in multi-state collaboratives and provide supports from these collaboratives to LEAs	CCSSO Birth to Age 8 Networked Improvement Community CCSSO Early Learning SCASS	CCSSO KEA Action Network CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS	CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS	CCSSO Supporting Students Below Grade Level Workgroup CCSSO English Language Arts SCASS CCSSO English Learner SCASS	2018-2020	MSDE Staff

Established Programs/Initiatives

The State encourages teachers to continue to work collaboratively to utilize responsive teaching methods grounded in student data to support growth. Targeted, small group instruction has been infused into classrooms as a best practice to provide personalized and customized instruction to meet the needs of all students. Paraeducators, resource teachers, EL teachers, and special educators work together with general education teachers to develop and implement engaging and rigorous instruction grounded in the standards. Technology has been readily infused into instruction to provide customized options to support students who need additional support as well as students who could benefit from further extension of learning experiences to enhance growth.

Enhancements/Improvements for LEAs to Consider

Teachers need additional professional learning in understanding available literacy data and how to use it for identifying student needs for early intervention. All teachers need additional professional learning in utilizing reading and writing strategies that will support the specific needs of their diverse learners. This also includes professional learning on culturally responsive teaching that is grounded in best practices for literacy. Multi-tiered systems of support include interventions as well as enrichments and are for students at all levels of proficiency and at every level of development. Collaboration is needed as students transition from one grade level to the next, and from one school to the next. In transition meetings, teachers need to share student-specific best practices with the next grade level teachers. Additional support is needed in high school for students reading below grade level. Many high schools do not have reading specialists assigned to the high school. The state will investigate how literacy issues and

screening are being addressed in districts across the state. Evidence-based programs to support students reading below grade level at the high school level may address some of these concerns; however, considerations for sustainability for literacy support should be investigated.

Conclusion

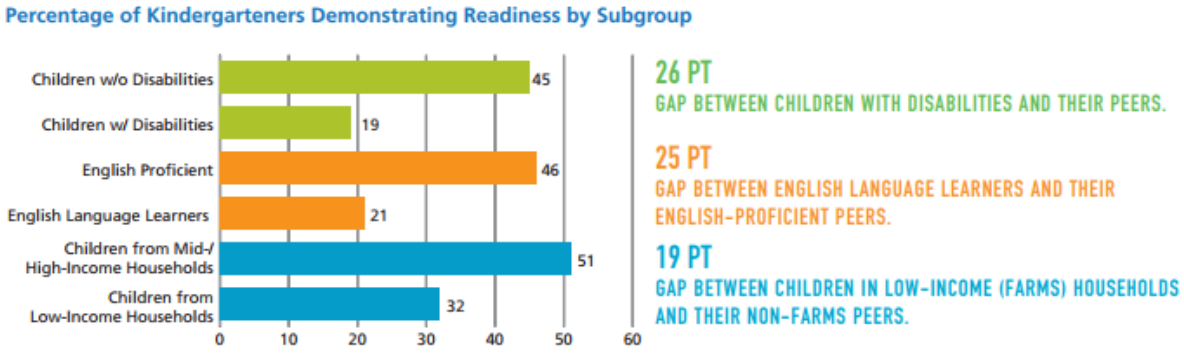
While Maryland has always had a consistent focus on literacy in leadership, professional learning, standards, assessment, and instruction, the data show that the state must continue its efforts and focus on disadvantaged populations beginning at birth. MSDE is driven to provide all keys necessary to help students be successful in a world that requires more of them than any era before, while juggling obstacles that educators and families could not have imagined ten or twenty years ago. Even more urgent is the need to provide equitable resources for all students, because all students must not simply survive in the 21st Century; they must thrive. The number of students from disadvantaged populations who are not college and career ready by the time they leave high school represents a challenge that MSDE will meet by providing the skills necessary for improved literacy development for all students, birth to grade twelve. The Maryland Comprehensive Literacy Plan outlined in this document establishes the plan for success for all students.

Appendices

Appendix A: Maryland 2016 data

> Maryland's demographic profile is rapidly changing. The overall student population is more diverse and now reflects a majority-minority, with the number of Hispanic students with disabilities more than tripling, from 4% in SFY 2000 to 14% in SFY 2016. More children are homeless, move frequently, are refugees from other countries, and/or speak other languages.
>
> *Moving Maryland Forward: Sharpen the Focus for 2020*

This change is seen in the school building, but there is also documentation regarding children prior to entering school. Any child who falls into two or more of the categories of disadvantaged youths is at greater risk of failing than their English speaking counterparts.

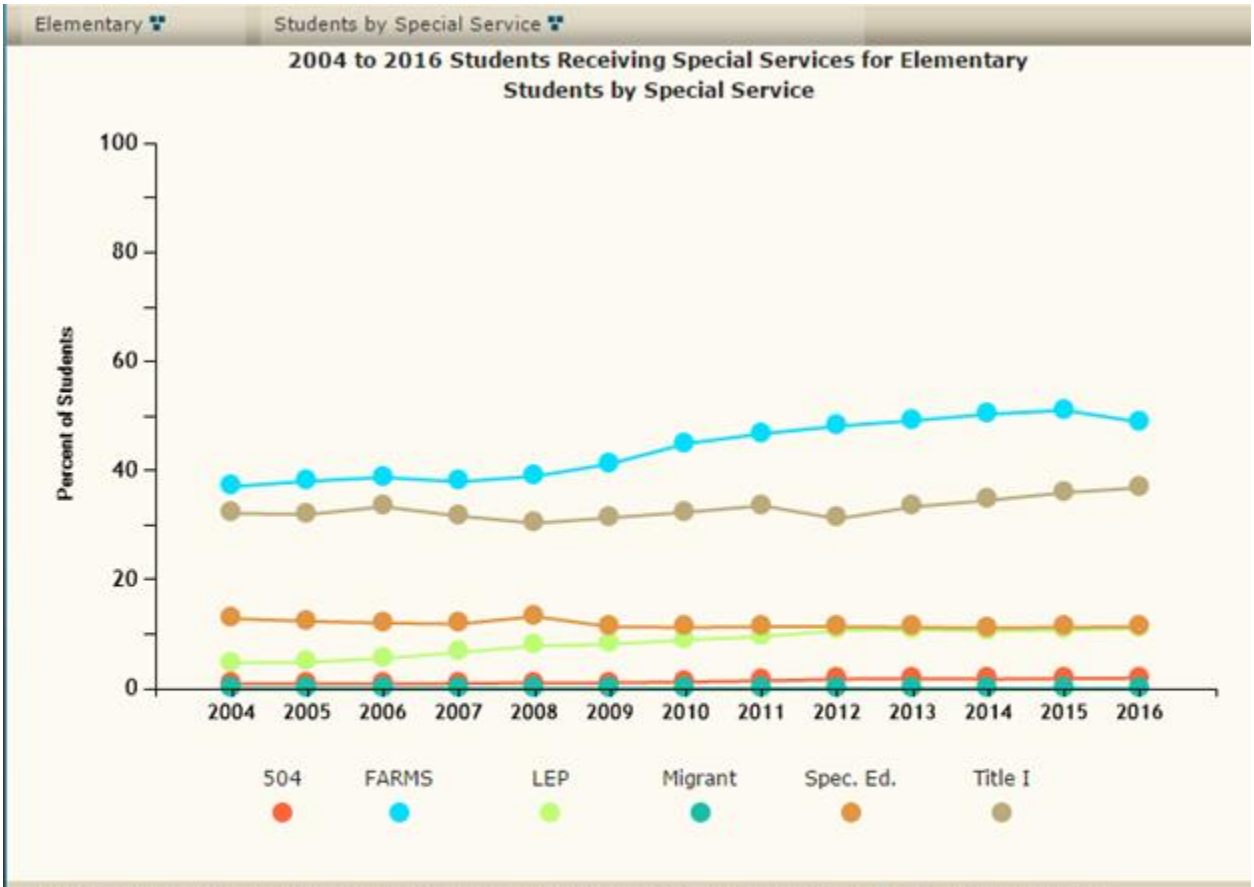


- Readiness Matters Informing the Future. (2017, January). Retrieved July 5, 2017, from http://www.readyatfive.org/school-readiness-data/readiness-matters-2017/1302-maryland-s-2016-2017-kindergarten-readiness-assessment-report-executive-summary/file.html

Closing this gap is vital to the success of all children from the moment they enter school and as they complete and most beyond grade twelve. As students lag behind their peers, the risk of academic failure increases drastically. The number of disadvantaged students who are tested and

reach proficiency levels on standardized tests drops significantly.

Elementary School Data for Disadvantaged Youth



2004 to 2016 Students Receiving Special Services for Elementary | Students by Special Service

Show # Descriptions »	504		FARMS		LEP		Migrant		Spec. Ed.		Title I	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
2016	2.0	8654 / 436890	48.9	213779 / 436890	11.1	48518 / 436890	0.0	33 / 436890	11.4	49645 / 436890	36.9	161180 / 436890

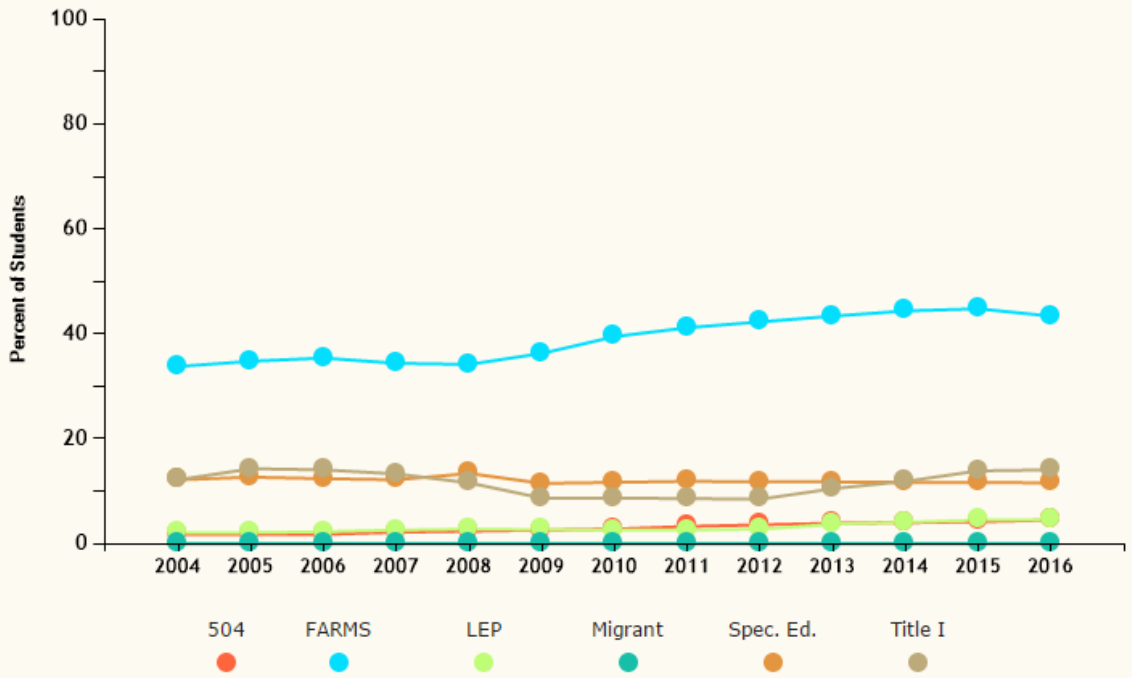
Middle School Data for Disadvantaged Youth

Overview | Results

Select Your Results: Expand Data Navigation +

Middle | Students by Special Service

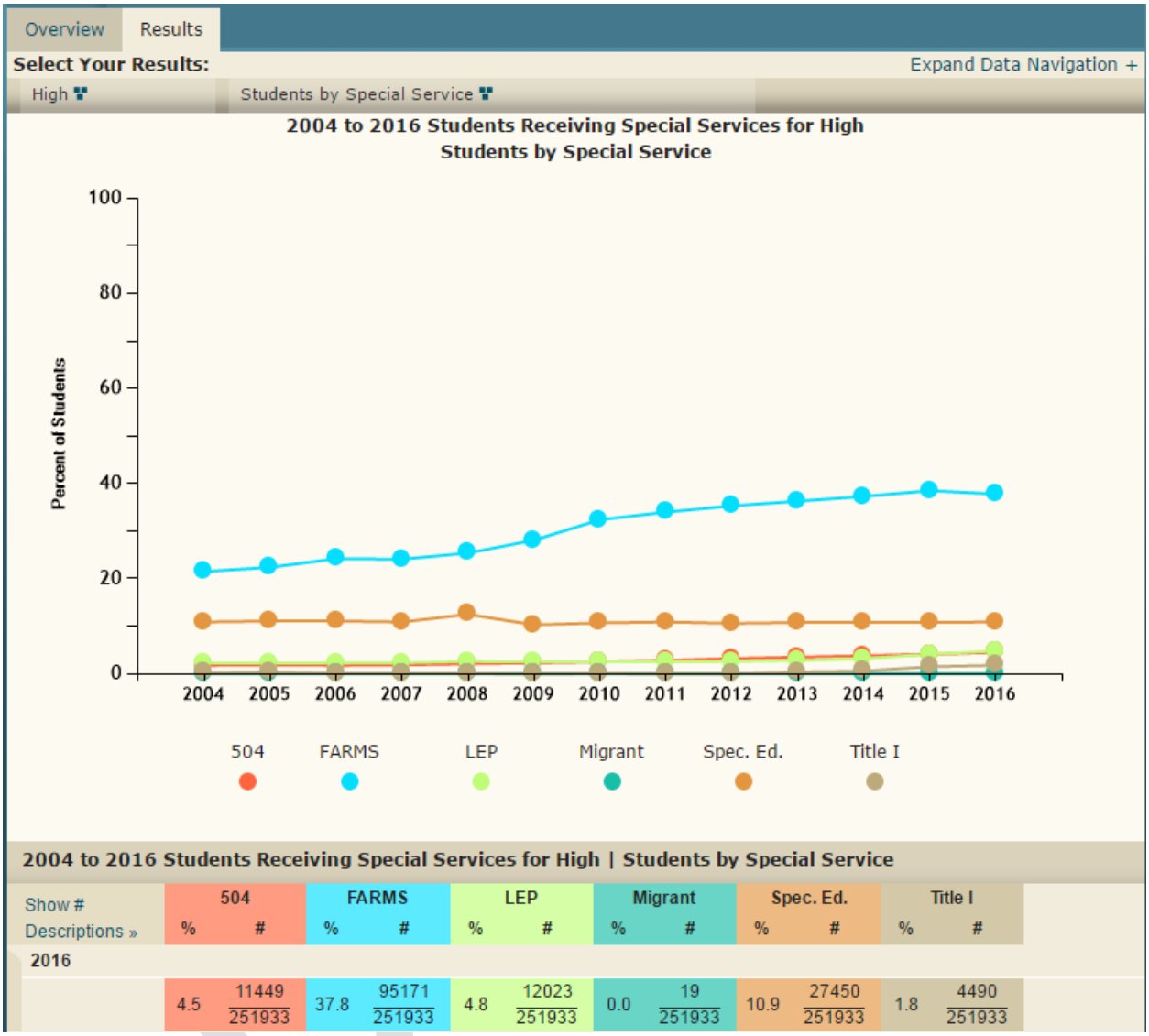
2004 to 2016 Students Receiving Special Services for Middle
Students by Special Service



2004 to 2016 Students Receiving Special Services for Middle | Students by Special Service

Show # Descriptions »	504		FARMS		LEP		Migrant		Spec. Ed.		Title I	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
2016												
	4.5	8752 / 193006	43.4	83835 / 193006	4.5	8632 / 193006	0.0	10 / 193006	11.6	22325 / 193006	14.1	27200 / 193006

High School Data for Disadvantaged Youth



2004 to 2016 Students Receiving Special Services for High | Students by Special Service

Show # Descriptions »	504		FARMS		LEP		Migrant		Spec. Ed.		Title I	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
2016												
	4.5	11449/251933	37.8	95171/251933	4.8	12023/251933	0.0	19/251933	10.9	27450/251933	1.8	4490/251933

All data can be accessed at: http://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov

School Level	504 and Special Education Services	Below Poverty/FaRMS	English Learners
Birth – 5 years	4.05% * 2.3%*	14.9%	NA
Elementary	13.4%	48.9%	11.1%
Middle	16.1%	43.4%	11.1%
High	15.4%	37.8%	4.8%

**According to the data from the 2015 Maryland Census Report, the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program was serving 4.05% children with disabilities. Of this group, 2.3% represent a developmental delay in at least one developmental domain.*

Assessment Scores Pass Rates for Disadvantaged Youth

The KRA is a measure of readiness, and indicates an average of 40% of entering Maryland kindergarteners are demonstrating readiness. The PARCC ELA/Literacy test results indicate an average 40% proficient level for Maryland students. The disaggregated data shows the proficiency level for disadvantaged populations.

