Louisiana Literacy Plan:

Literacy for All

Cecil J. Picard
State Superintendent of Education

September 2006

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Executive Summary

The Louisiana Literacy Plan is designed to address the learning needs of all students in grades PK – Adult Education in order to improve the literacy rates of students in the state, thereby developing a more literate and capable citizenry for the future. Connecting this plan to the No Child Left Behind Act, Louisiana seeks to close the achievement gap between all student sub-groups. The plan is based upon several key components that are well supported by national, scientifically based research and that have proven effective in improving outcomes for students when implemented with fidelity and integrity in schools. The plan requires a school-wide model with substantial district and state support and integrates a powerful instructional model across the PK-12 grade continuum with scientifically research-based instructional programs and strategies. This instructional model is supported by high quality, job-embedded professional development for teachers and school and district leaders that builds their foundational knowledge in delivering reading instruction and their capacity to implement the components the plan requires. The instructional model, research-based programs and strategies, and professional development components are highly aligned with the model used in Louisiana's Reading First model, but are grade-level specific to meet the needs of learners at various stages of their education.

The key components of the Louisiana Literacy Plan are:

1. A Three-tiered Instructional Model

    a. Tier 1 – The Core Curriculum
    In Louisiana, the *Grade-Level Expectations* and the *Comprehensive Curriculum* comprise the core curriculum for all students at each grade level. This core curriculum should be taught to all students through the use of instructional materials, including textbooks that are aligned to the GLEs and based on strategies that are supported by research. Research documents 80-90% of students will be successful at this tier of instruction without further intervention.

    b. Tier 2 – Strategic Intervention
    Based on regular screening assessments that monitor student progress in the core curriculum or Tier 1, students are identified for additional assistance through Tier 2 or strategic intervention. Tier 2

intervention involves more targeted, short-term intervention that is provided in addition to, not in place of, Tier 1 instruction. Tier 2 intervention is delivered in smaller groups and provides additional targeted instruction in skills or concepts from Tier 1 that specific students in the group are having difficulty mastering. Generally, 5-10% of students require this level of intervention in addition to Tier 1 or the core curriculum. Note that this tier generally involves short-term intervention and that students enter and exit based on frequent progress monitoring during this intervention.

    c. Tier 3 – Intensive Intervention

Lack of success based on frequent progress monitoring results while in Tier 2 will result in some students' needing even more intensive intervention in even smaller group sizes, more substantial blocks of time, a more highly trained interventionist, or explicit and systematic targeted instructional materials. This third tier will likely include longer term intervention for students. Generally, only 1-5% of students require Tier 3 intervention if the model is implemented with fidelity.

2. Scientifically Research-based Programs and Strategies

Research has shown that the inclusion of certain elements and strategies in instructional materials increase their impact on student outcomes. These key elements include emphasis on the following:

    a. Systematic, explicit instruction – Research has shown that some skills and concepts must be systematically and explicitly taught by the teacher to students, especially in the areas of reading and language arts. Students cannot be expected to learn these skills and concepts naturally just by being exposed to them. Scientifically research-based programs include systematic and explicit instruction of these skills and concepts to ensure appropriate instruction occurs.

    b. Five essential components of early reading instruction at the PK-3rd grade levels

        i. Phonemic Awareness

        ii. Phonics

        iii. Vocabulary

        iv. Fluency

        v. Comprehension

    c. Ten key instructional components of an effective adolescent literacy program at the 4th –12th grade levels

        i. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction

        ii. Direct, explicit vocabulary instruction

        iii. Effective instructional principles embedded in content

        iv. Motivation and self-directed learning

        v. Text-based collaborative learning

        vi. Strategic tutoring

       vii. Diverse texts
      viii. Intensive writing
        ix. A technology component
         x. Ongoing formative assessment of students

   d. Six infrastructural components required for a strong adolescent literacy program at the 4th- 12th grade levels
         i. Extended time for literacy
        ii. Professional development
      iii. Ongoing summative assessment of student progress and program implementation
      iv. Teacher teams
       v. Leadership
      vi. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program

   e. Key research-based elements of an effective adult education program for literacy

3. Extended time for reading and literacy instruction based on the grade level of the student
   a. Protected, dedicated 90-120 minutes minimum block of time in grades K-3 for instruction in the 5 essential components of early reading instruction
   b. Approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice per day that takes place in language arts and content area classes

4. Ongoing formative and summative assessments to inform instructional decisions regarding the need for and intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of the model

5. High Quality Teachers
   a. Preservice Programs
       i. Review of all preservice teacher preparation programs to ensure alignment to the Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers
      ii. Reading Competencies Assessments for Teachers appropriate to the grade level certification area
   b. Professional Development
       i. Reading/Literacy Coach who meets the qualifications as a Literacy Master teacher placed in every school
      ii. Faculty Study Groups focused on studying student work and data to plan for instruction and intervention on an individual student level
     iii. Annual Teacher Literacy Institutes to build teacher knowledge of key literacy components appropriate to grade level and content area certification and teaching assignment connected to the *Grade-Level Expectations*. Because of the limited capacity within the state, these initial institutes will be

conducted by external consultants during year one of implementation

iv. Quarterly Leadership Academies to build district and school level leadership capacity to develop and support the infrastructure necessary for success of the model

Based on the availability of funding, the LDE staff recommends a pilot of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* in approximately five districts, beginning with the 2006-07 school year. This pilot would require a PK-12 implementation of the model across a group of schools that share a generally common attendance zone within the district. Participating districts would be required to commit to all components of the literacy plan and have the agreement of the school principal and at least 80% of the faculty of each participating school to join in all components of the plan. Competitive priority would be given to schools and districts that have shown success in the implementation of other LDE-sponsored school reform efforts, including Reading First, LINCS, and the Milken TAP program, as well as to districts willing to look at collaboration of district resources, including NCLB and IDEA funds, for the implementation of the model in participating schools. An application for interested districts could be released in April with BESE's approval and with the understanding that implementation for 2006-07 will be dependent on available funding.

The redesign of daily practices in schools begins with the basic foundation of school effectiveness and good instruction, but it cannot stop there; it must go further. Educational leaders must begin to continuously monitor, correct, and integrate their growing knowledge base about teaching all students to read and write well. The vast body of research addressing the teaching of literacy can no longer be ignored. A paradigm shift is required by all those involved in the education of the children of Louisiana — state leaders, district leaders, school leaders, and teachers. This paradigm shift is one based on joint problem-solving, collaborative practice, and collective accountability, engaging all students in purposeful reading and writing. Educational leaders must be prepared to support and unquestionably lead this shift as they begin to think systematically about the teaching and learning of literacy.

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), nationally, approximately two-thirds of 8th and 12th grade students read below the proficient level, and one-quarter are unable to read at the most basic level. For minority students, the figures are even more staggering: almost half of the African American and Latino 8th grade students read below the basic level. NAEP results in Louisiana mirror that of the nation, with only 20% of Louisiana 4th and 8th grade students reading at the proficient level. While this is a slight increase from the 17% of Louisiana 4th and 8th grades who scored proficient in 1998, the year prior to the first full year of accountability, much work remains to be done in this area. In the area of writing, the statistics from the 2002 assessment are lower than those in reading: only 14% of 4th and 18% of 8th grade students scored proficient four years after accountability had begun. This is extremely worrisome for Louisiana, since poor academic achievement is consistently linked with higher suspension and expulsion rates, higher dropout rates, increased entrance into the juvenile justice system, and rising unemployment.

The members of the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) realize it will take a full-scale effort to truly address this issue; they have charged the Louisiana Department of Education with the responsibility of addressing this specific need of the students in Louisiana. With the implementation of the federal Reading First program in Louisiana, a concerted effort is being made to ensure elementary level teachers in Reading First and non-Reading First schools receive the preparation and professional development to implement effective, scientifically based reading research strategies to address the needs of kindergarten through third grade students. In addition, the High School Redesign initiative in the state has placed a focus on the needs of secondary students. Individuals working within these state initiatives realize if they are to capitalize on the gains made through Reading First, they must give attention to literacy in the middle and high school grade levels. With this recognition and a strong commitment to reversing the trend of

low performance in literacy, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Louisiana Department of Education have turned their attention toward the development of this comprehensive plan for literacy development from preschool through adulthood.

LOUISIANA'S CHALLENGE

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) recognizes the significant role each state board plays in making student literacy a priority for all students at all grade levels. Research has documented that as literacy skills improve, student achievement increases, not only in reading and writing but across the entire spectrum of curricula. The NASBE Study Group on Middle and Secondary School Literacy has established a key finding:

> *"State plans must target improving literacy skills by teaching them within the context of core academic subjects, rather than apart from challenging content instruction."*

District and school personnel will be required to "think differently" about the type of instructional services they currently provide to students, including students with disabilities participating in alternate assessments. What has remained unchanged in too many Louisiana middle and high school classrooms is the nature of teaching itself. Although improvement in reading instruction in the early grades has occurred over the past two years, traditional middle and high school instruction stands in marked contrast to what constitutes effective instruction for adolescent learners. Although some pockets of success exist in the state, a huge gap remains between the implementation of proven practices and their adoption by districts, schools, and educators.

School-wide literacy initiatives require sufficient funds to provide schools and teachers with the necessary resources and support to differentiate instruction for students across grades and abilities. To establish a new vision of teaching and learning for all students, schools and districts must reassess current fiscal and instructional practices, identify what is effective, and eliminate what is ineffective. Issues around "adequacy" are not always about how much

money is available, but how the money is being used and distributed. This topic, efficient use of funds, will be part of the professional development provided to district and school leadership.

In addition to the challenge districts and schools have in changing the way resources are utilized, Louisiana also faces a level of uncertainty of resource levels and availability because of the hurricanes of 2005. As a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Louisiana has been faced with the displacement of large numbers of its population, destruction of homes, schools, and businesses, and the loss of much of its economic base. Much uncertainty exists regarding the rate at which the state will rebound both in population size and in economic indicators, both of which affect current and future funding for education in the state. As the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* is implemented, the state, districts, and schools must work together to identify potential funding sources and other resources that can be utilized while not undermining and potentially destroying the significant progress made through the assessment and accountability reforms begun by the state in 1997. While this will be a balancing act for state leaders, it is critical to the continuing progress of the state.

The Current Condition of Literacy in Louisiana

A focus on statistics relevant to Louisiana indicates the state ranks near the bottom of the 50 states in educational quality, effectiveness and dropout rates. Additionally, measures of the wealth and health of its citizens fall well below that of other states. In recent years, Louisiana began the process of promoting pre-kindergarten programs that primarily target the "at-risk," low-income, four-year-old population. These programs are nationally recognized and have grown in scope, size and demand in recent years. The increase in the numbers of four-year-olds served will directly affect the state's progress toward improving the quality of life for all residents. In Louisiana, schools are offering preschool programs through LA4, Starting Points, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title I, 8(g), Even Start, and Head Start funds.

Studies have shown that children who have access to language-rich, early childhood environments are better prepared for later grades and are ready for structured academic settings. Furthermore, these students are more likely to graduate from high school. Data from the current LA4 preschool program documents that these students are less likely to be referred for special education services or retained as they progress through school. These students usually do not need remedial instruction and tend to learn positive behavior skills, resulting in fewer suspensions or expulsions from school in later grades. With more than 65% of mothers now in the workforce, children have a greater need for access to high quality programs that will provide them with appropriate receptive and expressive language models and social skills. A strong relationship of literacy success has been reported for students who are enrolled in LA4 preschool programs and then go on to participate in Louisiana's Reading First schools (Reading First 2005 evaluation).

The first full year of implementation of the scientifically based reading research strategies recommended in the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) and supported by the federal Reading First grant program occurred in Louisiana during the 2004 – 2005 school year. Much work is needed before all Louisiana students are reading on grade level by the end of third grade, but the results of the first year of implementation show great promise. Generally, more children are reading at benchmark at the end of the year than were at the beginning. Furthermore, evaluation data indicates that Reading First kindergarteners (low performing and high poverty) outperformed non-Reading First kindergarteners in the first year. While a few similarities exist between first, second, and third grade Reading First and non-Reading First students, performance differences between these groups is potentially meaningful, given the significantly greater proportion of black and/or economically disadvantaged students in Reading First schools. With these efforts, Louisiana will be able to address "closing the gap" between the higher risk students and the higher performing students. Table 1 documents the spring 2005 student performance of

Reading First and Non-Reading First students in kindergarten through third grade.

Based on the evaluation report from The Center for Child Development at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, a significant difference in Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills scores was found for students who had also participated in LA4 prekindergarten programs. There were five to ten percent more students on benchmark when compared to non- LA4 kindergarten or first grade participants who were in Reading First schools. This indicates that the combination of the LA4 and Reading First programs has a more positive impact on student achievement than the two programs have independently.

Table 1: Spring 2005 Student Performance of Reading First and Non-Reading First Students*

Kindergarten Phoneme Segmentation Fluency Performance	Percent Established	Percent Emerging	Percent Deficient
Reading First Students	72	17	11
Non Reading First	48	30	22
First Grade Oral Reading Fluency Performance	**Percent Established**	**Percent Emerging**	**Percent Deficit**
Reading First Students	48	29	23
Non Reading First	48	27	25
Second Grade Oral Reading Fluency Performance	**Percent Established**	**Percent Emerging**	**Percent Deficit**
Reading First Students	35	24	41
Non Reading First	35	23	42
Third Grade Oral Reading Fluency Performance	**Percent Established**	**Percent Emerging**	**Percent Deficit**
Reading First Students	32	35	32
Non Reading First	30	36	34

* Center for Child Development University of Louisiana at Lafayette

While it is too early to determine if Reading First is having an effect on The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) test results, we do have extensive data since the implementation of these assessments that reveal a minimally positive trend in performance at the third and fourth grades in the area of reading and language arts.

This data demonstrate that although gains have been made in vocabulary development and reading comprehension as measured at the third grade level through The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, these gains at the third grade level are not resulting in demonstrably higher levels of performance at the fourth grade level on the English Language Arts subtest of the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program.
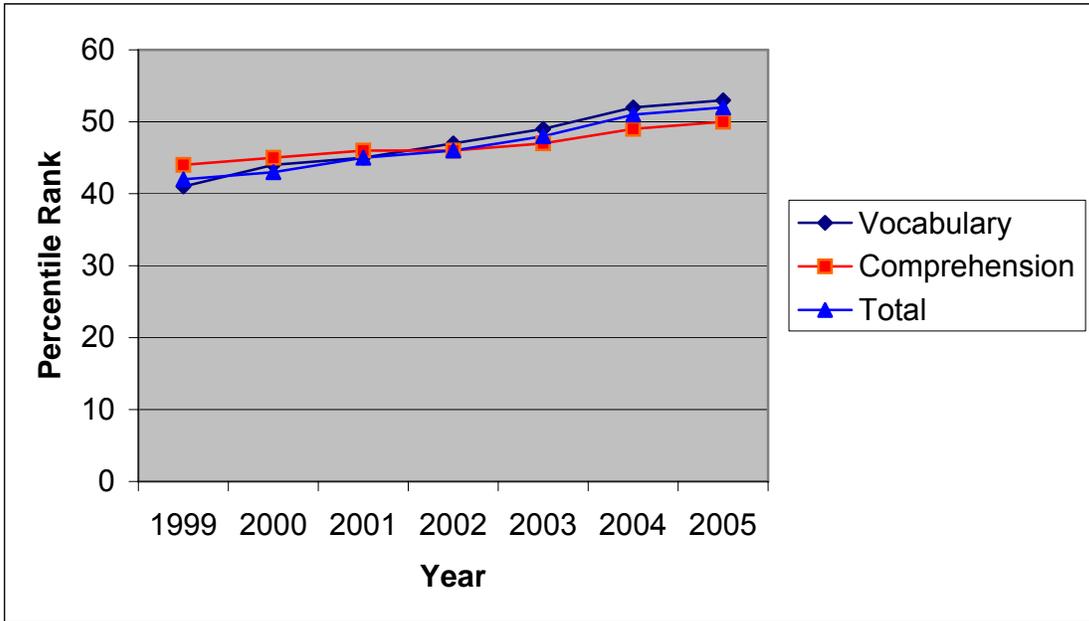
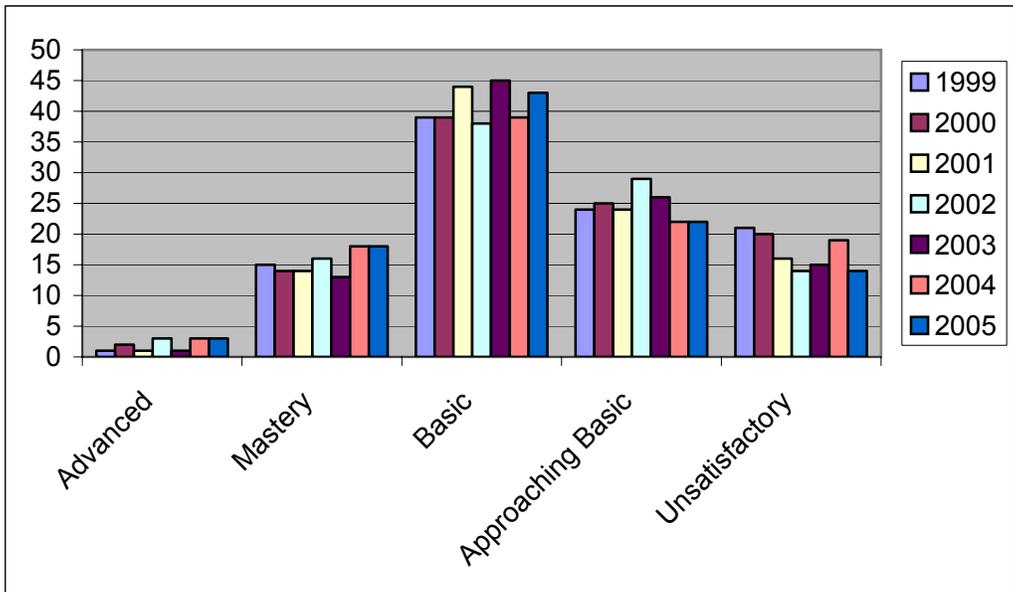Figure 1: Third Grade - Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

Figure 2: Fourth Grade - Louisiana Educational Assessment Program

Research documents that children who have not developed foundational reading abilities by approximately nine years of age are highly likely to struggle with reading throughout their years of schooling, if not the rest of their lives, and may never read efficiently enough to acquire information or to simply read for pleasure. Unless Louisiana ensures that the findings of the National Reading Panel are implemented with integrity and commitment in elementary schools across the state and that every child learns to read on grade level by the end of third grade, the current literacy levels in the state will not improve.