Student Level	All Students	Special Education Students	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged Students
Kindergarten (KRA Literacy Domain)	40% (demonstrating readiness)	19%	16%	27%
Grade 3 (PARCC ELA/L)	39.8%	10.4%	6.5%	21.4%
Grade 4 (PARCC ELA/L)	41.9%	8.4%	3.1%	23.2%
Grade 5 (PARCC ELA/L)	41.4%	6.7%	1.6%	22.9%
Grade 6 (PARCC ELA/L)	38.4%	5.1%	1.5%	19.4%
Grade 7 (PARCC ELA/L)	43%	5.9%	2.3%	23.2%
Grade 8 (PARCC ELA/L)	38.9%	4.7%	1.5%	20%
Grade 10 (PARCC ELA/L)	50.7%	10%	2.5%	29.1%

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Test Scores for EL Students

The percent from the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 English language proficiency test includes ELs by grade level who scored a 5.0 or higher on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 in 2016. In 2017, the test was

realigned to new standards, which impacted the results for students taking the test in spring 2017. Considering that there are over 203 languages spoken in Maryland, the population of English learners is very diverse. Although these students may be proficient in another language or languages, the ELs are working to develop their proficiency in English.

Grade Level	Total Number of EL Students	Number of EL Students Scoring Proficient	Percent of EL Students Attaining Proficiency
K	10,300	947	9.2%
01	9,917	960	9.7%
02	9,467	1,761	18.6%
03	8,078	3,434	42.5%
04	4,254	1,309	30.8%
05	3,172	780	24.6%
06	2,672	290	10.9%
07	2,944	338	11.5%
08	2,968	271	9.1%
09	5,838	1,081	18.5%
10	3,417	536	15.7%
11	1,479	297	20.1%
12	953	149	15.6%
Total	65,459	12,153	18.6%

Anticipated Changes in Maryland's Population

According to the federal 2010 census, Maryland's population was 5,773,552. Between 2000 and 2010, Maryland's population gained 477,066 persons, an increase of 9%. In 2000, Maryland ranked 19th in the nation in population. With 529.1 persons per square land mile in 1999, it ranked 6th in population density among states (including the District of Columbia).

From 1990 to 2000, Maryland population grew by 10.8%, a gain of 515,733 persons. Projected numbers for increases in population are available in Table 2.

Table 2: Maryland Projected Population Figures

	1990 census	2000 census	2010 census	2020 projected*	2030 projected*
Maryland	4,780,753	5,296,486	5,773,552	6,339,290	6,684,260

- Maryland at a Glance Population. (2015, December 23). Retrieved June 30, 2017, from http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/pop.html#state.

As suggested in Table 2, Maryland's population will continue to increase. While Maryland has a seemingly smaller number of disadvantaged youth as compared to other geographically larger states, the state's density is 6th overall. This increase has been evidenced by local educational agencies who are encountering an increasing number of students with disabilities, students with English as a second language, and students at a lower socioeconomic level. Maryland is homing in on the needs of its changing populations to address the needs of these disadvantaged groups.

Gifted and Talented

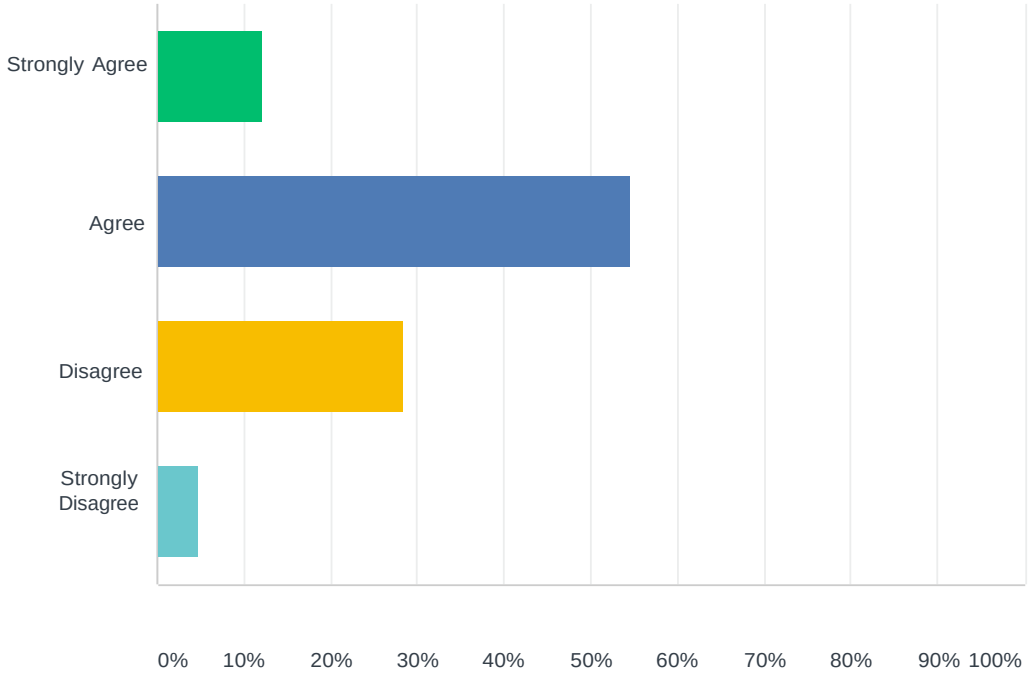
Maryland does not currently collect data on gifted and talented students; however, the Maryland ESSA plan states, "The State intends to take steps to add 'gifted and talented students' as an additional student group by the end of school year 2017-2018."

Appendix B: Needs-Based Survey and Results

The first step in the development of Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan was a needs assessment. The questions were created and sent to stakeholders across the state and their responses informed the direction of the CLP. The Birth to Grade 12 continuum required two surveys with similar questions but geared to the specific needs of various groups. Over 500 constituents responded to the questions and their feedback is the foundation of the CLP.

Q1 Administrators identify community, cultural, and equity concerns related to literacy and share solutions with stakeholders.

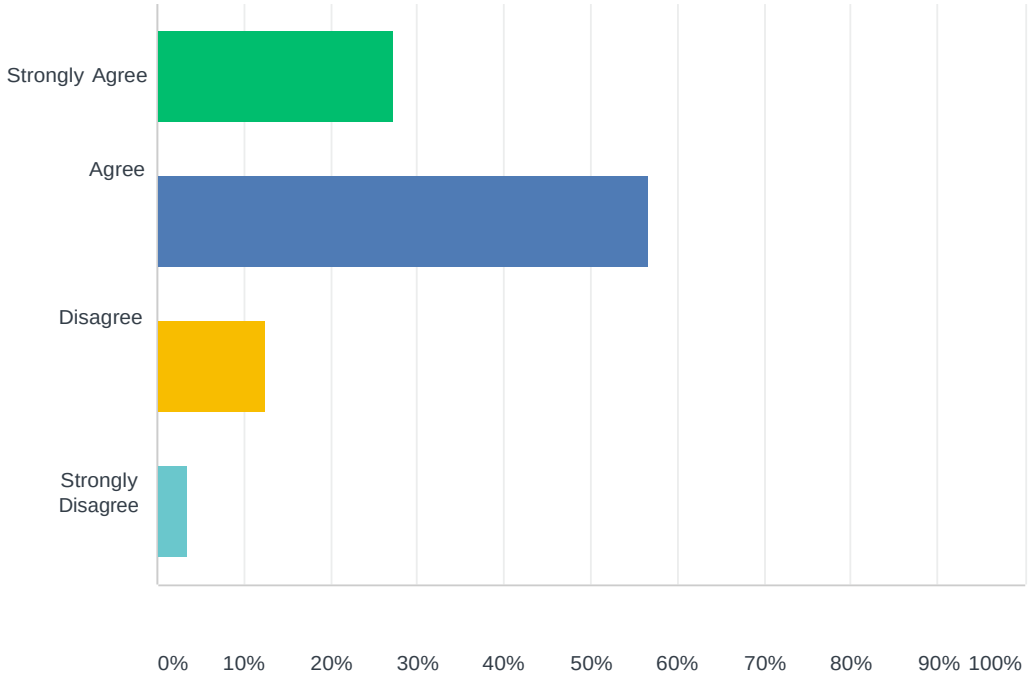
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	12.17%	41
Agree	54.60%	184
Disagree	28.49%	96
Strongly Disagree	4.75%	16
TOTAL		337

Q2 Educational leaders provide professional learning opportunities for teacher leaders through a variety of formats and encourage aspiring leaders to participate.

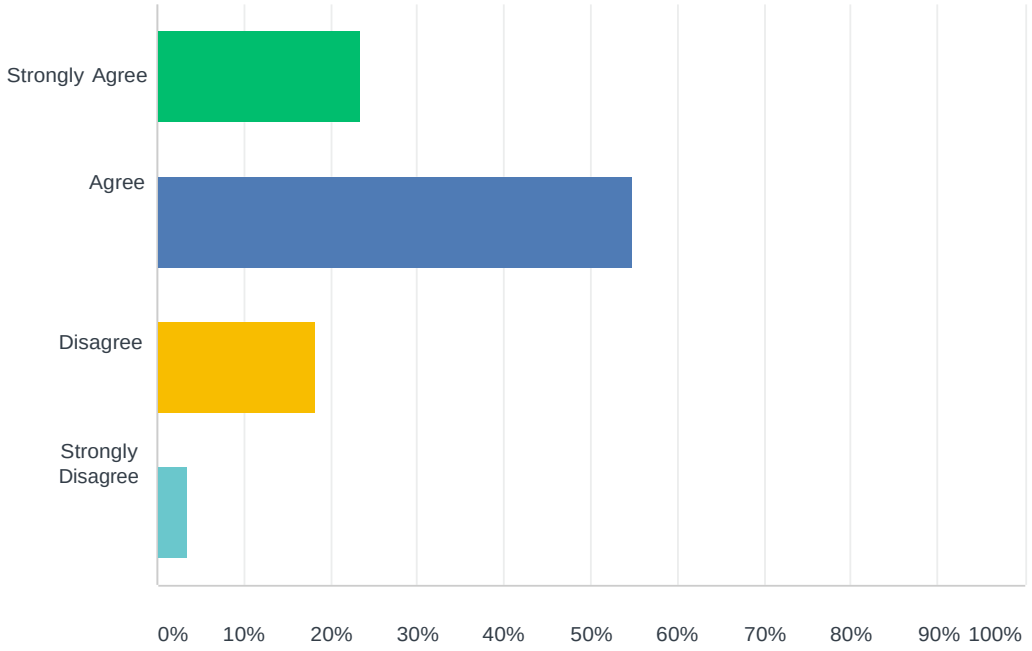
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	27.30%	92
Agree	56.68%	191
Disagree	12.46%	42
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q3 Administrators provide time for regular literacy meetings and collaborative planning.

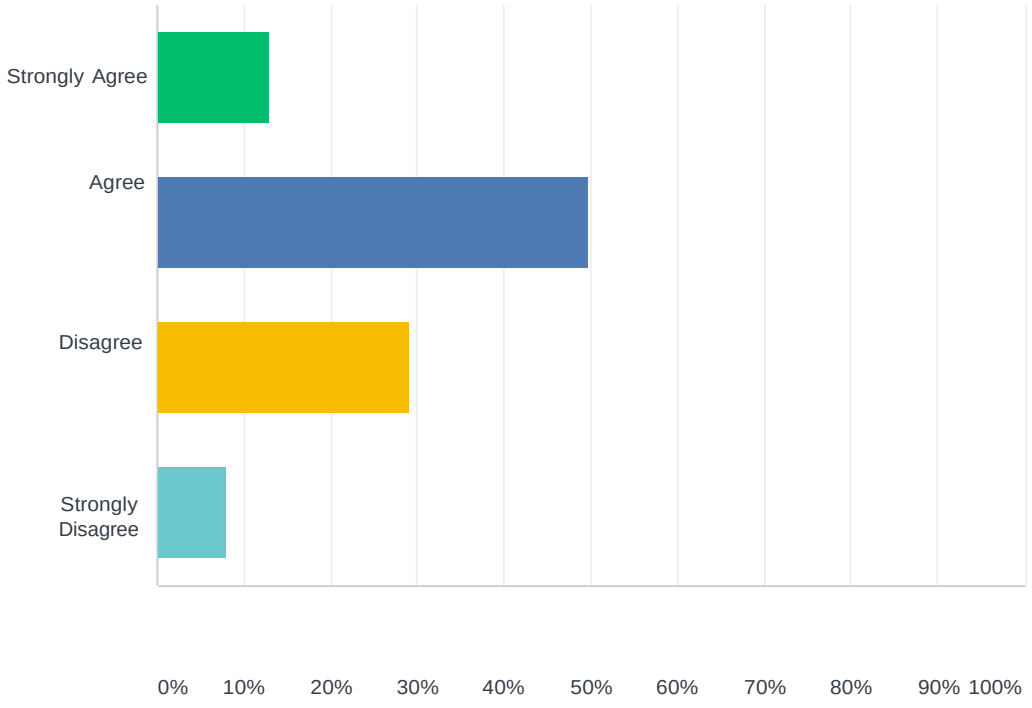
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	23.44%	79
Agree	54.90%	185
Disagree	18.10%	61
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q4 Administrators participate with teachers in professional learning initiatives for literacy.