A review of the performance trends for grades 5 through 7 on The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills from 1999 to 2005 indicates the slight gains shown at grade 5 in vocabulary and comprehension have not extended through grades 6 and 7. Instead, the trend in sixth grade shows a significant decline and then a gradual improvement and leveling off in both vocabulary and comprehension. By seventh grade, the trend was more level.
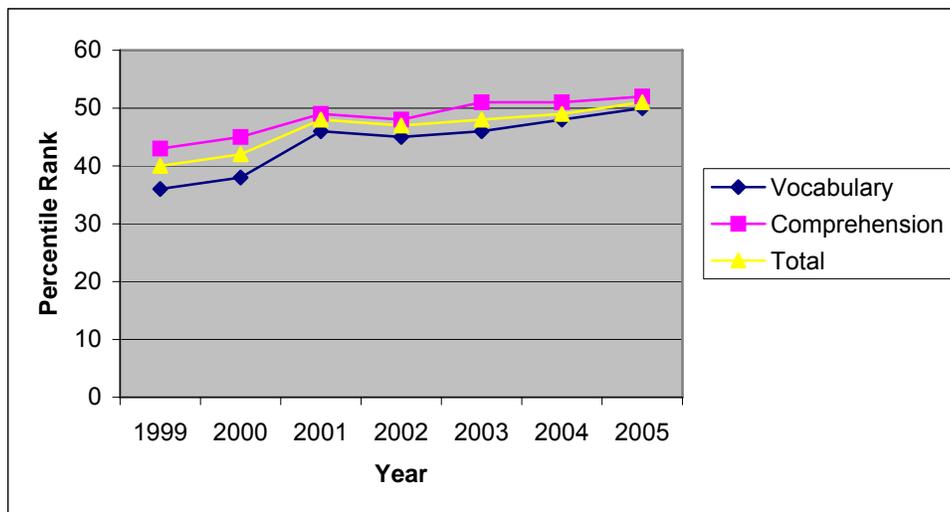
Figure 3: Fifth Grade - Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
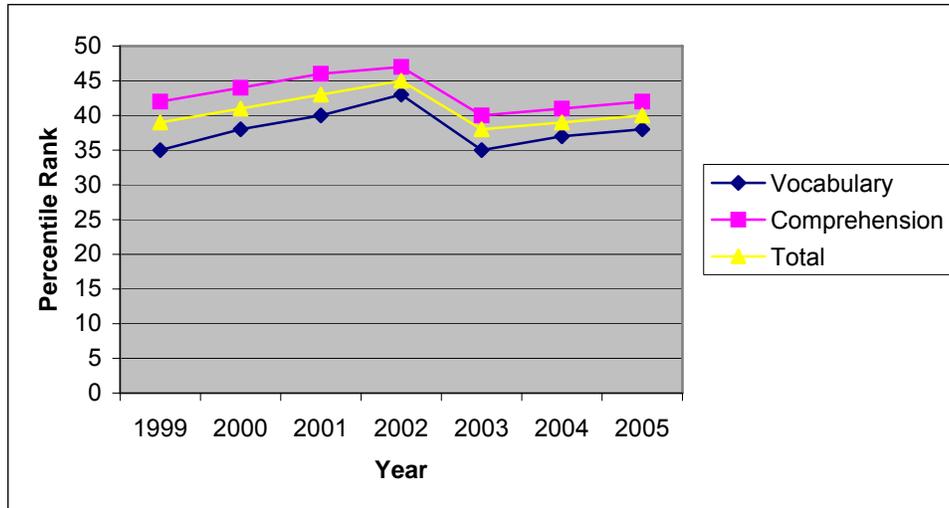
Figure 4: Sixth Grade – Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
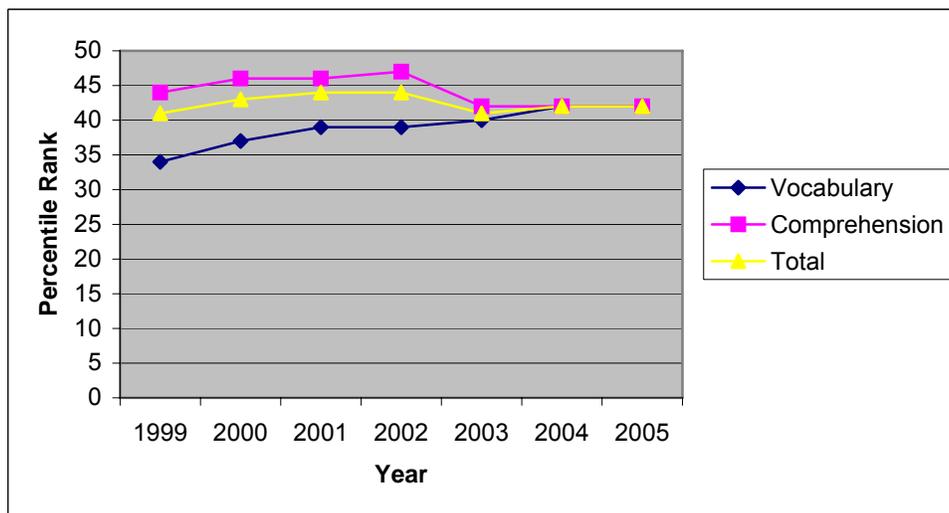
Figure 5: Seventh grade – Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

Additionally, the spring 2005 LEAP results indicate that eighth grade students did not fare as well as fourth grade students on the LEAP English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. While it is true that 50 percent of eighth grade students are performing at the basic or higher achievement levels, these same students' performance lags behind their fourth grade counterparts by 14 percent. This clearly raises a concern as to whether the current instruction in the areas of ELA and reading in the middle grades in Louisiana is providing students with the explicit and systematic instruction in vocabulary and comprehension they need to

meet the standards set by the state. The instructional needs of these adolescent learners enrolled in the middle grades must be addressed so gains earned in kindergarten through fourth grades will continue in those upper levels.
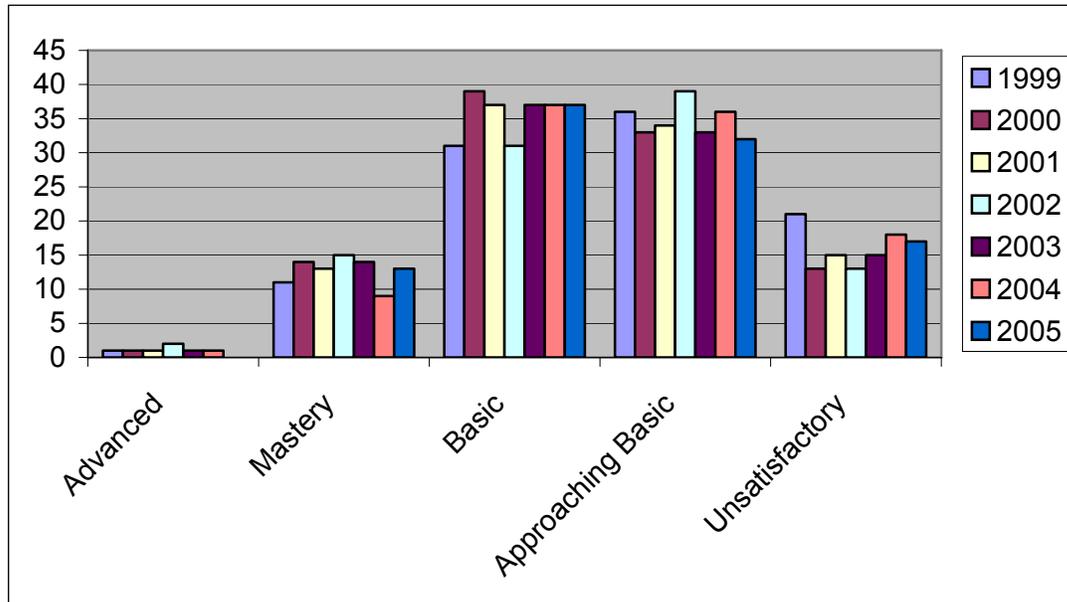
Figure 6: Eighth Grade – Louisiana Educational Assessment Program

In addition, current data documents that 43.7 percent of students scoring unsatisfactory in ELA and Math on the eighth grade LEAP assessments will likely drop out of high school sometime during the next four years, compared to 6.6 percent who score basic in both areas. In Louisiana, a total of 8.26% of students never attempt the rigor of high school; instead, they drop out of middle school (Division of Planning, Analysis and Information Resources, Student Information System [SIS]). In large urban areas of the state, 3.37% of middle grade students are dropping out; smaller city schools are losing about 3.11% of their students.

At the high school level, the trend in comprehension at the 9th grade level on The Iowa Tests of Educational Development has also shown a sharp decline with a minimal increase over the last two years. In contrast, vocabulary scores reflect a very slight positive trend over the past four years. While the most recent data shows that some progress is being made, the trajectory for this progress is too slow to meet the aggressive targets the Louisiana Department of Education has

set for itself and its schools. In addition, continuing performance at this level will steer many Louisiana residents to low wage, unskilled positions and will make economic development a difficult challenge for the state.
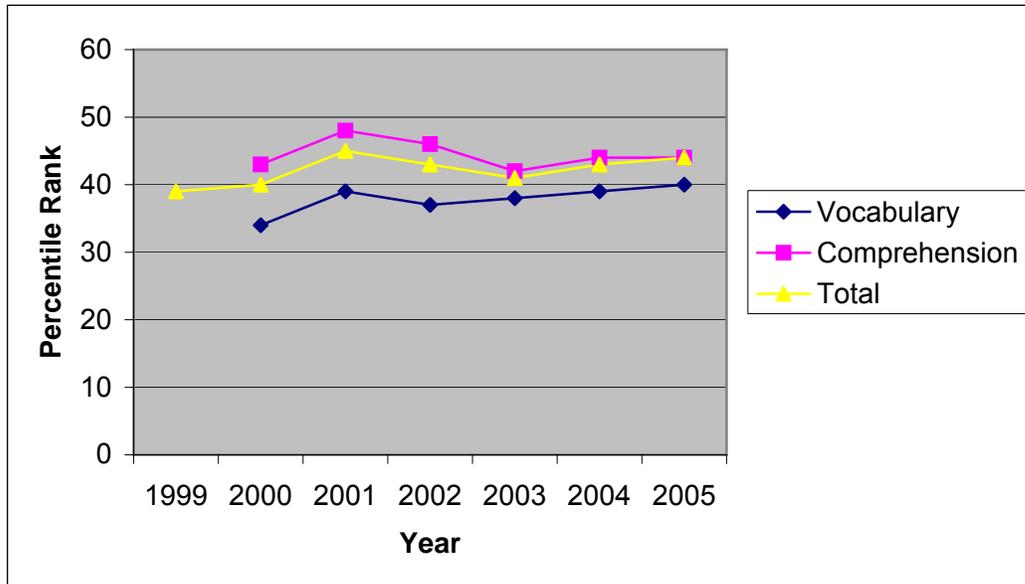
Figure 7: Ninth Grade – The Iowa Tests of Educational Development

On Louisiana's Graduation Exit Exam, it is clear that student performance is gradually improving over time. The percent of students scoring *Basic* or higher has increased from 56% in 2001 to 61% in 2005. In fact, 84% are meeting the requirements for graduation by scoring *Approaching Basic* or above.

While Louisiana has, for the most part, seen steady gains on its promotional and graduation assessments since their inception, it is clear these gains are not adequate to ensure the preparation of Louisiana's youth for the workplace. This does not even consider those students who drop out of school before they reach high school. A significant transformation of the day-to-day practice of elementary schools must occur if Louisiana is to achieve success in developing the basic early reading skills necessary for success in later grades. Otherwise, the problem of inadequately prepared students will be exacerbated at the middle and high school levels. Furthermore, inaction will continue to lead to middle and high school students who are poor readers being "left behind" as they continue through and attempt to move into the workplace. Many will lack sufficient skills for employment and will find themselves needing the services of

adult education just to ensure their employability in low wage positions.   The *Louisiana Literacy Plan* is designed with the intent of meeting these challenges aggressively and addressing them consistently statewide.
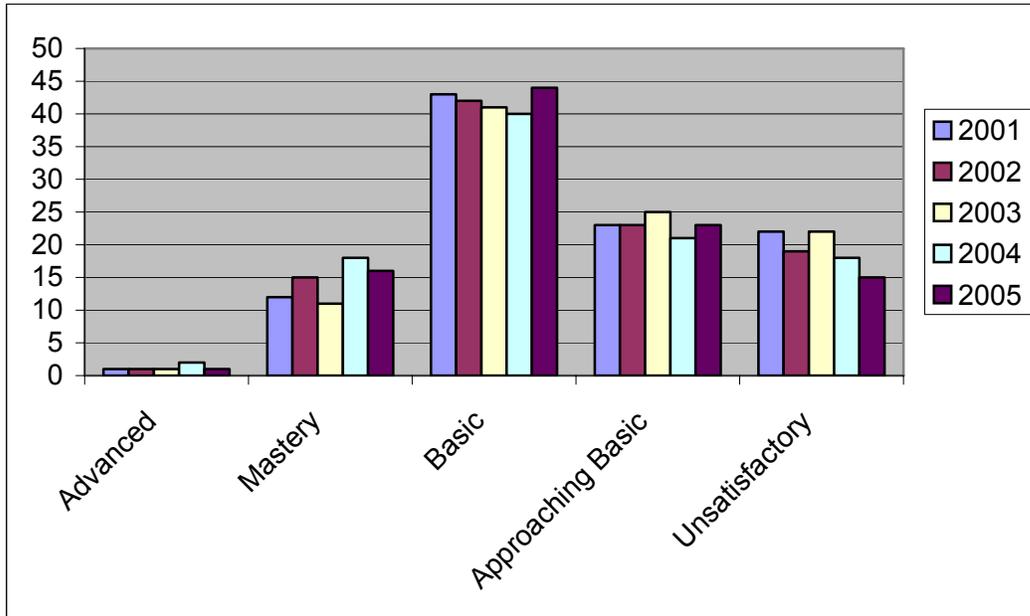
Figure 8: Tenth Grade – Graduation Exit Exam

Adult Education:

Several indicators echo the need to educate adult learners to build highly skilled and prepared adults that are self-sufficient.   Louisiana ranks second highest in rate of poverty in the nation, behind only Mississippi.   The 2000 census data indicate nearly 600,000 adults 25 years of age and older in Louisiana do not have a high school diploma.   Of this population, 137,000 have less than a ninth grade education.   Adult education and literacy programs are cornerstones of workforce development in a state where nearly 600,000 adults lack the basic literacy skills to compete in a high-skills work environment.

Encouraging adults who have either dropped out of school or who failed to gain the necessary skills for successful employment while in school is a difficult task.   While enrollment data from Louisiana's Adult Education Program for the 2004-2005 project year indicates some strides have been made in serving adults in need of education and literacy services, the number served represents less

than 5% of the population in need of literacy services to improve their educational functioning level. A total of 47,131 students were served in 2004-2005, and of that enrollment, only 31,125 students were reported in the National Reporting System for Adult Education because they attended for 12 or more hours.

The enrollment trends indicate the age of participants ranges from 16 to 45 years or older, with students 16 to 24 years of age comprising 56% of the total enrollment. Analyses of the participants' functional levels document that 82% of the students enter the program below a ninth grade educational functioning level, while 51% (14,192 individuals) enter the program below a sixth grade educational functioning level. These individuals have been failed by the K-12 educational system and will face an uphill battle overcoming these deficits as adults.

Behavior: As the research clearly indicates, effective academic success for students is not possible when there are significant behavioral challenges occurring within a school or classroom (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2005). Louisiana teachers are facing many of these kinds of challenges that inevitably impede the effective delivery of high quality instruction. According to a 2003 survey from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 19% of school officials reported that physical conflicts among 4th grade students were a moderate or serious problem. The percentage of school officials that indicated this issue among eighth grade students was a moderate or serious problem rose to 26%. Even more alarming, 44 % of school officials reported that classroom misbehavior was a moderate or serious problem among the 8th grade students. These statistics demonstrate, quite effectively, the concern that Louisiana school officials have regarding the issues of classroom misbehavior and physical conflicts and the prevalence in their schools.

Information obtained from the Louisiana Student Information System (SIS) indicates a growing trend in the number of suspensions and expulsions across Louisiana's schools. From the 1999-2000 school year through the 2003-2004 school year, the number of student suspensions (both in-school and out-of-

school) rose from approximately 230,000 to almost 300,000. During this time, the number of out-of-school suspensions increased more than the in-school suspensions, resulting in more children missing more days of instruction. This movement toward more time spent out of the classroom setting because of suspension or expulsion indicates that current discipline models do not accomplish the goal of reducing the number of behavioral incidents, nor do they support plans to improve student achievement. Clearly, students cannot learn if they are not in school; therefore, Louisiana must work through its Model Master Plan for Discipline to improve these critical areas if academic programs and interventions are to be successful.

The Louisiana Department of Education currently supports School-Wide Positive Behavior Support, which is a three-tier intervention model addressing the area of behavior. It is currently being implemented in elementary and middle schools across the state, with varying degrees of success, depending upon the fidelity of implementation of the processes and procedures at the school level.