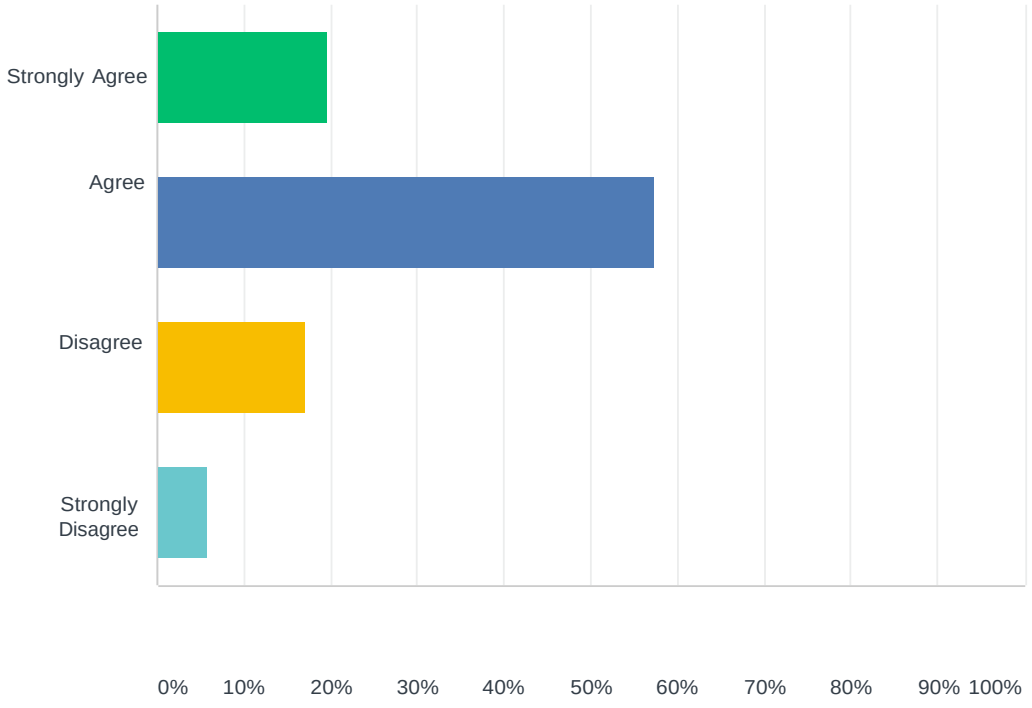
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	13.06%	44
Agree	49.85%	168
Disagree	29.08%	98
Strongly Disagree	8.01%	27
TOTAL		337

Q5 LEAs provide systematic, evidence-based professional learning for literacy.

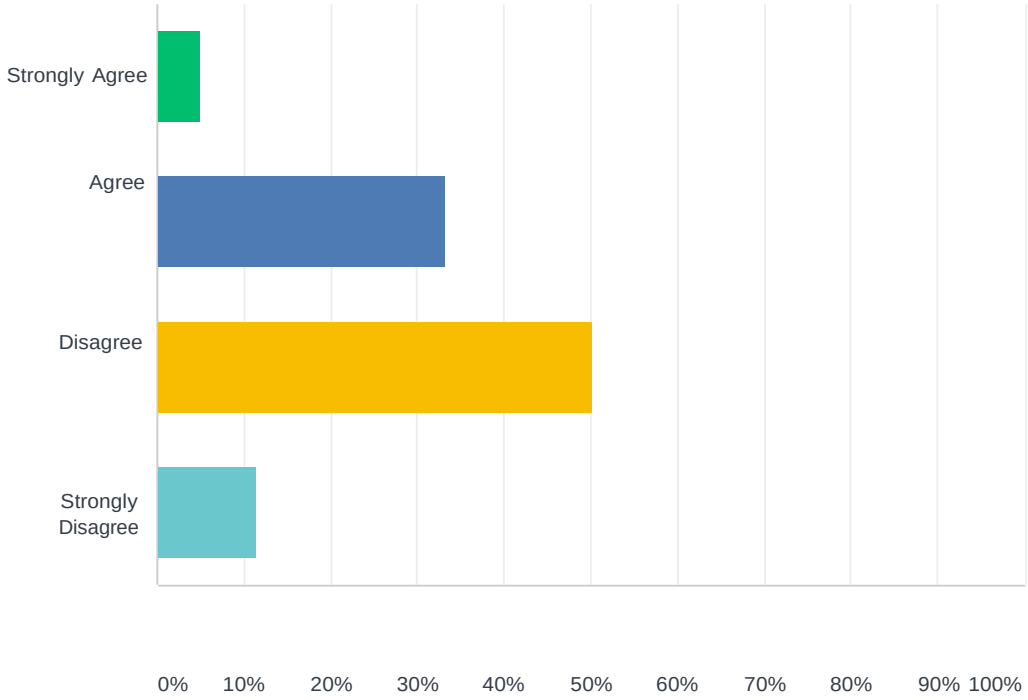
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	19.58%	66
Agree	57.27%	193
Disagree	17.21%	58
Strongly Disagree	5.93%	20
TOTAL		337

Q6 LEAs include parents, community-based providers, higher education representatives, and other related stakeholders in professional learning initiatives for literacy.

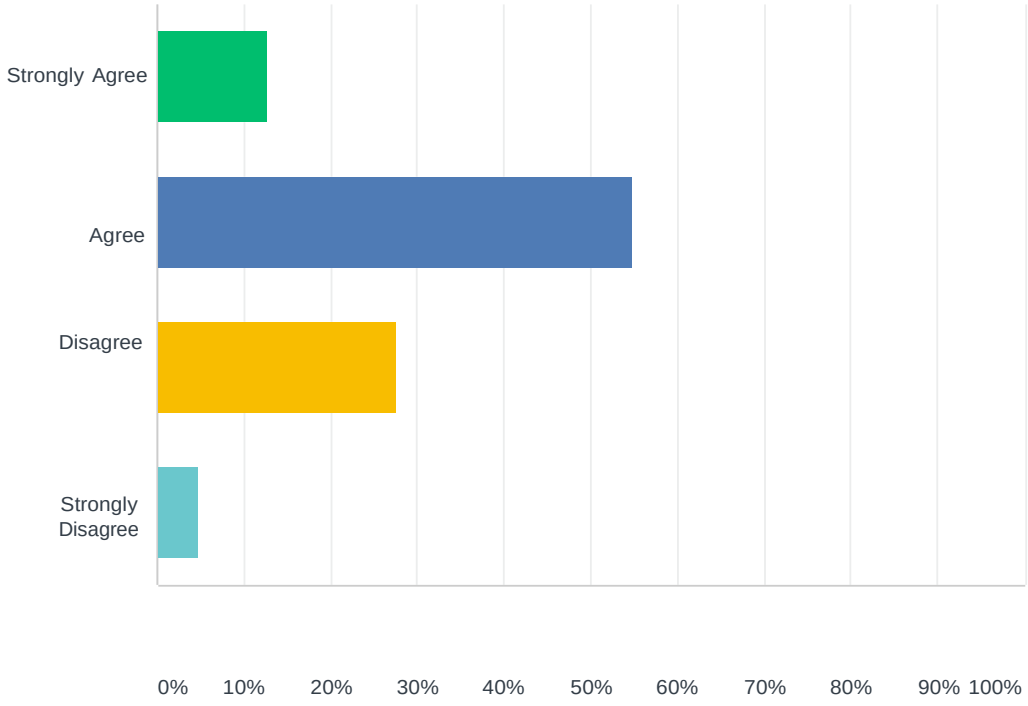
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE	
Strongly Agree	5.04%	17
Agree	33.23%	112
Disagree	50.15%	169
Strongly Disagree	11.57%	39
TOTAL		337

Q7 Professional learning for literacy initiatives incorporates a variety of formats.

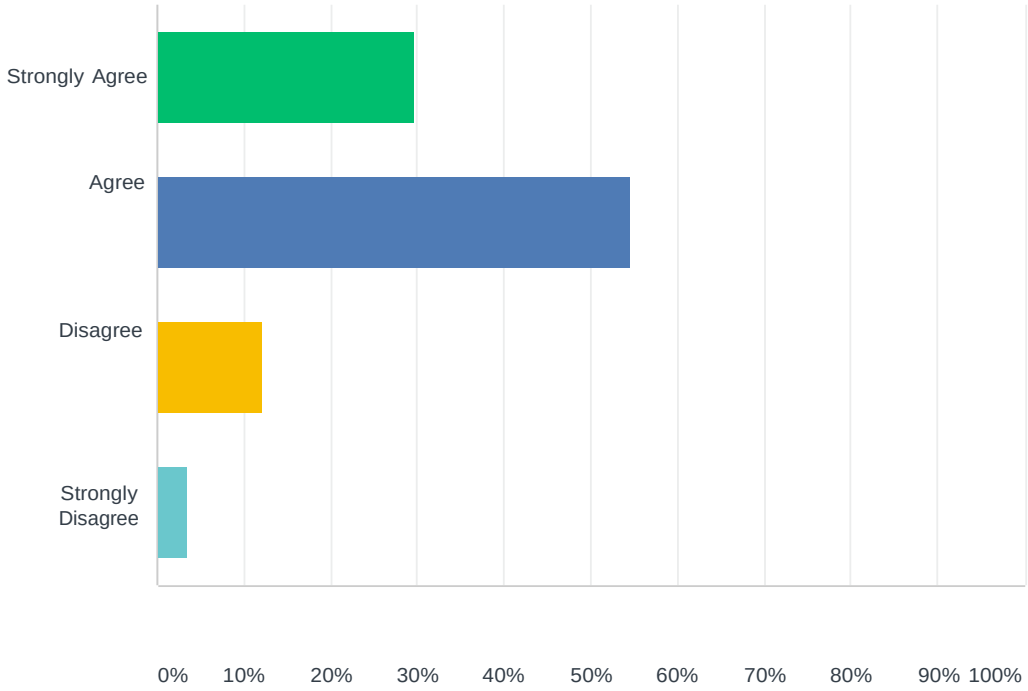
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	12.76%	43
Agree	54.90%	185
Disagree	27.60%	93
Strongly Disagree	4.75%	16
TOTAL		337

Q8 Literacy instruction is developmentally appropriate and strongly aligned to Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

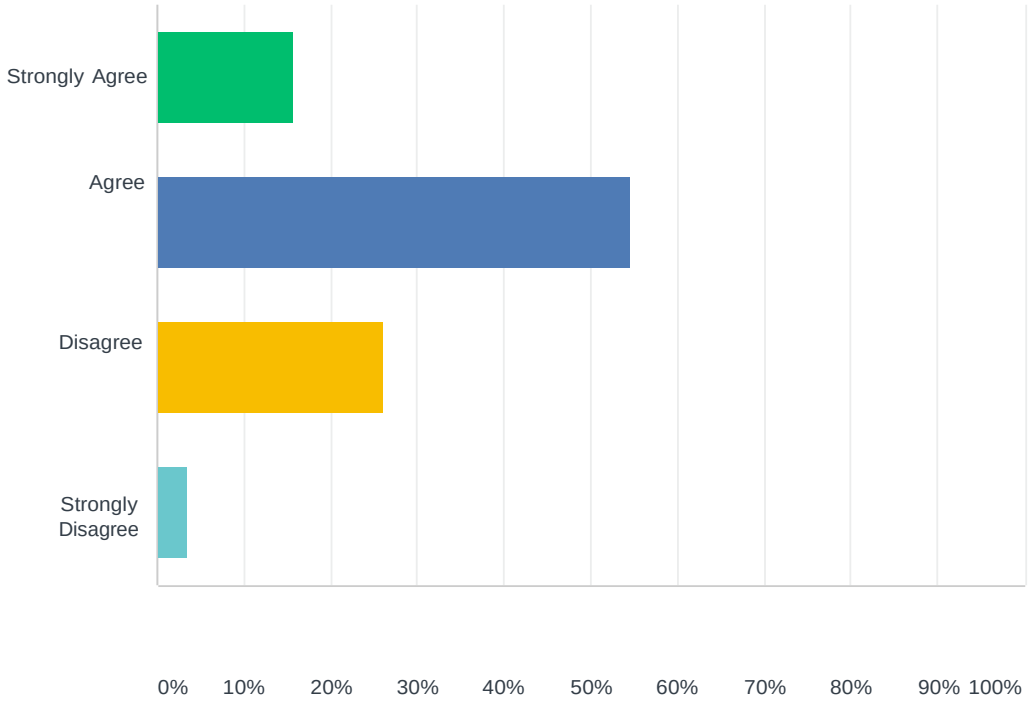
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	29.67%	100
Agree	54.60%	184
Disagree	12.17%	41
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q9 Classroom instruction meets the rigor of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

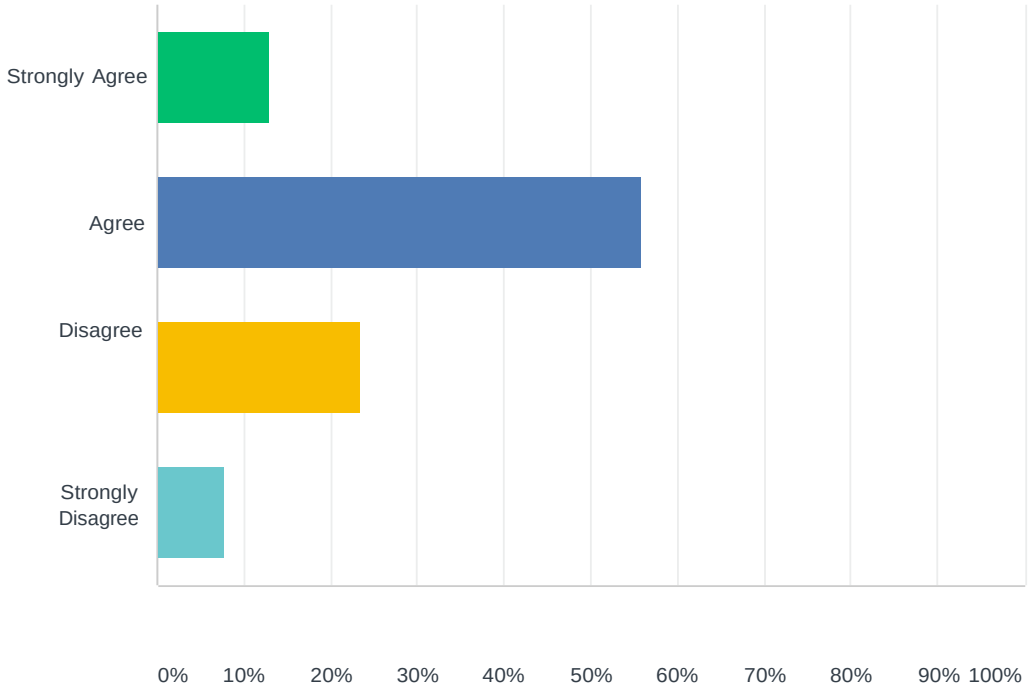
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	15.73%	53
Agree	54.60%	184
Disagree	26.11%	88
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q10 The assessment system includes valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment components.