VISION, MISSION and OVERARCHING GOAL

VISION

Literacy For ALL Learners Is Achievable.

MISSION

The mission of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* is to significantly improve literacy instruction by creating positive teaching and learning environments and by using research-based strategies for students in preschool through twelfth grade and beyond, resulting in all students performing at or above grade level.

OVERARCHING GOAL

The overarching goal of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* is to enhance literacy of preschool children through adults. Literacy includes an individual's ability to read, write, speak, view (comprehend and interpret visual input), and listen in English at levels of proficiency necessary to function in the family, in society and on the job.

OBJECTIVES

K –12 Students

1. Increase the percent of students with and without disabilities participating in the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills scoring At Low Risk of reading difficulties by 10% each year from the 2006 spring baseline.

School Years	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Kindergarten (PSF)	57% (baseline)	67% (established)	77% (established)	87% (established)	97% (established)	97% (established)
First Grade (ORF)	48% (baseline)	58% (established)	68% (established)	78% (established)	88% (established)	97% (established)
Second Grade (ORF)	35% (baseline)	45% (established)	55% (established)	65% (established)	75% (established)	85% (established)
Third Grade (ORF)	31% (baseline)	41% (established)	51% (established)	61% (established)	71% (established)	81% (established)

2. Increase the percent of students with and without disabilities participating in general statewide assessments, scoring basic and above on *i*LEAP and LEAP in the English Language Arts to ensure each grade level is at 100% proficiency by 2013-14.

School Years	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (NCLB Target
Third Grade (*i*LEAP)	NA	Baseline TBE								100%
Fourth Grade (LEAP)	64% (baseline)	64%	65%	66%	66%	67%	68.4%	78.9%	89.4%	100%
Fifth Grade (*i*LEAP)	NA	Baseline TBE								100%
Sixth Grade (*i*LEAP)	NA	Baseline TBE								100%
Seventh Grade (*i*LEAP)	NA	Baseline TBE								100%
Eighth Grade (*i*LEAP)	50% (baseline)	52.6%	55.2%	57.9%	61.4%	64.9%	68.4%	78.9%	89.4%	100%
Ninth Grade (*i*LEAP)	NA	Baseline TBE								100%
Tenth Grade (*GEE*)	61% (baseline)	62.2%	63.4%	64.6%	65.8%	67%	68.4%	78.9%	89.4%	100%

* These numbers are based on the results of student performance on the Louisiana LEAP and *i*LEAP in the area of ELA.

3. Increase the percent of students completing high school with regular high school diploma by 5% each year from the 2006 spring baseline as measured by the state accountability report card.

School years	2005/ 2006 Baseline	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014
High School Graduates	TBE								

Adult Education Students

4. Enroll a minimum of 5% of the undereducated adult population in each parish within the state in adult education classes.

5. Adult education programs will meet or exceed the Louisiana benchmarks of performance, as approved by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (USDOE/OVAE) for FY 2005-2006. Programs must meet the benchmarks of performance for students increasing their educational functioning levels upon entry as outlined in the following chart:

Beginning Literacy ABE	41%
Beginning ABE	44%
Low Intermediate ABE	44%
High Intermediate ABE	46%
Low ASE	53%
High ASE	53%
Beginning Literacy ESL	33%
Beginning Basic ESL	29%
Low Intermediate ESL	40%
High Intermediate ESL	40%
Low Advanced ESL	30%
High Advanced ESL	16%

Note: National Reporting System for Adult Education policies require local adult education programs to assess and place students at an educational functioning level (EFL) upon intake and at least one other time during the program year to measure student level and growth. Percentages are based upon the number of students who are at an EFL at the beginning of the year or upon entry into the adult education program. These targets are negotiated annually with USDOE.
ABE = Adult Basic Education   ESL = English as a Second Language

6. Adult education programs must meet or exceed the other core measures for adult education for FY 2005-2006. These measures are related to GED completion/high school completion, employment, or postsecondary education, and are outlined in the following chart:

Further Education/Training	48%
Entered Employment	58%
Retained Employment	63%
GED/High School Completion	55%

Note: National Reporting System for Adult Education policies require that these measures only be applied to students who have set this as an active goal while enrolled in an adult education program.

Teachers

1. 100% of BESE-approved teacher preparation programs (excluding Practitioner Teacher Programs) will address the required Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers by the end of the 2006-07 academic year.

2. 100% of teachers entering teacher preparation programs in Louisiana after August 1, 2007, will demonstrate mastery of the Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers through passage of a teacher competency assessment appropriate to their grade level and content certification area.

3. By the end of 2010-11, 100% of Louisiana teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs prior to August 1, 2008, will demonstrate mastery of the Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers appropriate to their grade level and content certification area through participation in state-approved professional development programs.

4. The percent of teachers holding a Literacy Master Teacher certification will increase by 20% each year, beginning with a target of 200 Literacy Master Teachers by the end of the 2008-09 school year. (This is a new area of certification, which will not be available to teachers until the 2008 – 2009 school year.)

Consideration is also being given to an add-on for teaching in adult education literacy programs. This is to be developed in the future.

Required Components of the Instructional Program

Based on our experience with the federal Reading First program and a review of the research literature on adolescent learning, Louisiana has identified the following key instructional components for a scientifically research-based instructional program in reading and literacy. Schools and districts in Louisiana will implement these components as the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* is implemented in the state. All effective literacy and reading programs must include the following components regardless of the grade level of the students:

Designing School-Wide Systems for Student Success

Academic Systems		Behavioral Systems
Intensive, Individual Interventions •Individual Students •Assessment-based •High Intensity	← 1-5% 1-5% →	**Intensive, Individual Interventions** •Individual Students •Assessment-based •Intense, durable procedures
Targeted Group Interventions •Some students (at-risk) •High efficiency •Rapid response	← 5-10% 5-10% →	**Targeted Group Interventions** •Some students (at-risk) •High efficiency •Rapid response
Universal Interventions •All students •Preventive, proactive	← 80-90% 80-90% →	**Universal Interventions** •All settings, all students •Preventive, proactive

Diagram 1

1. Three-Tiered Instruction Model

The foundation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* is the three-tiered intervention model that has been identified by researchers in the areas of reading, mathematics, and positive behavior support. Essential components of the model include multiple tiers of instruction and intervention, Diagram 1 (Sugai & Horner, 2002), a problem-solving method, and an integrated data collection/assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of instruction/intervention. The three-tier model is currently being used in the implementation of Reading First in Louisiana

and has been very successful in the schools participating in that program. The model incorporates increasing intensities of instruction that are provided to students in direct proportion to their individual needs. Embedded in each tier is a set of unique support structures or activities that help teachers implement research-based curriculum and instructional practices at levels of fidelity that are designed to improve student achievement.

- ○ Tier I consists of the core curriculum in which screening for difficulties and group interventions occur. In Louisiana, the *Grade-Level Expectations* and the *Comprehensive Curriculum* comprise the core curriculum for all students at each grade level. This core curriculum should be taught to all students through the use of instructional materials, including textbooks aligned to the GLEs and based on strategies supported by research. While specific literacy classes are important, literacy across the content areas plays an equally important role in the middle and high school grades when addressing students' mastery of literacy skills. Tier I includes support for teachers to help them deliver the curriculum to all learners. Effective teachers use instructional strategies that are evidenced-based and are able to match students' prerequisite skills with the course content to create an appropriate instructional match. All students are involved in this tier of intervention, and if this tier is implemented with fidelity at the classroom level, 80-90% of students will not need Tier 2 or 3 instruction. While all students are involved in this tier of intervention, or core program, instruction does not generally occur in a whole group or whole class format and frequently involves within class grouping by the teacher.
- ○ Tier 2 provides more targeted, short-term, and strategic interventions through supplemental instruction to those students who, based on progress monitoring data, display poor response to the core instruction in Tier I. Tier 2 intervention is delivered in smaller groups and provides additional targeted instruction in skills or concepts from Tier 1 that specific students in the group are having difficulty mastering. These interventions,

which focus on high efficiency and rapid response, may include additional supports and can be developed through a problem-solving process by the teacher, interventionist, and literacy coach. Generally, 5-10% of students require this level of intervention in addition to Tier 1 or the core curriculum. Noted, this tier generally involves short-term intervention, and students enter and exit based upon frequent progress monitoring during this intervention.

- ○ <u>Tier 3</u> provides intensive instructional interventions to increase an individual student's rate of progress. More intensive interventions can be provided for students who, based on frequent progress monitoring, are found not to be making satisfactory progress with the combination of Tier I instruction and Tier 2 intervention. In this tier, more diagnostic assessments are needed to identify specific patterns of skills the student lacks. The third tier will likely include a longer term of intervention. Students at this level may require ongoing, intensive instruction delivered in more substantial blocks of time to help them catch up with their peers. While this intervention is more long-term and intensive, it occurs in addition to the core curriculum provided in Tier 1. Most importantly, students must experience a positive impact early in their school career to reduce the upper grade-level dropout rate.