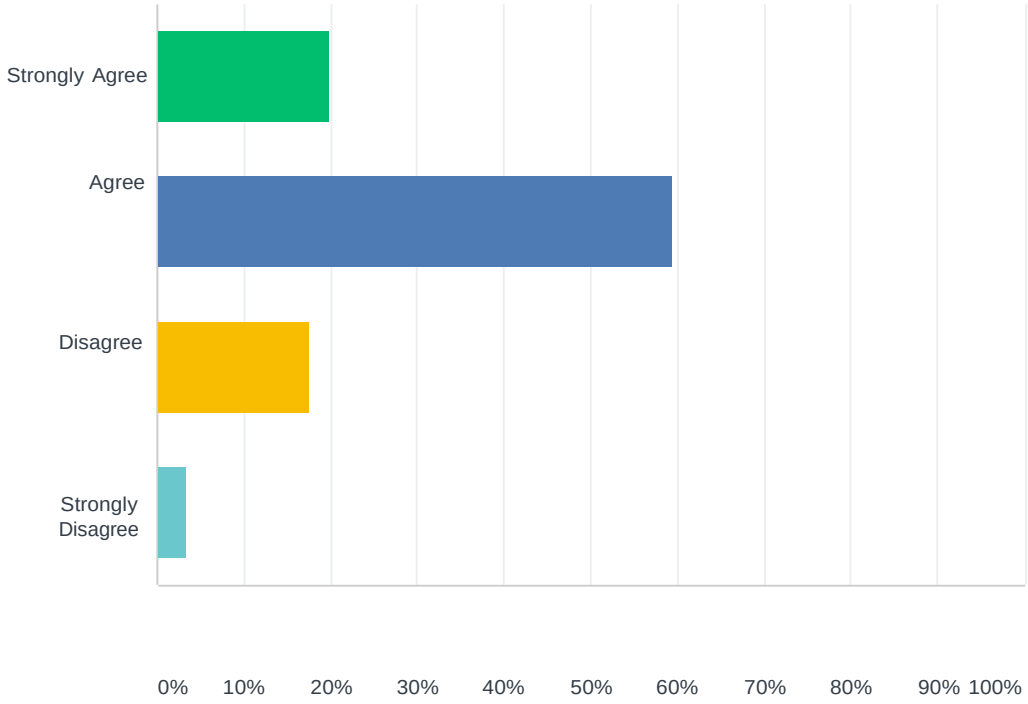
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	13.06%	44
Agree	55.79%	188
Disagree	23.44%	79
Strongly Disagree	7.72%	26
TOTAL		337

Q11 Assessments are used for data-informed decision-making in order to identify a child's learning needs, to inform instruction, and to monitor a child's progress and the effects of instruction.

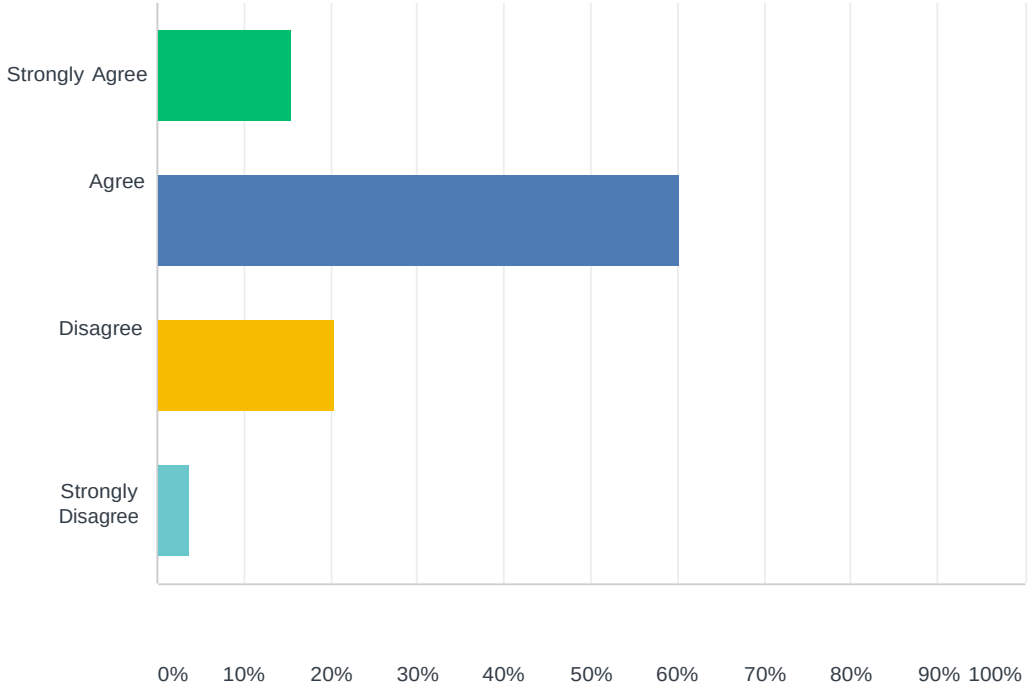
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	19.88%	67
Agree	59.35%	200
Disagree	17.51%	59
Strongly Disagree	3.26%	11
TOTAL		337

Q12 Assessment systems provide school-level data on disadvantaged children who are at risk for educational failure or in need of special assistance and support, including a child living in poverty, a child with a disability, or a child who is an English learner.

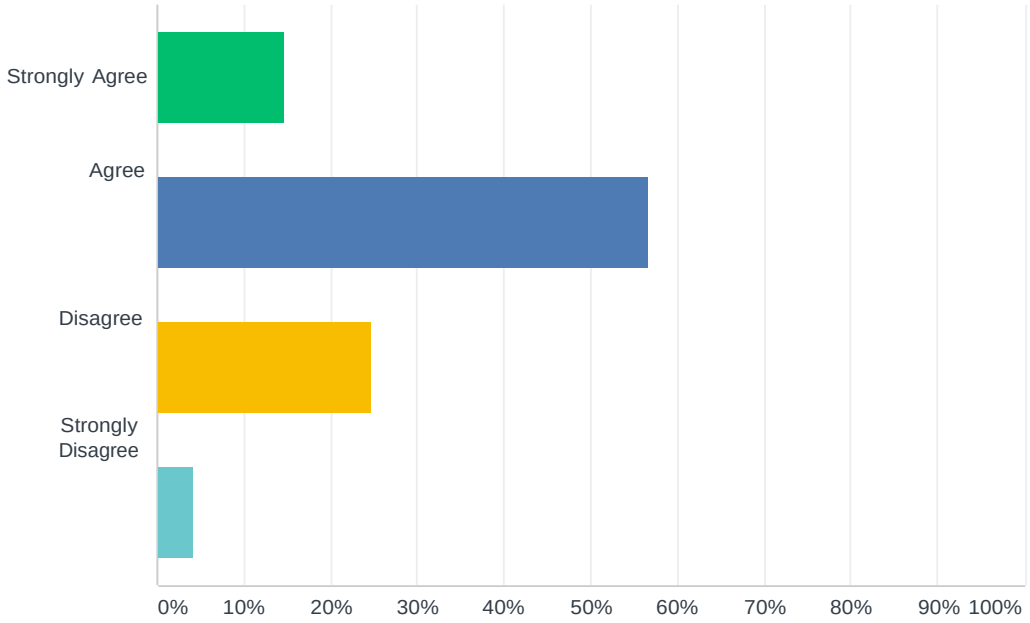
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	15.43%	52
Agree	60.24%	203
Disagree	20.47%	69
Strongly Disagree	3.86%	13
TOTAL		337

Q13 Schools use multi-tiered systems of support to provide interventions and practices to support students' needs.

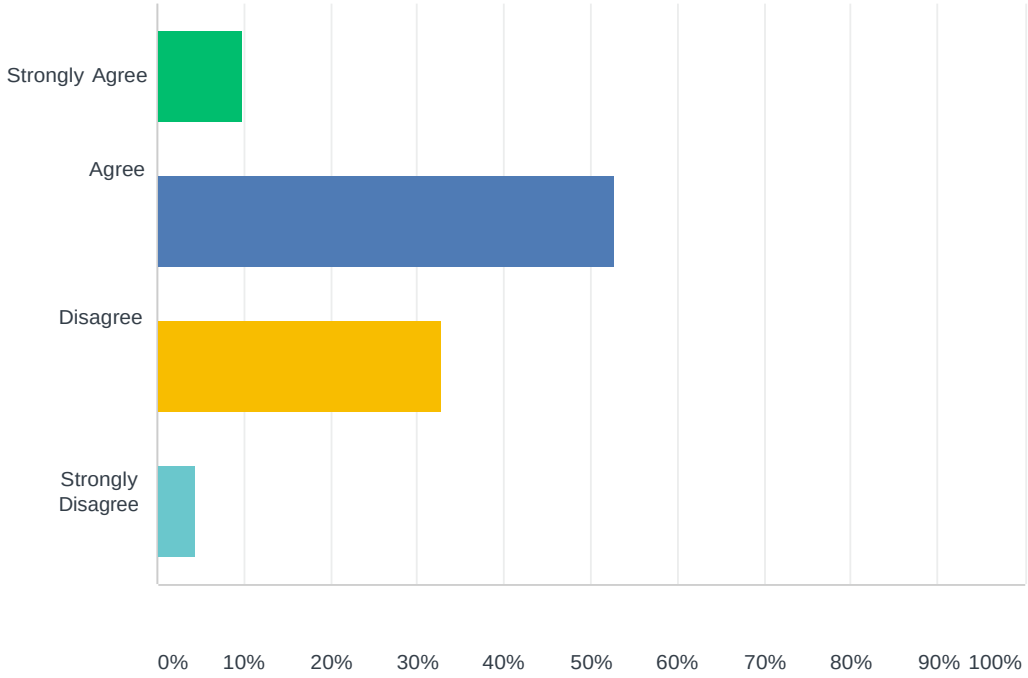
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	14.54%	49
Agree	56.68%	191
Disagree	24.63%	83
Strongly Disagree	4.15%	14
TOTAL		337

Q14 Teachers design lessons with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide flexibility in the way information is presented; the way students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills; and the way students are engaged.

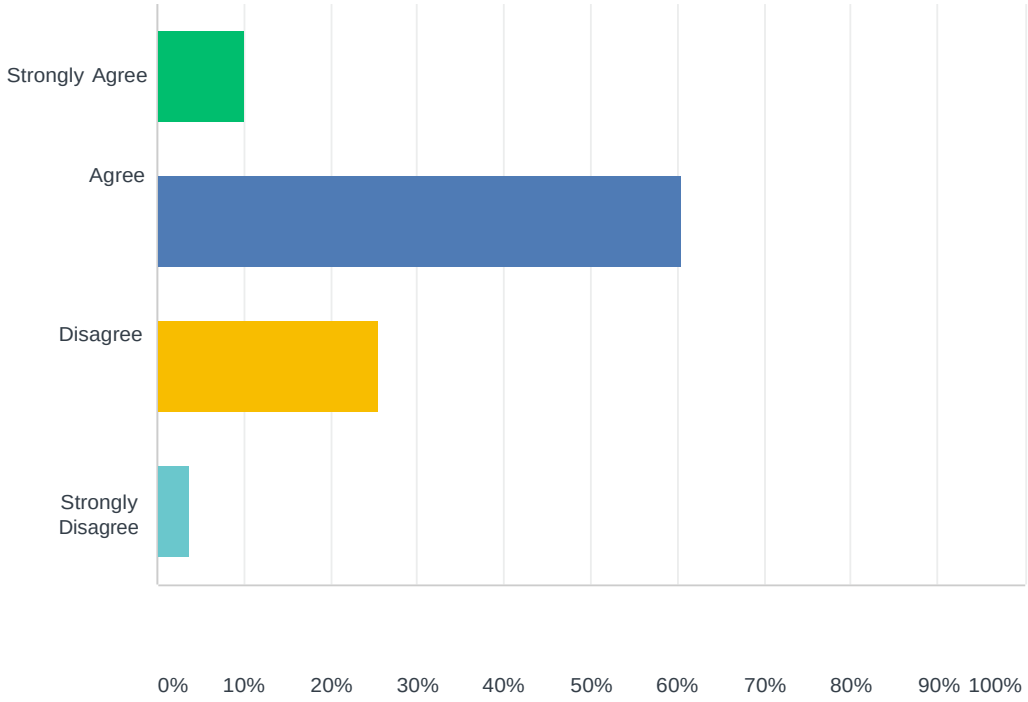
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	9.79%	33
Agree	52.82%	178
Disagree	32.94%	111
Strongly Disagree	4.45%	15
TOTAL		337

Q15 LEAs use interventions to provide appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintain high achievement expectations for all students.

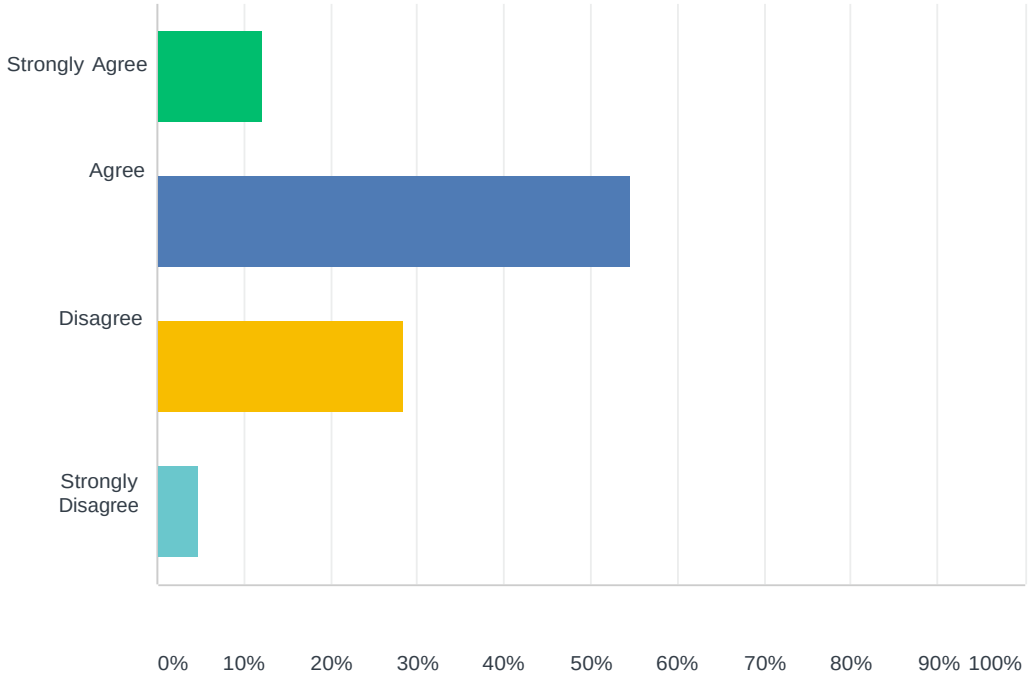
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	10.09%	34
Agree	60.53%	204
Disagree	25.52%	86
Strongly Disagree	3.86%	13
TOTAL		337

Q1 Administrators identify community, cultural, and equity concerns related to literacy and share solutions with stakeholders.