2. **Ongoing Formative Assessment of Students**

Ongoing assessment of student performance on critical literacy skills is an essential aspect of the system. Universal screening and progress monitoring data are used to inform instruction to identify the appropriate intervention for each student in a timely fashion. In this way, a student's response to research-based teaching and intervention strategies is used as basic data on which decisions are made.   The data-driven nature of this model provides for the movement of students into and out of the tiers of intervention on an individualized and as needed basis. Students are regularly assessed or progress monitored to

determine their need for additional intervention and to determine if they are ready to exit the intervention based on improved performance.

An integrated data collection/assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of intervention is an essential element of determining a student's response to intervention. In general, response to intervention is based on a behavioral tradition of assessment of academic skills and behavioral performance. The selected assessments should be

- curriculum-based and linked to the *Grade-Level Expectations*;
- administered repeatedly using multiple forms;
- sensitive to small increments of growth over time;
- administered efficiently over short periods of time to monitor students' progress;
- readily summarized in teacher-friendly data displays; and
- directly relevant to the development of instructional strategies that address the areas of need.

In Louisiana, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, DIBELS, has been adopted as the progress monitoring instrument in grades K-3 for Reading First schools and is also in use in a number of non-Reading First schools in the state. To implement the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*, appropriate research-based progress monitoring assessments for the middle and high school grade levels must be identified. The timelines for identifying these specific assessments is the summer of 2006.

3. **Systematic, Explicit Instruction**

Research has shown that some skills and concepts must be systematically and explicitly taught by the teacher to students, especially in the areas of reading and language arts, and that students cannot be expected to learn these skills and concepts naturally just by being exposed to them. Scientifically research-based programs include systematic and explicit instruction of these skills and concepts to ensure appropriate instruction occurs. Systematic, explicit instruction involves the planned and intentional teaching of

the strategies that proficient readers use to decode text, gain word meaning, and understand text.

4. **<u>Scientifically Research-based Programs and Strategies</u>**

Programs that meet the criteria of being scientifically research-based clearly include systematic and explicit instruction in each of the essential instructional components of reading or literacy based on the grade level being addressed. These programs and strategies will address the appropriate skills and concepts for learners based on their grade level and instructional level.

GRADE-SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

In addition to these overarching instructional components, other specific instructional components should also be included, depending on the grade levels being addressed in the school. At the elementary level, the report of the National Reading Panel (2000) identified 5 essential components of early reading instruction. These components are as follows:

1. **<u>Phonemic Awareness</u>** is defined by the National Research Council (1998) as the insight that every spoken word can be conceived as a sequence of phonemes. Phonemic awareness tasks include:

   - Phoneme deletion – What word would be left if the /k/ sound were taken away from cat?
   - Word to word matching – Do pen and pipe begin with the same sound?
   - Blending – What word would we have if we blended these sounds together: /m/ /o/ /p/?
   - Phoneme segmentation – What sounds do you hear in the word *hot*?
   - Phoneme counting – How many sounds do you hear in the word *cake*?
   - Rhyming – Tell me all of the words that you know that rhyme with the word *cat*?

2. **<u>Phonics</u>** is defined by the National Research Council (1998) as the instructional practices that emphasize how spellings are related to speech

sounds in systematic ways. Phonics includes both the system by which alphabetic writing represents speech and the strategy children employ to sound words out.

3. **Fluency** is defined as the speed and accuracy with which a reader reads. Fluency instruction should include repeated and monitored oral reading that improves reading fluency and overall achievement. Repeated oral reading substantially improves word recognition, speed, and accuracy.

4. **Vocabulary Development** is an important prerequisite for reading comprehension. Research indicates that students who have a larger vocabulary base find it easier to comprehend text. This does not imply that vocabulary instruction *per se* increases comprehension. Rather, it means that effective vocabulary instruction must precede comprehension instruction in order to build a foundation (i.e., vocabulary) on which the child may rely to extract meaning from the text (i.e., comprehension). This important connection is often not made by classroom teachers.

5. **Reading Comprehension** involves the use of oral language skills, including the shared basic language components (lexical, syntactic, and interpretive processes), cognitive mechanism (working memory), and conceptual knowledge (vocabulary, topic knowledge). Effective reading comprehension applies previously acquired reading skills from the other four essential components, so any deficits in skill acquisition at this point will greatly affect reading comprehension.

At the adolescent level, the Alliance for Excellent Education produced the Reading Next report, outlining fifteen key elements of effective adolescent literacy programs. The key instructional elements of an effective adolescent literacy program are as follows:

1. **Direct, explicit comprehension instruction** – instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read, including summarizing, keeping track of one's own understanding, and a host of other practices;

2. **<u>Effective instructional principles embedded in content</u>** – language arts teachers using content-area texts and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area;

3. **<u>Motivation and self-directed learning</u>** – building motivation to read and learn and providing students with the instruction and supports needed for independent learning tasks they will face after graduation;

4. **<u>Text-based collaborative learning</u>** – students interacting with one another around a variety of texts;

5. **<u>Strategic tutoring</u>** – providing students with intense individualized reading, writing, and content instruction as needed;

6. **<u>Diverse texts</u>** – texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics;

7. **<u>Intensive writing</u>** – instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform well in high school and beyond;

8. **<u>A technology component</u>** – technology included as a tool for and a topic of literacy instruction;

9. **<u>Ongoing formative assessment of students</u>** – an informal, often daily assessment of how students are progressing under current instructional practices.

During work on this plan, The Education Trust staff recommended the inclusion of another key instructional element in an effective adolescent literacy program for Louisiana. This additional element is vocabulary development, which includes the learning of technical and content specific vocabulary critical for success in high school and beyond.

In addition to the above components identified by the Alliance for Excellent Education, some additional facets for an effective instructional program at the middle and high school levels are necessary. Research reveals that students entering high school below grade level are more likely to be retained in the ninth grade and are more prone to drop out of high school. Because of the elevated state dropout rate, the Louisiana Department of Education established an Early

Warning System: The Louisiana Secondary Transitions Project. Through the Louisiana High School Redesign Commission, the Department plans to create a set of policies and programs to form a "safety net" that would prevent students from dropping out of school before they receive a high school diploma. These will include strategies that will be part of an "early warning system" using performance of *Below Basic* in ELA as the initial indicator to prevent students from dropping out of school. For example, Louisiana's eighth grade high stakes testing policy has resulted in an increase in eighth grade student retention; this resulted in a careful analysis of the data, which brought to light the academic deficiencies that would normally not be evident until high school. As a result, the Department of Education's safety net must span the middle school years.

The Department of Education's plan will incorporate at least two major components:

(1) Utilize Louisiana's current advanced unit record data system to build an Early Warning System that would signal 7th – 9th grade teachers, counselors, parents and administrators that students need extra help. Several independent initiatives are in place through which a student can plan and monitor his or her progress from middle school through postsecondary education and into the workforce.

(2) For students who are significantly behind, a set of intervention programs and courses will be developed or identified, and teacher training will be developed. These courses will not be traditional remedial courses; instead, they will double the amount of math and reading instruction, incorporate systematic and highly structured curricula and teaching strategies, including highly motivational materials and activities of interest to teenagers, and make vigorous use of diagnostic assessments so that instruction is targeted to the specific needs of the student. The aim is begin with the seventh grade and accelerate learning so students may catch up and be prepared to enter college-prep coursework as early as the second semester of ninth grade. This additional support would be delivered in Tiers 2 and 3 of the instructional model at the middle and high school levels.

In the area of Adult Education, much research has been conducted regarding adult learners, learning theory, and literacy.   The following research-based practices will be implemented as part of the Louisiana Literacy Plan:

1. **Adult Learners & Learning Theory**

"Education for adults is as old as Aristotle and as new as tomorrow's newspaper" (Cross, 1991). **Andragogy** is the term most widely associated with adult education and was coined by Malcolm S. Knowles.   Knowles defines **andragogy** as the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 15). In expanding Knowles' theory of **andragogy,** Cross (1981) offers the concept of *The Learning Society*, which demonstrates the intricate nature of adult education. Cross describes *The Learning Society* as the spread of education to all people in the society and into multiple organizations of society, and offers three categories of adult learners, which include:

- Participants in organized learning activities;
- Participants in self-directed learning activities; and
- Participants in adult learning for academic credit.

Consistent with the theory of **andragogy** are the basic characteristics of adult learners. Adult learners attend classes because they want to learn; as they attend class, they bring life experiences to the learning environment. Characteristics associated with adult learners include their voluntary attendance often because of a life-changing event, their need for a comfortable learning environment, and their ability to stay on task. Adult learners also are likely to come from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, have different levels and styles of learning, and want to maintain control over their learning experience (Brady & Lampert, 2004).

2. **Literacy**

Literacy must be "viewed as a complex phenomenon – as cultural practice laden with meanings created and interpreted by the individuals involved" (Wikelund, Reder & Hart-Landsberg, 1992, p. 3). The research from

Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy, a report to Carnegie Corporation (2004), further supports this view of literacy. Literacy skills for adults are important both at work and in home life. In addition, changes in their literacy practices are often reflective of life transitions. As those changes occur, new strategies and approaches to meet the needs of adult learners must be developed; to do so, the interrelationship of literacy development and social transitions of adults must be recognized and understood (Wikelund, Reder, & Hart-Landsberg, 1992).