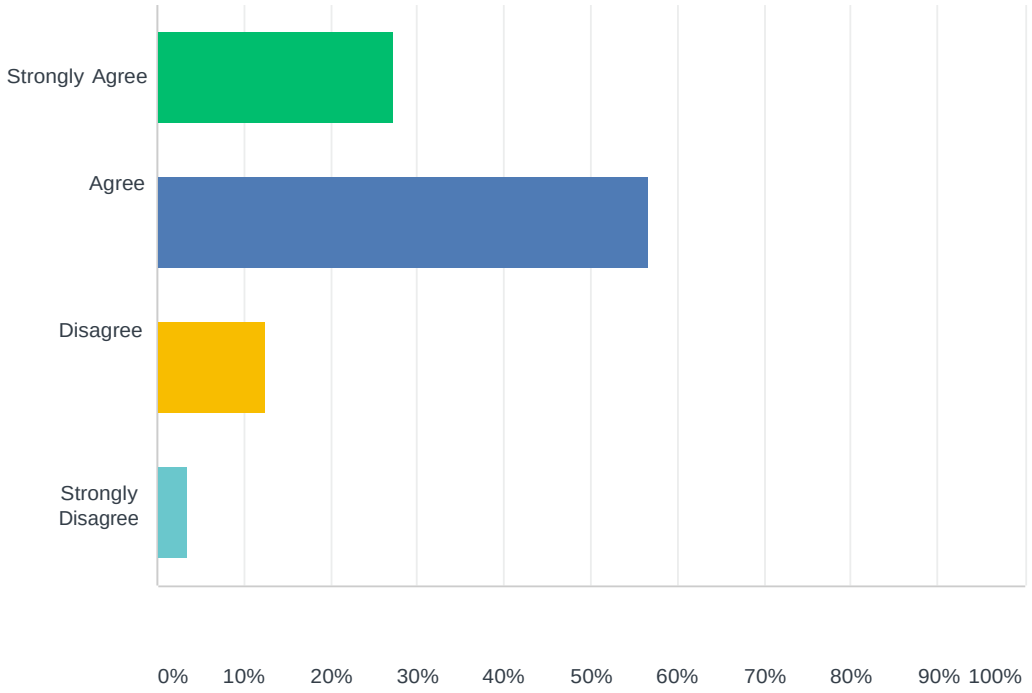
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	12.17%	41
Agree	54.60%	184
Disagree	28.49%	96
Strongly Disagree	4.75%	16
TOTAL		337

Q2 Educational leaders provide professional learning opportunities for teacher leaders through a variety of formats and encourage aspiring leaders to participate.

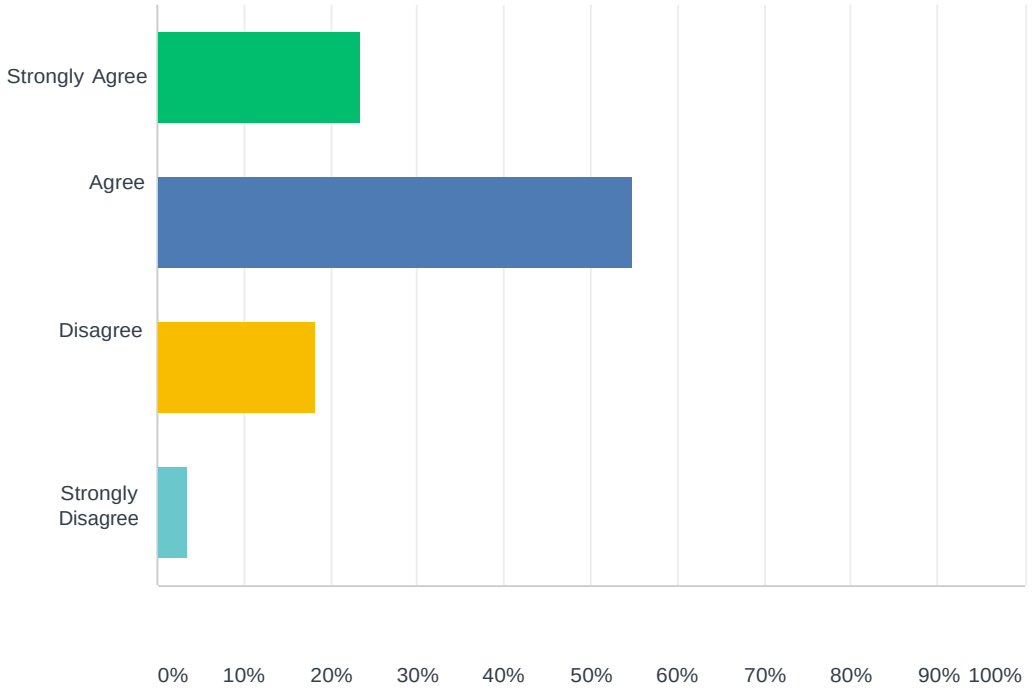
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	27.30%	92
Agree	56.68%	191
Disagree	12.46%	42
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q3 Administrators provide time for regular literacy meetings and collaborative planning.

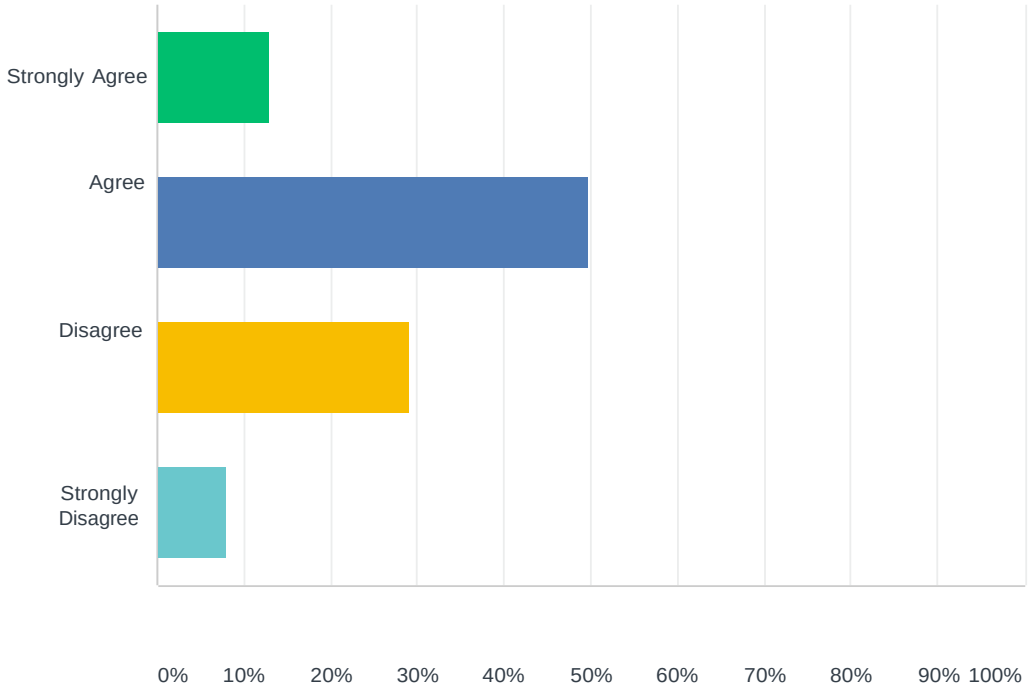
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	23.44%	79
Agree	54.90%	185
Disagree	18.10%	61
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q4 Administrators participate with teachers in professional learning initiatives for literacy.

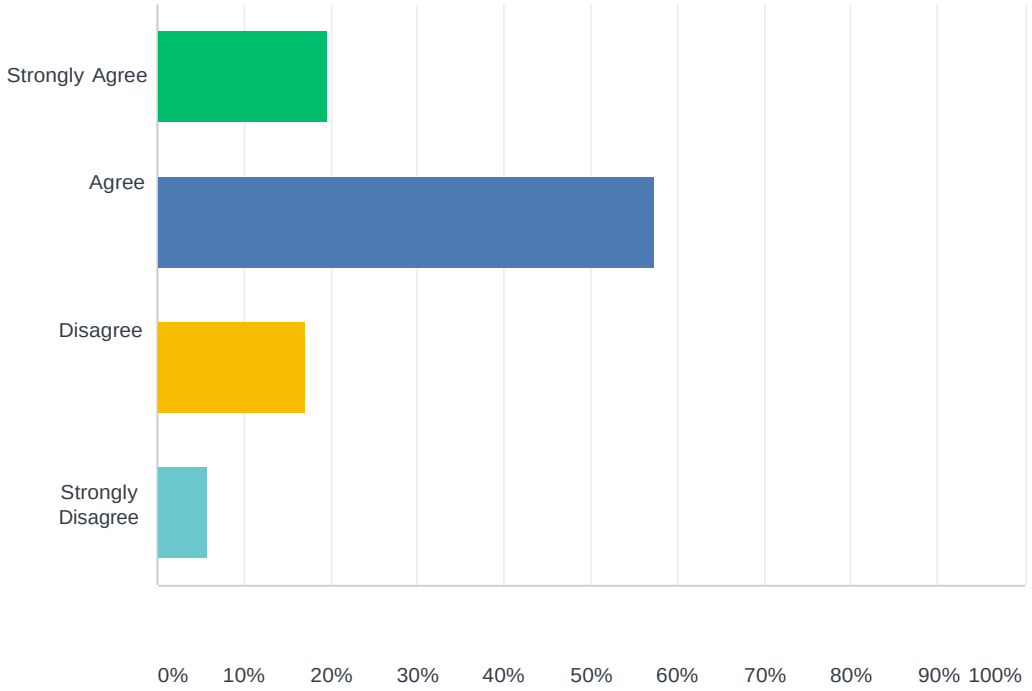
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSE	
Strongly Agree	13.06%	44
Agree	49.85%	168
Disagree	29.08%	98
Strongly Disagree	8.01%	27
TOTAL		337

Q5 LEAs provide systematic, evidence-based professional learning for literacy.

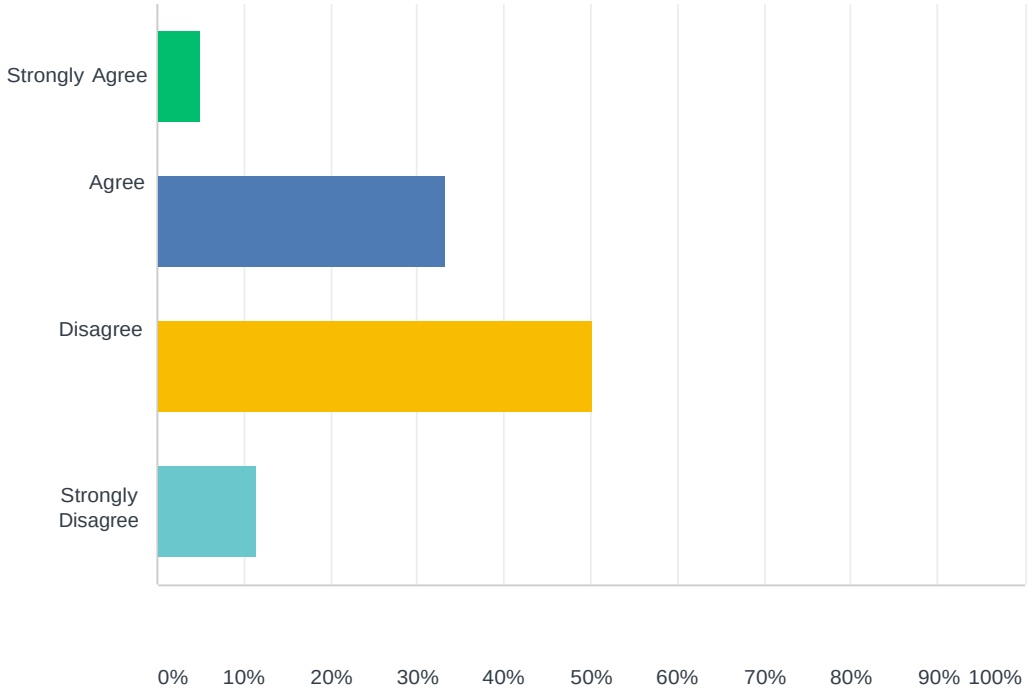
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	19.58%	66
Agree	57.27%	193
Disagree	17.21%	58
Strongly Disagree	5.93%	20
TOTAL		337

Q6 LEAs include parents, community-based providers, higher education representatives, and other related stakeholders in professional learning initiatives for literacy.

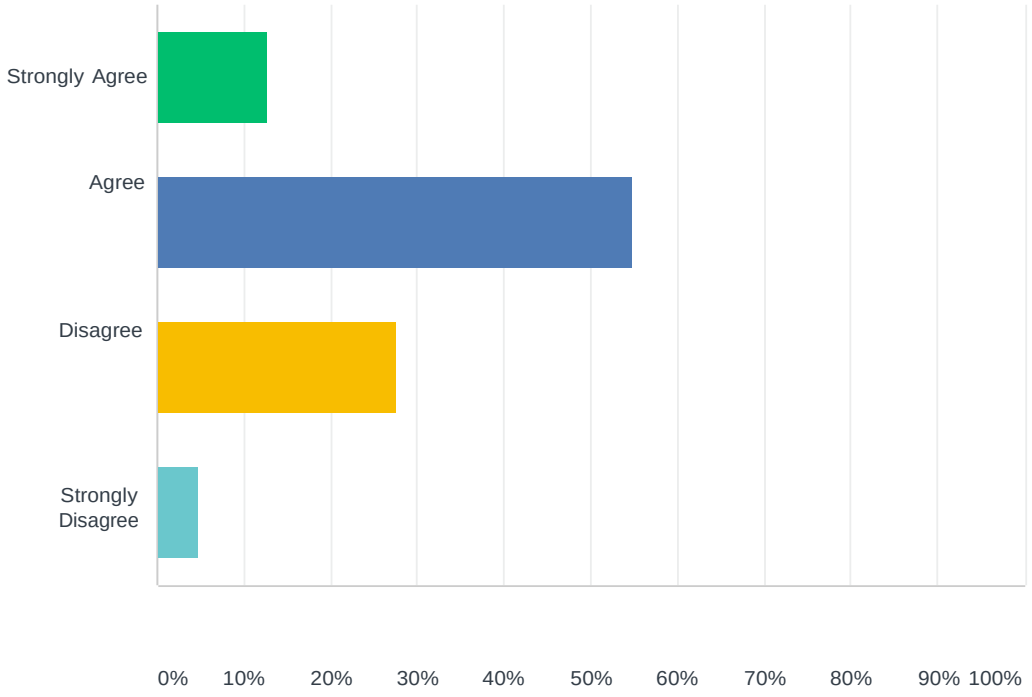
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	5.04%	17
Agree	33.23%	112
Disagree	50.15%	169
Strongly Disagree	11.57%	39
TOTAL		337

Q7 Professional learning for literacy initiatives incorporates a variety of formats.

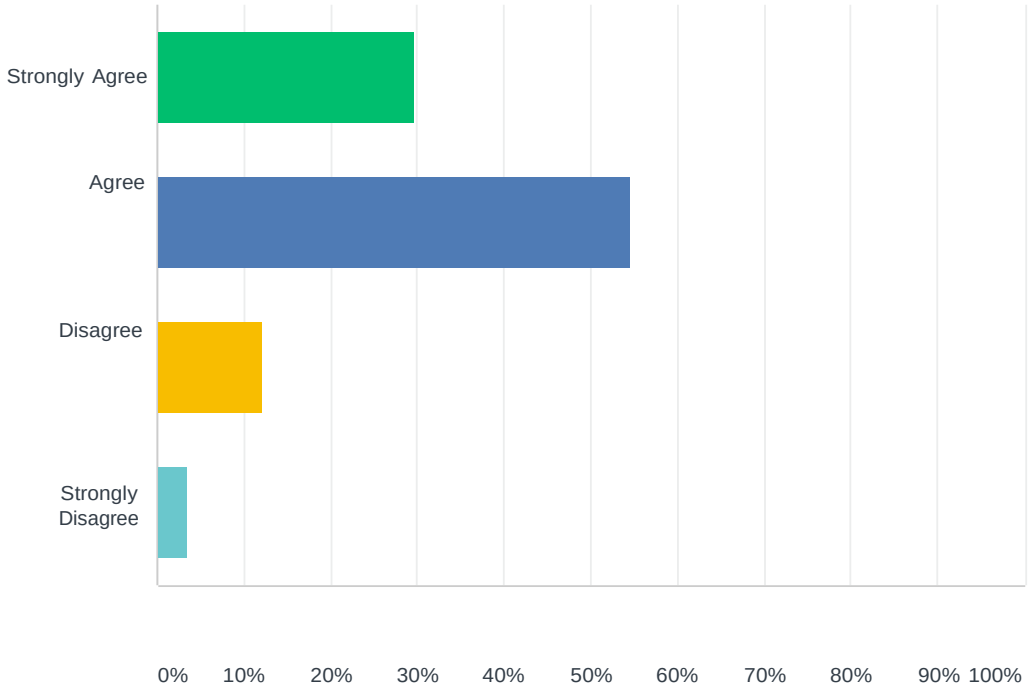
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	12.76%	43
Agree	54.90%	185
Disagree	27.60%	93
Strongly Disagree	4.75%	16
TOTAL		337

Q8 Literacy instruction is developmentally appropriate and strongly aligned to Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

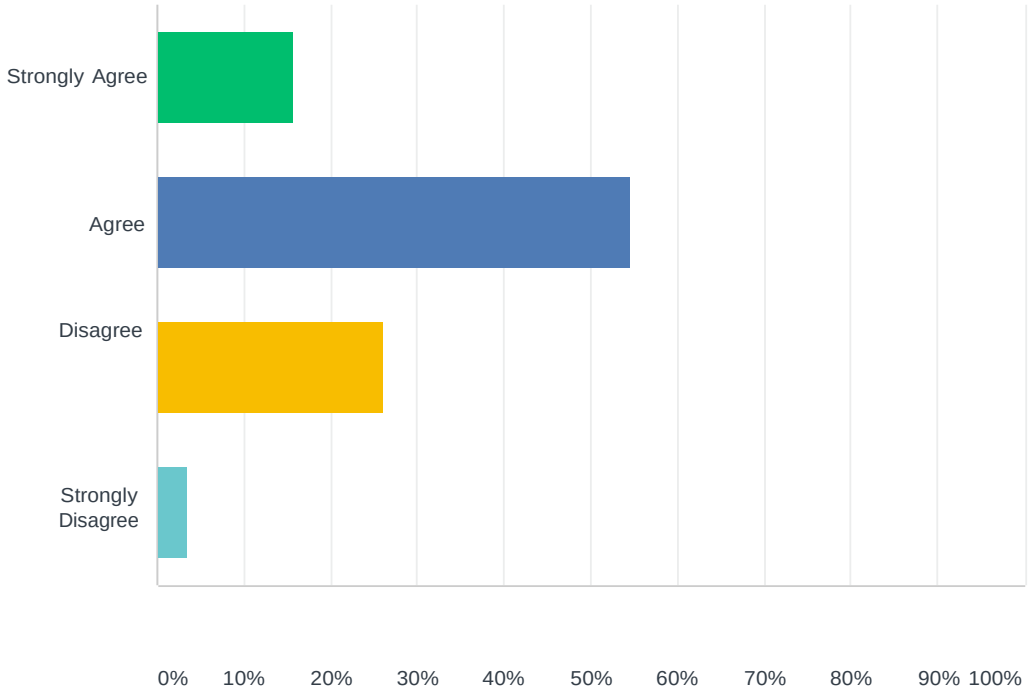
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	29.67%	100
Agree	54.60%	184
Disagree	12.17%	41
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q9 Classroom instruction meets the rigor of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

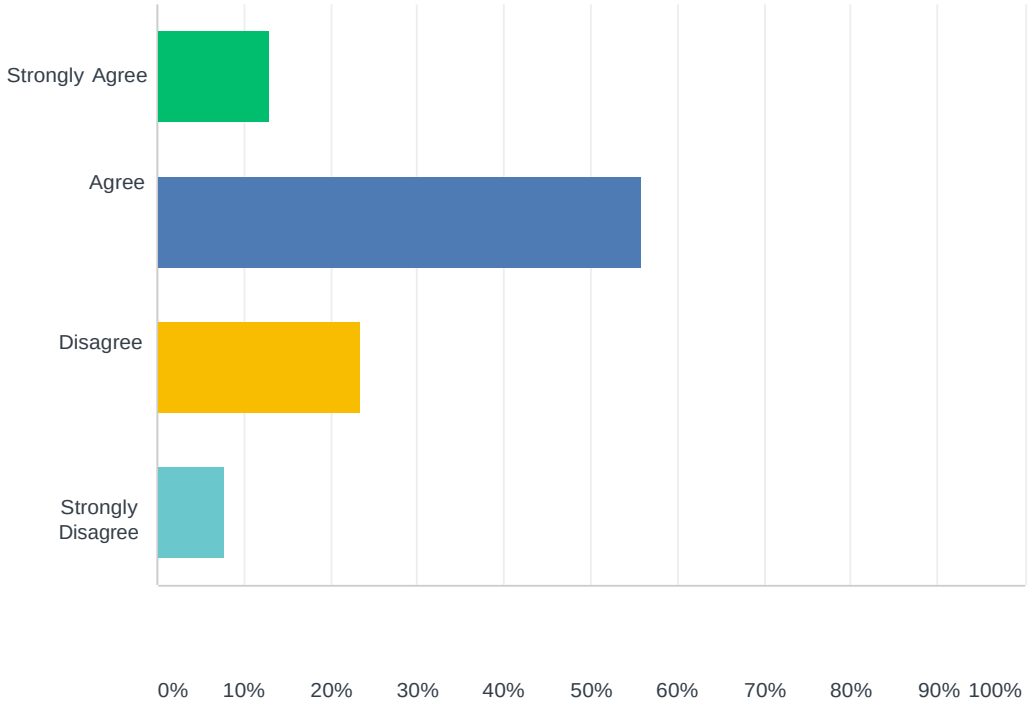
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	15.73%	53
Agree	54.60%	184
Disagree	26.11%	88
Strongly Disagree	3.56%	12
TOTAL		337

Q10 The assessment system includes valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment components.

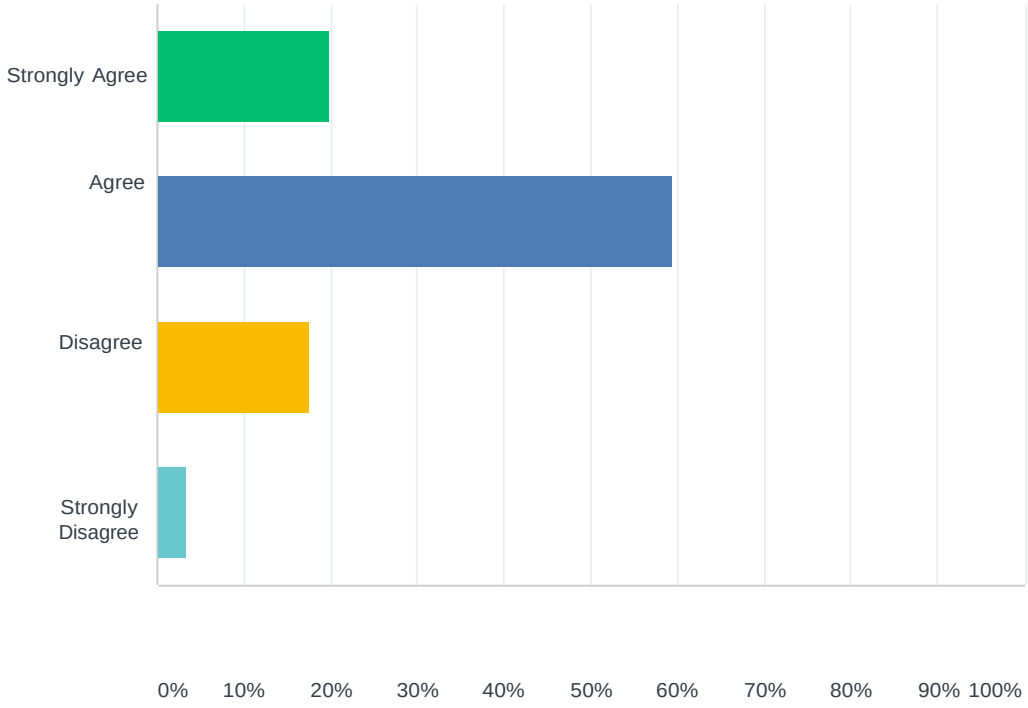
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	13.06%	44
Agree	55.79%	188
Disagree	23.44%	79
Strongly Disagree	7.72%	26
TOTAL		337

Q11 Assessments are used for data-informed decision-making in order to identify a child's learning needs, to inform instruction, and to monitor a child's progress and the effects of instruction.

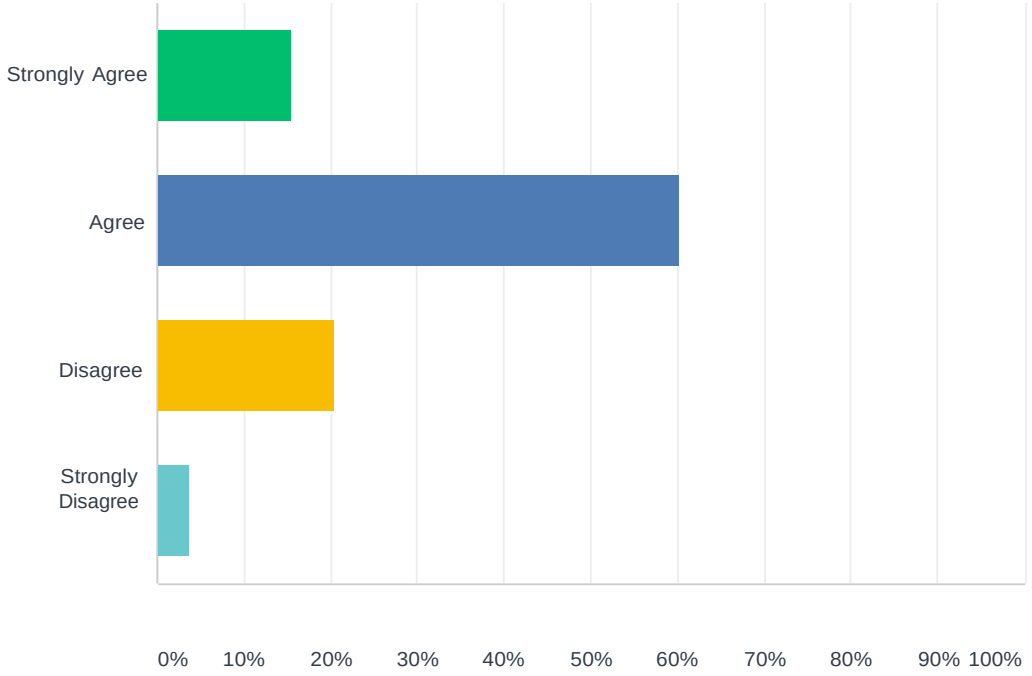
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	19.88%	67
Agree	59.35%	200
Disagree	17.51%	59
Strongly Disagree	3.26%	11
TOTAL		337

Q12 Assessment systems provide school-level data on disadvantaged children who are at risk for educational failure or in need of special assistance and support, including a child living in poverty, a child with a disability, or a child who is an English learner.

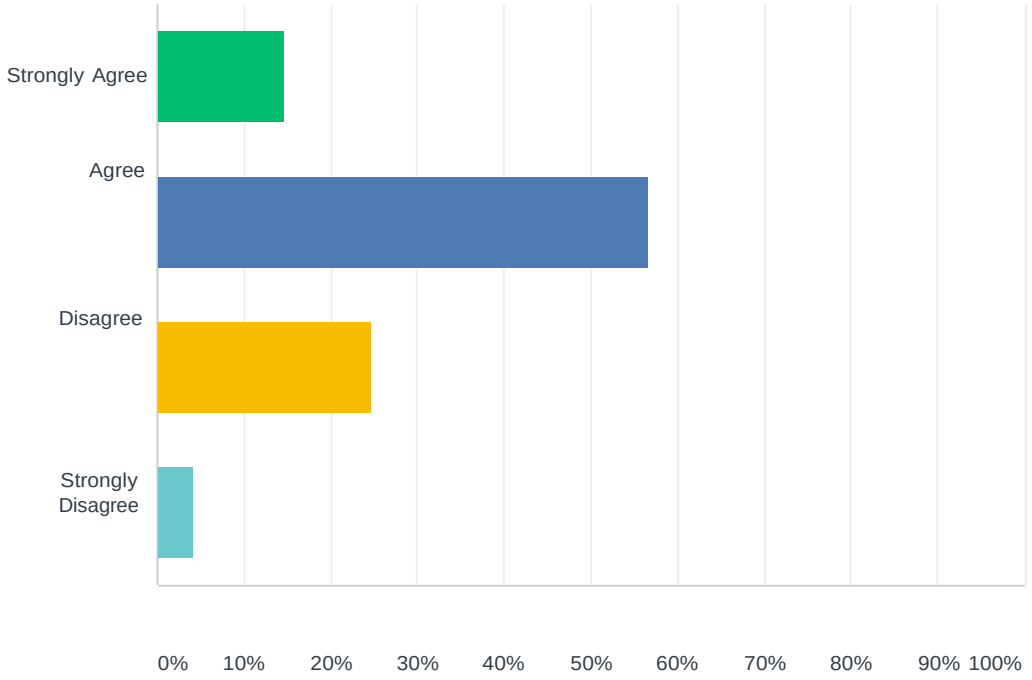
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	15.43%	52
Agree	60.24%	203
Disagree	20.47%	69
Strongly Disagree	3.86%	13
TOTAL		337

Q13 Schools use multi-tiered systems of support to provide interventions and practices to support students' needs.