Some researchers believe disconnects can exist between the content of literacy programs and the student's everyday experiences with reading and writing. Alisa Belzer (2002) hypothesized that these disconnects carry over into adulthood and have negative influences toward reading which hinder opportunities for adults to improve literacy skills. She studied the contrasts between educational experiences and expectations of adult learners and the values, goals, and assumptions of the adult education program in which they participate. Belzer discovered that participants in GED programs typically carry powerful negative messages from youth and adolescence into adulthood. She also found that participants labeled themselves as illiterate, but evidence proved that participants were literate on some level. The adult learners' idea of being illiterate was attributed to a discrepancy in the participant's definition of literacy, which was inconsistent with the definition of literacy among educators (Belzer). For these reasons, educators must clearly articulate the content of literacy programs and acknowledge the literacy skills that adult learners possess.

Because of the tasks and demands that adults face, they must possess basic literacy skills in order to function in today's society. The ability to communicate effectively is essential to job performance in today's society. When communication skills are absent, it is difficult for the individual to function in all aspects of life; therefore, adult education and literacy programs in Louisiana must address the unique needs of these learners and prepare

these individuals for the work place and for postsecondary education opportunities.

In 2002, the National Center for Education Statistics issued the third edition of *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey*. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) was conducted in 1992 as a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by Educational Testing Service, in collaboration with Westat, Inc. The definition of literacy for the purposes of NALS took a different and more comprehensive approach. The aim of the NALS survey was to profile the English literacy skills of adults in the United States based on their performance across a wide array of tasks that reflect the types of materials and demands adults encounter in their daily lives.

In the proceedings of the third edition of *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey,* it was stated that literacy among adults and job-seekers requires a number of skills to accomplish many tasks. Expressing literacy proficiencies of adults in school-based terms or grade-level scores is inappropriate. Literacy is neither a single skill suited to all types of texts nor an infinite number of skills, each associated with a given type of text or material. NALS did not define literacy as it was used the previous surveys, but developed three scales to gauge literacy abilities among adults, including the following:

- **Prose literacy** — the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction, e.g., finding a piece of information in a newspaper article, interpreting instructions from a warranty, inferring a theme from a poem, or contrasting views expressed in an editorial.

- **Document literacy** — the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in materials that include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and graphs, e.g., locating a particular intersection on a street map,

using a schedule to choose the appropriate bus, or entering information on an application form.

- **Quantitative literacy** — the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, using numbers embedded in printed materials, e.g., balancing a checkbook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form, or determining the amount of interest from a loan advertisement (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins & Kolstad, 2002).

3. <u>**Group Instruction**</u>

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) issued *Classroom Dynamics in Adult Education*, which was a qualitative study of 20 adult literacy education classes and interviews with teachers. The study examined many characteristics of adult education classrooms, including the following:

- Location: urban, rural, suburban;
- Skill level of students: beginning, intermediate, GED level;
- Institutional sponsorship: public school, community college, community-based organization;
- Program type: basic literacy, workplace literacy, family literacy, welfare-sponsored classes;
- Instruction type: group-based, individualized, blend; and
- Class size: small (1–8 learners), medium (9–14 learners), large (15 or more learners).

The *Classroom Dynamics in Adult Education* study found that the lesson was the basic unit for the content and structure of instruction and that the most commonly expressed intention of instructors was to meet adult learner needs. Also noted were generally two types of instruction:

- *Discrete skills instruction*, characterized by teacher-prepared and teacher-delivered lessons focusing on conveyance of factual information and learners' literal recall; and

- *Meaning instruction*, characterized by a focus on problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and social awareness in addition to basic skills.

The *Classroom Dynamics in Adult Education* study affirmed the need for using discussions in the adult learner classroom as a venue to interact with other learners to develop important group dynamics skills, such as knowing when to assert or defer and when to speak or listen. However, researchers acknowledge that discussions are rarely used in classroom instruction. The importance of community within the classroom was also noted in the finding of the *Classroom Dynamics in Adult Education* study. Elements of community that should be present in adult learning environments include learners collaborating with learners, teacher support for a community environment, and inclusion.

Additionally, the *Classroom Dynamics in Adult Education* study also found that instruction is the most fundamental process of adult literacy education, and the classroom is the most basic organizational unit. The quality of adult literacy must focus on instruction and classroom behavior. When all means of improving instruction quality are considered, professional development stands out as the most important factor in improving the quality of adult literacy instruction. Well-planned professional development systems are vital for advancing the practice of adult education and literacy (Heder & Medina, 2001).

4. **Reading Instruction Research-Based Principles**

The Reading Research Working Group (RRWG) has identified existing research related to adult literacy reading instruction for low-literate adults, aged 16 and older, who are no longer being served in secondary education setting. The four primary research-based instructional methods for teaching reading to adults are

- ***Alphabetics*** instruction, which includes both phonemic awareness, or knowledge of the sounds of spoken language, and word analysis, or

knowledge of the connection between written letters and sounds (letter-sound correspondence).

- **Fluency** instruction, which includes the ability to group words appropriately into meaningful grammatical units for interpretation and the rapid use of punctuation and the determination of where to place emphasis or where to pause to make sense of a text.

- **Vocabulary** instruction, which is crucial for getting meaning from text. Without knowledge of the key vocabulary in a text, a reader may struggle to understand the writer's intended message.

- **Comprehension** instruction, which can be described either as understanding a text that is read or the process of constructing meaning from a text.

Instruction should involve all aspects of the reading process. The adult basic education classroom offers many different materials a teacher might use in helping adults develop their reading skills. Adults might also use materials related to their jobs, families, and other special interests. Unlike children, adult participation in educational programs is voluntary. Adult programs must offer options that lead to greater amounts of time spent in classes and must increase the intensity of instruction provided (Kruidenier, 2002).

The importance of each of these four aspects in the reading process becomes inherent in working with low literate adults as each component leads to improvement of the others, as stated below:

> The ultimate goal in reading is comprehension. Readers read a text in order to understand and use the ideas and information contained in it. Comprehension is improved when readers understand the key concepts or vocabulary in a text. Reading comprehension may suffer, however, when readers are unable to recognize individual words in a text. A reader may be conceptually ready to understand a text, for example, but will not have the opportunity to do so if he or she cannot read the individual words. To read individual words, the reader must know how the letters in our alphabet are used to represent spoken words (alphabetics). This includes knowing how words are made up of smaller sounds (phonemic awareness), and how letters and combinations of letters are used to represent these sounds (phonics and word analysis).

The ability to figure out how to read individual words, however, is not sufficient. Readers must also be able to rapidly recognize strings of words as they read phrases, sentences and longer text. Fluent reading is crucial to adequate comprehension (Kruidenier, 2002, p. 2).

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS

To create the environment necessary for the implementation of the Louisiana Literacy Plan and the instructional model components recommended herein, certain key infrastructure components must be in place. While each of these components is a distinct entity, separate from the instructional elements addressed above, they are often synergistically related with those elements; therefore, the addition of one element in a school can automatically lead to the inclusion of another. In fact, it is difficult, if not impossible, to implement some of the instructional improvements such as text-based collaborative learning in an adolescent literacy program without the corresponding infrastructure improvement of a classroom library of diverse texts.

The key infrastructural elements of an effective adolescent literacy program are

1. **Extended time for literacy instruction**
   a. A minimum of 90 minutes with a recommendation of 120 minutes per day of reading instruction in the 5 essential elements of early reading instruction at the K-3 grade levels.
   b. Dependent upon the specific need of each student, approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content area classes in grades 4-12.

2. **Teacher Effectiveness**

   For the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* to have a positive impact on student achievement, teachers will need to possess a common core of knowledge relative to the development of reading and literacy and provide appropriate instruction and assessment in these areas. To reach consensus of what this common core of knowledge consists, during spring 2002, the Governor's Office, Board of Regents, State Board of Elementary and

Secondary Education, and Louisiana Department of Education submitted a proposal to the National Governor's Association to participate in the Literacy Institute at Harvard University. Louisiana was one of five states selected to send a team of 20 state, district, and university leaders to participate in a one-week institute during August 2002. In conjunction with the institute, the State made a commitment to have Louisiana's Harvard Literacy Team develop a set of Reading and Language competencies for use within university settings when preparing teacher candidates to work with PK-12 students. The team recognized an alignment must exist between reading competencies taught through pre-service and the knowledge and skills required for teachers to effectively teach in the areas of reading and language.