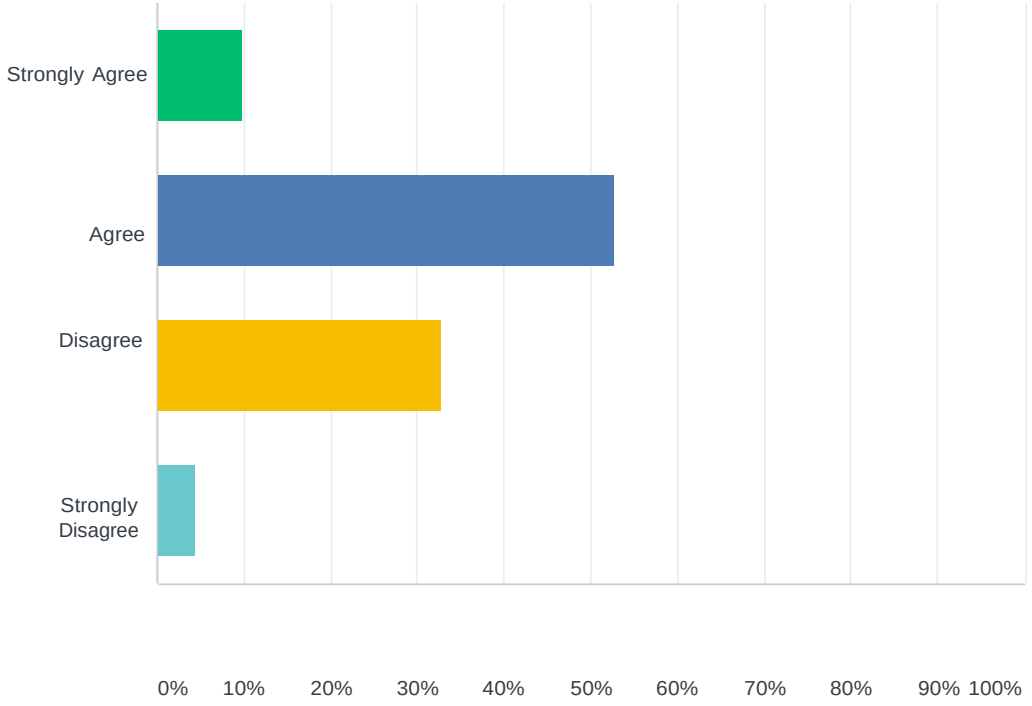
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	14.54%	49
Agree	56.68%	191
Disagree	24.63%	83
Strongly Disagree	4.15%	14
TOTAL		337

Q14 Teachers design lessons with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide flexibility in the way information is presented; the way students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills; and the way students are engaged.

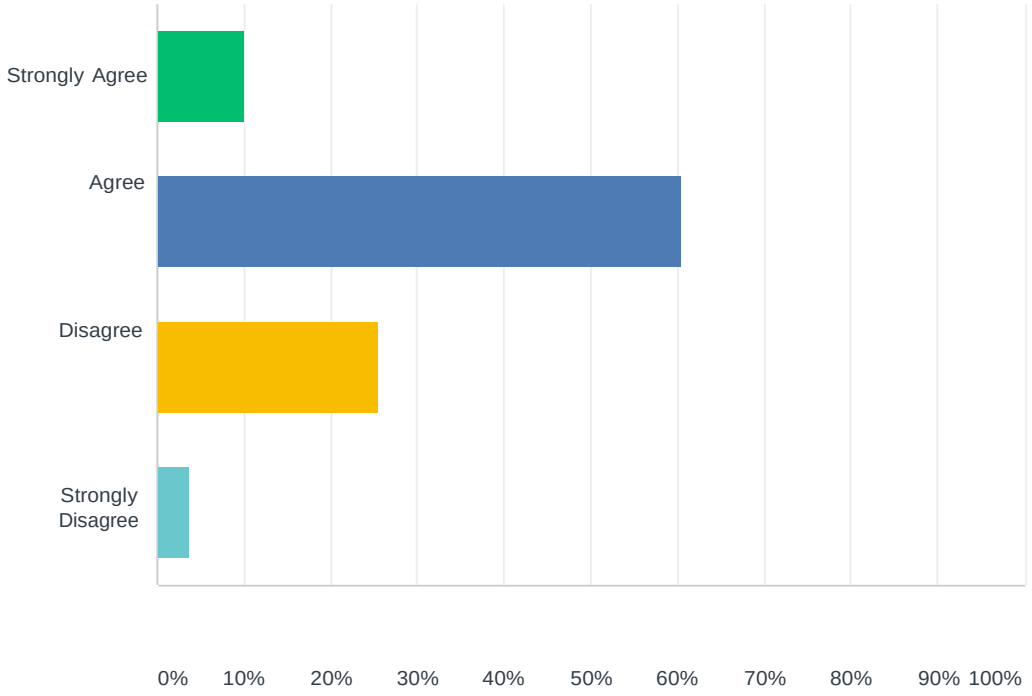
Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	9.79%	33
Agree	52.82%	178
Disagree	32.94%	111
Strongly Disagree	4.45%	15
TOTAL		337

Q15 LEAs use interventions to provide appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintain high achievement expectations for all students.

Answered: 337 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	10.09%	34
Agree	60.53%	204
Disagree	25.52%	86
Strongly Disagree	3.86%	13
TOTAL		33

Appendix C: Evidence-based Resources

Sources of Evidence

1. "Warehouses" with multiple sources on various topics, pre-reviewed against the ESSA definition
   - Evidence for ESSA (Hopkins)
   - What Works Clearinghouse (IES)
   - Evidence-Based Intervention Network (University of Missouri)
   - National Center on Intensive Intervention (AIR)
2. Multiple sources on single topics, sometimes pre-reviewed against the ESSA definition
   - Sources synthesized by groups like Class Size Matters, Attendance Works, etc.
   - Literature reviews
3. Single sources, not pre-reviewed against ESSA definition
   - Academic and professional journals (these are reviewed, just not against the ESSA definition)
   - Vendors
   - Google

What to ask after finding a piece of evidence?		
Question	Answer	Evidence
Is the original source trustworthy?		
Is the evidence data and statistics, or research?		
Does the source clearly describe the activity, the desired outcome, and the conditions under which it was tested?		
What was the result of the activity? (Did the activity achieve the outcome?)		

What "Level" of evidence is it? (How strong is the link between the activity and the outcome?)		
What was the "effect size" of the activity? (To what degree did the outcome occur, a little or a lot?)		
What other factors might have contributed to the activity working (or not working)?		
Can (and should) the activity be selected for the decision at hand?		

Find the Evidence

The information and links below may guide LEAs in determining the level of evidence-based research for a program or resource.

1. "Warehouses" with multiple sources on various topics, evaluated against the ESSA definition:
Evidence for ESSA (Hopkins)

What Works Clearinghouse (IES) *has email subscription

Evidence-Based Intervention Network (University of Missouri)

National Center on Intensive Intervention (AIR)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Registry (SAMHSA)

2. Multiple sources on single topics, sometimes evaluated against the ESSA definition:
Sources synthesized by groups like Class Size Matters, Attendance Works, etc.
Literature reviews

3.Single sources, not pre-reviewed against ESSA definition:

Academic and professional journals (these are reviewed, just not against the ESSA definition)

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Vendors
Google

Checklist: Evaluating Plans for Evidence-Based Activities

Prior to selecting an evidence-based program, respond to the following questions.

1. Does the plan identify a need (and associated objectives/outcomes)?

2. What is the proposed activity to meet the need?

3. What level of evidence does the proposed activity demonstrate? ("How strong is the link between the activity and the outcome?")

- Level 1-3: Existing research links the *specific* activity to the need.

- Level 4: Existing research links the *general* activity to the need, **and** the plan will evaluate whether the *specific* activity meets the need after it is implemented.

4. What is the effect size of the proposed activity? ("How large is the impact of the activity on the outcome?")

5. Is the activity an appropriate choice, given the level of evidence, the effect size, and other context (student population, grade levels, delivery method, cost, etc.)?

Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

Child with a disability	A child evaluated in accordance with §§300.304 300.311 as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as ‘‘emotional disturbance’’), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.
Comprehensive literacy instruction	Instruction that—(a) Includes developmentally appropriate, contextually explicit, and systematic instruction, and frequent practice, in reading and writing across content areas; (b) Includes age-appropriate, explicit, systematic, and intentional instruction in phonological awareness, phonic decoding, vocabulary, language structure, reading fluency, and reading comprehension; (c) Includes age-appropriate, explicit instruction in writing, including opportunities for children to write with clear purposes, with critical reasoning appropriate to the topic and purpose, and with specific instruction and feedback from instructional staff; (d) Makes available and uses diverse, high-quality print materials that reflect the reading and development levels, and interests, of children; (e) Uses differentiated instructional approaches, including individual and small group instruction and discussion; (f) Provides opportunities for children use language with peers and adults in order to develop language skills, including developing vocabulary; (g) Includes frequent practice of reading and writing strategies; (h) Uses age-appropriate, valid, and reliable screening assessments, diagnostic assessments, formative assessment processes, and summative assessments to identify a child’s learning needs, to inform instruction, and to monitor the child’s progress and the effects of instruction; (i) Uses strategies to enhance children’s motivation to read and write and children’s engagement in self- directed learning; (j) Incorporates the principles of universal design for learning; (k) Depends on teachers’ collaboration in planning, instruction, and assessing a

	child's progress and on continuous professional learning; and (l) Links literacy instruction to the State's challenging academic standards, including standards relating to the ability to navigate, understand, and write about complex subject matters in print and digital formats.
Dual Language Learner	English learners who range in age from birth through five years old and who are learning two or more languages. The title of DLL acknowledges that very young children are still actively developing their home language(s) along with English.
English learner	An individual— (a) Who is aged 3 through 21; (b) Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; (c)(i) Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) Who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) Who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (iii) Who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and (d) Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual— (i) The ability to meet the academic standards; (ii) The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) The opportunity to participate fully in society
Professional development	Activities that— (a) Are an integral part of school and LEA strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the State's challenging academic standards; (b) Are sustained (not stand-alone, one-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused; and (c) May include activities that—(1) Improve and increase teachers'—(i)

Knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach;(ii) Understanding of how students learn; or (iii) Ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, including how to adjust instructional strategies, assessments, and materials based on such analysis; (2) Are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans; (3) Allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator's specific needs identified in observation or other feedback; (4) Improve classroom management skills; (5) Support the recruitment, hiring, and training of effective teachers, including teachers who became certified through State and local alternative routes to certification; (6) Advance teacher understanding of— (i) Effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; or (ii) Strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; (7) Are aligned with, and directly related to, academic goals of the school or LEA; (8) Are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, representatives of Indian Tribes (as applicable), and administrators of schools to be served under this program; (9) Are designed to give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments; (10) To the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers, principals, and other school and community-based early childhood program leaders in the use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and academic subjects in which the teachers teach; (11) As a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on teacher effectiveness and student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development; (12) Are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services to those children, including positive behavioral

interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations; (13) Provide instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform classroom practice; (14) Provide instruction in ways that teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents and families; (15) Involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education, including, as applicable, Tribal Colleges and Universities as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)), to establish school-based teacher, principal, and other school leader training programs that provide prospective teachers, novice teachers, principals, and other school

leaders with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers, principals, other school leaders, and faculty of such institutions; (16) Create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by an LEA receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; (17) Provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in this paragraph (c) that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom; or (18) Where practicable, provide for school staff and other early childhood education program providers to address jointly the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.

System of Early Care and Education in Maryland (SECE in MD): Maryland's early care and education system encompasses an array of programs with distinct purposes and designs. The system is complex with federally, state and privately funded programs subject to oversight by multiple authorizing and licensing agencies. The range of program options available to families of young children ages birth to 5 years includes:

Public Pre-Kindergarten

Community-based Pre-Kindergarten

Head Start

Early Head Start

	Licensed Childcare Centers Judy Centers Family Childcare Parochial Preschool Montessori Informal/Relative Care
World Language Immersion Program	A model of instruction in which academic content and literacy skills are taught through the use of both English and a partner language, usually beginning in kindergarten.

Appendix E: Research to Support the Keys

Research/Evidence to Support Instructional Leadership (Key 1)

Research suggests that effective instructional leadership is a key ingredient in educational reform (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). In fact, effective instructional leadership has been linked to improved student outcomes (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Thus, instructional leadership is essential for facilitating implementation of a comprehensive literacy plan. Research suggests that key players in instructional leadership include central office personnel, principals and assistant principals, and teacher leaders (Elmore, 2000; King, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2000).

Works Cited in Key 1

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Elmore, R. (2000). Building a new structure for school leadership. Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute.

Goddard, R. D., Goddard, Y. L., Kim, E. S., & Miller, R. J. (2015). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the roles of instructional leadership, teacher collaboration, and collective efficacy beliefs in support of student learning. American Journal of Education, 121, 501-530. http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Developing_and_Supporting_School-Ready_Leaders.html.

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Research/Evidence to Support Strategic Professional Development (Key 2)

Strategic professional learning is an important component in education reform. In fact, research suggests that ongoing and intensive professional learning opportunities can have a substantial effect on student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007). Models of effective professional learning suggest that it is tied to clear standards, aligned curricula, and systemwide accountability (Garet, et al., 2001). It also includes active learning opportunities, a focus on sets of discrete skills, relevant practice, and sustained duration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009). Providing ongoing professional learning and instructional support (e.g., coaching) from an instructional leader is associated with improved teacher implementation of evidence-based practices (Becker, Bradshaw, Domitrovich, & Ialongo, 2013). Notably, ongoing instructional support has been highlighted as an essential component of professional learning for facilitating teachers' translation of research to practice (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Center-based programs play a vital role in providing explicit instruction on pre-literacy skills such as phonological awareness, letter naming, and print awareness (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Knowledge of these skills vary substantially across teachers (Powell et al., 2008; Connor et al., 2006), thus professional development interventions have clear benefits on the quality of instruction and children's language outcomes (Powell et al., 2010). Multiple models have proven effective, including on-going feedback (Landry et al., 2006), pre-specified curriculum (Bierman et al., 2008), or technologically mediated remote coaching (Powell et al., 2010).

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Research/Evidence for Continuity of Standards and Evidence-based Instruction

Alignment from birth through secondary school is essential for providing students the coherence and support they need to develop effective literacy skills. Misalignment between early childhood and K-12 standards results in disconnected instructional practices that limit student learning (Claessens, Engel, & Curran, 2014). Connections across ages and grade levels as well as across curricula, assessment, and professional development are needed to ensure that students experience a seamless literacy education (Bogard & Takanishi, 2005). These connections, especially from early childhood to K-12 education, must cross boundaries between non-formal and formal education (Coffman & Kauerz, 2012), and they must foster shared goals and instructional strategies across age and grade levels (Correnti & Rowan, 2007).

Differences in early language mirror distinctions in the communicative input to children from varying SES backgrounds. Hart and Risley (1995) estimate that relative to their higher-SES counterparts, children from lower-SES backgrounds face a cumulative input gap of 30 million words by the time they reach the school-aged year. In addition to sizable effects of input quantity, more nuanced factors such as vocabulary diversity (Rowe, 2012), informativity of the extra-linguistic context (Cartmill et al., 2013), and the connectedness or fluency of the communicative interactions (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015) also predict vocabulary growth. Well-established associations between language outcomes and caregiver input motivate interventions that focus on increasing caregiver input among lower-SES groups. For example, storybooks are a key source of linguistic input and a strong predictor of vocabulary size (Senechal et al., 1996) since they feature unique words that are not found in child-directed speech (Montag et al., 2015).

Parent-child interventions that focus on book reading generate improvements in vocabulary size that sustain over follow-up periods (Whitehurst et al., 1994; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). Recent interventions that look beyond vocabulary size can examine other dimensions of language that impact early reading (e.g., use of complex syntactic structures, decontextualized language). These approaches have incorporated technology that provide real-time information about how much caregivers talk to children and home audio environment (e.g., amount of background noise), e.g., 30-Million Words Initiative (thirtymillionwords.org), Providence Talks (providencetalks.org). When paired with home-based programs, these methods may be effective for delivering and assessing low-cost strategies for promoting school readiness (Susskind et al., 2013).

However, since caregiver input varies substantially across cultural and SES backgrounds (Hoff-Ginsberg, 1991), center-based programs paired with a parenting component are able to achieve larger improvements compared to those that focus on parents alone (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Burger, 2010). Relative to control groups that do not receive services, children who enroll in early Head Start (HS) programs show improved cognition, language, attention, and health (Love et al., 2013). These effects sustain over time when children continue onto formal programs following the completion of early HS. Similarly, HS children take part in a family-based training program show greater improvements in language and cognition beyond those who were enrolled in HS alone (Neville at al., 2013).

Evidenced-based practices are those "effective educational strategies supported by evidence and research" (ESEA, 2002). The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 non-Regulatory Guidance: *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments* (2016) states,

"using, generating, and sharing evidence about effective strategies to support students gives stakeholders an important tool to accelerate student learning." Therefore, supporting the use of evidence-based strategies in the classroom is essential to improving teacher literacy instruction. Educators must take part in thoughtfully designed professional learning experiences to ensure evidence-based strategies are at the core of all literacy instruction. Although utilizing evidence based strategies provides tools to improve learning, "changing literacy instruction in an evidence-based approach is hampered by a lack of knowledge regarding exactly how to combine multiple effective practices into a comprehensive instructional program" (Greenwood, C.R., Tapia, Y., Abbott, M., Cheryl Walton, C., 2003). Evidence-based strategies, learning experiences, and interventions must be part of an ongoing cycle that includes identifying local needs, selecting the evidence-based intervention, having the capacity to implement, and examining while reflecting upon how the intervention is working. It is necessary for educators to be guided on how to make the connections from evidence-based strategies to effective instructional practices. Carefully designed supports must be in place to identify strong and moderate evidence-based interventions that also consider the needs of students, schools, and communities. When selecting evidence-based practices there are several concepts that are to be considered. According to Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments (2016), "Interventions supported by higher levels of evidence, specifically strong evidence or moderate evidence, are more likely to improve student outcomes because they have been proven to be effective" (p.4). In addition to identifying practices that are shown to be successful, "teachers also must examine the generalizability, or fit, of the evidence"

(International Reading Association, 2002). Intentional time and support must be allotted for educators to explore evidence-based strategies in order to improve instruction.

Utilizing evidence-based strategies to improve student outcomes is part of a larger ongoing process of improvement to instruction. The impact of utilizing evidence-based strategies is evident. However, successful identification and implementation of these strategies does not just happen. It takes support in identifying needs, identifying evidenced-based strategies, and planning for implementation. The ongoing cycle of improvement requires dedicated time and support for local educational agencies and schools.

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Research/Evidence for Comprehensive System of Assessments

A comprehensive system of assessment is a coherent plan for monitoring student achievement across age and grade levels and includes measures for screening, progress monitoring, diagnosis, and evaluation (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Screening assessment is used to determine whether students may need additional support in a particular area. Progress monitoring is used to determine whether students are responding to instruction. If students are identified as needing support, diagnostic assessment can be used to determine specific areas to target. Finally, outcome assessment can be used to determine (a) how much a student grew and (b) where he or she ended up in relation to their peers in a given area. Did students make gains? Did they begin to catch up with their peers or get closer to grade level? Data from these assessment systems must be used as part of a continuous cycle of instructional improvement (Hamilton, et al., 2009). A comprehensive system of assessment may include teacher, center/school, and local educational agency level evaluation plans that can be used to inform professional development and school improvement efforts (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Formative assessment as critical component of Multi-tiered Systems of Support

Formative assessment is a critical component of effective school systems that improve students' performance and closes the achievement gaps. Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), discussed in Key 5, rely on four basic components: (a) the provision of multiple tiers of generally effective instructional practices, with a core curriculum that meets the needs of most (e.g., 80%) students; (b) access for all students to high-quality instruction that is matched to their needs; (c) an emphasis on formative assessment data to document the match

between students' needs and their instruction; and (d) a mechanism to evaluate system effectiveness across tiers, using a problem-solving model of data-based decision making (Atkins & Cummings, 2011).

Strong measurement tools are integral in the conceptualization of MTSS and to its success or disappointment in being able to both improve academic outcomes and provide data for the identification of LD (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009). The assessment demands of an MTSS approach bring forth an increased need for formative assessments that both meet the traditional criteria for psychometric acceptability and are predictive of high-stakes achievement outcomes. Additionally, these measures should be brief, repeatable, and instructionally relevant so that they can be used to improve instruction and, ultimately, student outcomes. Screening instruments have risen to prominence in education due to the need to identify students as being at-risk for poor reading and other outcomes. The practical benefits of universal screening include efficient measurement and the opportunity to prevent more serious deficits. Screening systems can help teachers make more efficient and effective instructional decisions (e.g., Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005) and reduce disproportionality in special education referrals (Marston, Muyskens, Lau, & Canter, 2003). Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) technology has evidence of utility as a formative assessment tool (Deno, 1985; Deno, 2003; Fuchs & Deno, 1992). Historically, CBMs have been used in special education to provide student-level data that measures how students are progressing in a curriculum towards specific outcomes. More recently, CBMs are being used to provide system-level data to improve the overall academic health of the school, including the progress of students in general education (Kaminski & Cummings, 2007).

CBM as a Formative Assessment Tool

Curriculum-based measurement was developed as a system for formative assessment; a methodology for adapting teaching to meet student needs (Deno, 1985). Because the primary purpose of formative assessment is to support student learning, it is linked to assessment practices for the purposes of improving student outcomes (Kaminski & Cummings, 2007). In addition to setting individual student goals, formative assessment also aims to provide a database on which effective instructional programs may be developed empirically over time (Fuchs, 1986).

At the individual student level, developed initially through the Data-Based Program Modification system (Deno & Mirkin, 1977), CBM has grown to become one of the most widely-studied assessment technologies. Converging evidence over the past 30 years has demonstrated CBM's validity in the following key areas: (a) CBM displays high degrees of content validity because the content for CBM is either based on or mirrors the daily curriculum taught in the classroom (Fuchs & Deno, 1992; Hasbrouck, Woldbeck, Ihnot, & Parker, 1999; Capizzi, Barton-Arwood, 2009), (b) CBM displays high levels of decision utility (Messick, 1989) in that it can be used to make instructional modifications when needed and results in better, more responsive teaching (Deno, 1985; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2003; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Hamlett, 1989; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Walz, & Germann, 1993) (c) CBM has evidence of discriminant validity in that students who are grouped based on CBM data are more likely to benefit from similar instruction than students who are grouped based on other assessments (Wesson, Vierthaler, & Haubrick, 1989; Kranzler, Brownkell, & Miller, 1998; Good & Jefferson, 1998).

Formative assessment linked to student outcomes

One way to ensure that all students are on track for being successful readers is to provide educators with assessment tools that allow them to make timely, appropriate decisions about a child's response to instruction (Cummings, Kaminski, Good, & O'Neill, 2011). The practice of collecting formative assessment data on a wide scale can have a dramatic effect on global student achievement (Ervin, Schaughency, Goodman, McGlinchey, & Matthews, 2006). Other benefits of formative assessment include reduced referral and eligibility rates for the category of specific learning disability (SLD; VanDerHeyden, Witt, & Gilbertson, 2007; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2011), reduced disproportionality in special education placements (Marston et al., 2003; O'Connor, Bocian, Beach, Sanchez, & Flynn, 2013), and improved achievement (O'Connor et al, 2013; Sharp, Sanders, Noltemeyer, Hoffman, & Boone, 2016).

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Research/Evidence to Support Tiered Instruction and Interventions

Tiered approaches to instructional delivery help students at all levels of achievement and assist their access to the core curriculum, irrespective of grade level. Districts or schools may implement a tiered model in a variety of ways (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009) but critical features include:

- A strong, evidence-based core reading program. One of the most critical components of any tiered model is that it is based on a strong general education curriculum (Tier 1; Foorman et al., 2016; Gersten et al., 2009). The core program forms the basis for all other intervention efforts and affects the achievement of all students.
- Multiple, flexible tiers of instruction. Successful tiered models also include 2-4 flexible tiers of supplemental, not supplanted, instruction. The purpose of these tiers is to provide additional supports to students who are struggling to make adequate progress in Tier 1 alone, though some schools also include tiers of enrichment for students performing above level. These supplemental tiers must be flexible, all students will move in and out of different support levels in accordance with their needs. According to a recent Department of Education Practice Guide (Gersten et al., 2009), Tier 2 supports demonstrated strong evidence in terms of improving students' reading achievement.
- Strategic integration. Supplemental supports should be based on and deliberately linked to Tier 1 content. Too often we intervene with students who are struggling by offering many disparate interventions, expecting the students to make connections between these interventions and their Tier 1 program (Tilly, 2008). This process hasn't been effective because it can be redundant with other programs, provide conflicting information, and

- lacks coordination. For tiered systems to be successful, we must work to connect all supports—including flexible tiers but also special education and ELL supports, back to Tier 1.
- Universal screening: Best practices in universal screening assessment includes assessing all students at least twice per year (fall, winter). The purpose of screening is two-fold, first to determine students who may benefit from additional support and second to evaluate the various school-level supports. For example, schools can examine the percentage of students whose needs are met by the core reading program, Tier 1 should meet the needs of the majority of students in the school (e.g., 60-80%). Schools can also examine the extent to which their supplemental supports are reducing risk for students. Universal screening alone has a moderate impact on student reading achievement, particularly if coupled with progress monitoring (Gersten et al., 2009).

- Progress monitoring: Students who have been identified as needing additional supports are unlikely to meet subsequent reading goals UNLESS we intervene to change that outcome. Thus, struggling readers should be monitored more frequently so that teachers can make decisions about their progress on a more frequent basis.

Grades K-5

Tiered systems have their roots in the elementary grades and are widely regarded as models for preventing reading difficulties and disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003; Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, & Fanuele, 2006). Vaughn et al., (2008) note the goal of any RTI approach is to “raise the achievement levels of all students, which

requires a multi-tiered approach beginning in general education settings that provides increasingly intense and differentiated interventions for students who struggle with reading and learning from text." (p.338).

Key milestones of tiered systems in the early grades focus on foundational reading skills. Foorman and colleagues (2016) identified four key recommendations for enhancing the quality of instruction and these include (p. iii):

- Teach students' academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge
- Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters
- Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words
- Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension

The elementary grades represent a critical period for intervention in reading. We know that reading challenges in elementary school ultimately lead to school failure and harmful long-term consequences, from reduced academic performance (Torgesen, 2000) to poor employment opportunities (Juel, 1988; McGill-Franzen, 1987; McIntosh, Horner, Chard, Boland, & Good, 2006). We also know that many students are not learning to read sufficiently well, indicated by the decline in reading proficiency over time (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). Tiered systems have demonstrated promise in preventing such risk factors and they do a better job remediating those that do exist. Such systems also show promise for reducing disability identification, can improve students' reading performance, and enhance their general academic functioning and future

opportunities for gainful employment (Chard, Harn, Horner, & Sugai, 2008). Successful implementation of tiered systems, however, rely on both structural components, such as data collection and decisions about placement into tiers, as well as evidence-based interventions. Although all five components listed above are important, the quality of instruction is, or at least should be, paramount. Put simply, regardless of the size of small groups, data collection, placement decisions, or other operational details associated with MTSS or other systems changes, poor-quality instruction will not likely produce proficient readers (e.g., Metis Associates, 2011) nor will it teach and reinforce appropriate, functional behaviors. At the same time, high-quality instruction could potentially preclude the need for tiered systems, per se (e.g., Carlson & Francis, 2002; Watkins, 1997).

Grades Six to Twelve

Many adolescents enter middle or high school after struggling with reading for years. Some students struggle with decoding multisyllabic words which they encounter frequently in secondary level text (Bhattacharya, Aplana, & Ehri, 2004). Others may be able to decode fluently, but they continue to face comprehension challenges. Their poor reading performance can be attributed to a variety of factors such as never receiving sufficiently intensive, explicit evidence-based instruction or intervention that targets their needs and/or having a reading disability. The consequences of poor reading ability are glaringly apparent for some students from an early age and can result in frustration and less independent reading over time. In addition, some students may need supplemental literacy support because, although they have proficiency in a language other than English, they are in the process of developing English language skills.

Ultimately, reading less leads to a rapidly widening gap between these struggling secondary readers and their typically achieving peers. When students read less, they profit less. In other words, students who do not read often acquire less vocabulary, background, and content knowledge (Gelzheiser & Meyers, 1991; Hairrell et al., 2011; O'Sullivan, Ysseldyke, Christenson, & Thurlow, 1990). Without explicit instruction and practice, we also deprive students of a 'tool box' of strategies that they can apply to make sense of text when their comprehension breaks down (Snow, Porche, Tabors, & Harris, 2007; Smith, Doabler, & Kame'enui, 2016). Stanovich (1986) described this phenomenon as the Matthew Effect. Put simply, we can think of it as "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." Unfortunately, poor reading ability can lead to grave consequences. For example, struggling readers are likely to demonstrate frustration, disengagement, and misbehavior (Lane, Carter, Pierson, & Glaeser, 2006). Thus, improving adolescent literacy achievement is critical.

A tiered model for secondary education can be implemented in a variety of ways (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009), hence it is referred to as a model and not a program. Besides variation in implementation within elementary level settings, implementation can also vary extensively between the elementary and secondary settings (Reed, Wexler, & Vaughn, 2012). Indeed, while tiered models at the secondary level share the same essential components as conceptualized at the elementary level listed above, there are some unique challenges and logistics that make the model somewhat different for secondary level implementation. For example, we can expect less growth from students as they get older (Bloom, Hill, Black, & Lipsey, 2008). Because of this, it is possible to conduct universal screening only one time per year if resources are scarce and we can use existing data (e.g., state test data) rather than using

resources to assess all students. Furthermore, while it is important to use data on an ongoing basis to monitor students' progress and make instructional decisions, we can consider conducting formal progress monitoring less often (Reed, Wexler, Vaughn 2012). Finally, in many schools, more than 60% of the student population may qualify for supplemental, intensive intervention. However, with scarce resources, schools can be challenged about how to intervene with all the students who qualify for intervention. This makes providing evidence-based reading instruction in the Tier 1 (i.e., English language arts, science, social studies, and math) even more critical as students with disabilities spend a majority of their day in the Tier 1 setting (Newman, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In a practice guide on Improving Adolescent Literacy, Kamil and colleagues (2008) highlight the following evidence-based recommendations:

- Provide explicit vocabulary instruction
- Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation
- Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning
- Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.

Recommendations 1-4 should be integrated across the Tier 1 setting and in supplemental intervention settings. The final recommendation stresses the need for secondary schools to determine ways to provide more intensive supplemental intervention, typically during an elective period, to students who need more help in foundational level skills (i.e., word-reading).

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