Louisiana's Harvard Literacy Team met on five occasions during fall 2002 and spring 2003. After extensive discussions pertaining to appropriate competencies, a decision was made to adapt a document developed by Louisa C. Moats entitled, "*A Blueprint for Professional Development of Teachers of Reading: Knowledge, Skills, and Learning Activities,*" and combine elements of the document with the NCATE Standards for Reading Professionals and other state documents. In doing so, the five components of effective reading programs as defined in the National Reading Panel (2000) could be fully addressed as well as expectations for NCATE accreditation, Louisiana's K-12 English Language Arts standards, and Louisiana's K-12 *Grade-Level Expectations* for Reading and Language Arts. Louisiana's Harvard Literacy Team then identified knowledge and disposition statements that would address the following eight strands:

1. Foundational Concepts
2. Assessment
3. Phonemic Awareness and Letter Knowledge
4. Phonics and Word Recognition
5. Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text

6. Vocabulary

7. Text Comprehension

8. Spelling and Writing

As a result of this work, the Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers was developed. These competencies include the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for the teaching of reading, which all teachers are expected to understand and implement within the instructional setting. With these reading competencies in place, Louisiana will be able to align programs and policies so teachers will have the skills and knowledge to address the literacy needs of all students. While *Bulletin 113: Reading Competencies* focuses on the needs of pre-service teachers, the need to address the skills of teachers currently working in Louisiana schools remains a concern. Teachers are going to require consistent, high quality and ongoing support in order to integrate literacy throughout content learning and to infuse specific strategies to broaden vocabulary and concepts across content areas. High quality, intensive professional development is required if teachers are going to implement a tiered, schoolwide reading intervention model.

To ensure all teachers have the necessary common core of knowledge, Louisiana will address the issue of teacher development on two levels:

a. <u>Preservice Preparation</u>

The Louisiana Department of Education has established instructional reading competencies to be integrated into all College of Education programs across the state.   These competencies are currently under review by external consultants for the appropriateness of the level to which the competency has been assigned.   Upon completion of the review of this specific alignment (February 2006), the instructional reading matrix will be provided to all College of Education deans. The university staff will complete the matrix, documenting how each of the competencies is addressed within the assigned program.

In addition, the universities will align their courses with current alternate certification courses and continuum through secondary content area education courses. The timeline for this alignment documentation for all coursework addressing teacher preparation shall be completed by June 2006, with presentation to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education scheduled for August 2006. Through this process, Louisiana will identify any deficiencies in each preservice teacher preparation program's coverage of the Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers, and will provide colleges and universities assistance in addressing and correcting these deficiencies to meet the above objective. Furthermore, Louisiana has adopted policy to include the Louisiana Reading Competencies for Teachers in the Unit Accreditation process required for ongoing approval of university teacher preparation programs in Louisiana.

Additionally, for those teachers who have already completed alternate certification programs, the Department will be able to provide them with an assessment to validate their mastery of the instructional competencies or the opportunity to enroll in online course work aligned with the instructional competencies. Teachers new to the profession who have entered through alternate certification programs will have the following three options to demonstrate their skill in addressing the instructional reading competencies: a) an assessment, b) face-to-face professional development, or c) online coursework. Each of these options will count toward teachers' meeting the continuing education units required for renewal of their Level 2 teaching certificate or as part of their LaTAAP program during their first three years of teaching.

b. Professional Development

The state's role in professional development is extremely important, especially in regard to literacy. For state-sponsored professional development to be effective, it must be transferred into a school-based initiative and become embedded into the day-to-day work of the

teachers. This concept takes into consideration that the most effective method of professional development occurs in discussions among colleagues around actual student work, directly linking new instructional practices to student learner outcomes.   To meet the mission to "significantly improve literacy instruction through positive learning and teaching environments using research-based strategies for students in preschool through twelfth grade and beyond, resulting in all students performing at grade level in literacy," Louisiana must ensure that the quality and quantity of professional development available to every teacher occurs through embedded professional development. Professional development offered or approved will be aligned with state and national standards.   The professional development will include scientifically based research and will utilize methods proven to be effective with all learners. Ongoing professional development, conducted in schools after annual statewide training, will include teachers and principals. Study groups will be used to establish a coherent school and district improvement plan, with clearly stated objectives that promote high quality professional development.

The Louisiana Department of Education makes the following commitments related to professional development for the implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*:

- Ensure alignment of all state-level professional development activities affecting literacy instruction under guidelines grounded in research-based strategies and developed by the LDE staff, with representation across offices and divisions.
- Make available opportunities for professional development in research-based strategies addressing the teaching and learning of literacy across content areas, ensuring teachers have collaborative time to discuss student work on an ongoing basis through the implementation of such structures as study groups, professional learning communities, or LINCS.

- Recognize the areas of highest importance will be establishing leadership, creating collaborative cultures, developing organizational structures to sustain and enact the model literacy instruction within the content areas, implementing deep curriculum alignment, providing embedded professional development, participating in meaningful engaged learning, embracing response to intervention, meeting the instructional needs of diverse learners, employing data-driven decision making, and fostering shared accountability for student learner outcomes.

- Make available opportunities for districts to 1) evaluate their current method of targeting dollars, 2) assess ways in which current funding could be collaboratively used, and 3) re-target funding to reflect the priority need toward enhanced literacy.

- Provide consultants to perform services as outlined in the section addressing the Role of the Consultant.

- Provide technical assistance and site-based monitoring on a monthly basis to targeted sites.

The professional development model for the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* will include the following components:

I. **Reading/Literacy Coaches** – To fully implement the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*, each school must have a reading/literacy coach. The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that qualified reading/literacy coaches may be difficult to locate and hire in some areas. Districts must make efforts to hire persons who most nearly demonstrate the qualifications listed below. Qualifications of persons to be hired must be documented and submitted to the Department of Education for approval. If the required qualifications cannot be met, the district must include an assurance from the Superintendent that the person submitted meets qualifications

better than other applicants. The Department of Education will ensure researched-based literacy knowledge by requiring those persons hired to participate in the state-sponsored training.

Reading/Literacy Coaches must meet the following required qualifications:

- At least five years of teaching experience at the level at which they are coaching, with evidence of excellence in teaching.
- Minimum of twelve graduate hours in literacy instruction at the appropriate level (or equivalent professional development in instructional strategies grounded in research-based strategies around in-depth knowledge of reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction).
- Experience (with demonstrated excellence) in presenting professional development to teachers, with a priority given to candidates who have conducted presentations on intervention strategies to enhance instruction of literacy across the curriculum.
- Experience in a leadership role working with other teachers (leading a faculty study group, working with a school improvement team, leading school-wide positive behavior support).
- Evidence of effectiveness in communications.
- References supporting excellence in teaching, communication, professional development, facilitation, and research-based strategies.

In addition to these required qualifications, the implementation of the literacy plan in each school will be

enhanced if the reading/literacy coach meets the following desired qualifications:

- Master's Degree in Education or Literacy Master Teacher (to be developed).

- Demonstrated expertise in literacy based instruction. Reading/Literacy coaches will be expected to perform the following duties and responsibilities:

- **Mentoring Participating Teachers:** Reading/Literacy Coaches will work collaboratively with teachers in the classroom by modeling lessons and by providing the necessary follow-up and one-on-one assistance required to implement and sustain effective instructional strategies grounded in research-based literacy strategies. They will devote at least 80% of their time working directly with teachers to improve classroom instruction and, when necessary, will spend one hour each day working directly with students in need of Tier II or Tier III interventions.

- **Professional Development for Participating Teachers:** While working with individual teachers in the classroom, the literacy coach will occasionally provide whole group instruction on appropriate research-based literacy strategies and on teaching literacy across the curriculum (comprehension, vocabulary, writing across the curriculum, motivation and engagement, word identification and fluency).

- **Building School and District Capacity:** Literacy Coaches will assist in addressing district and school issues in reading reform. District-wide as well as school-wide professional development sessions may be requested of literacy coaches to provide awareness

sessions to teachers and administrators outside the target population.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Assessment and evaluation procedures are necessary to maintain the integrity of the literacy processes. Collecting artifacts and conducting classroom observations in participating classrooms will provide formative evidence required to allow adjustments to be made in the program direction as needed. It is imperative that literacy coaches provide this information to maintain a productive, viable program that is demonstrably valuable to teaching and learning.

- **Leader Professional Development:** Continuing education is central to the professional development of the literacy coach. The literacy coach will be required to participate in ongoing professional development activities as scheduled by the Department of Education. Topics will include data-driven decision making, the four steps problem-solving model, universal screening and progress monitoring, research-based strategies, and literacy across the curriculum.

- **Programmatic Reports:** Each literacy coach will electronically submit a monthly activity log summarizing and reflecting upon the activities accomplished each month. These brief reports will provide the LDE staff with information necessary to identify needed technical assistance.

II. **Study Groups** – Teachers must participate at least once weekly in small collaborative group meetings that include two or more colleagues. These study groups will focus on disaggregated student data to determine and prioritize teacher learning needs, to monitor student progress, and to plan for individual student

intervention. "Expert voices" can be invited to work with study groups to strengthen content knowledge development and design student intervention. To inform the work of study groups and to enrich the conversation, teachers may read books and articles, attend workshops, and take courses related to scientifically research-based reading instruction and assessment appropriate to their grade levels and content area specialty. These groups may cross grade levels and interdisciplinary teams that will meet regularly to discuss students and align instruction.

III. Teacher Institutes – Teachers, District Assistance Team Members, and University Staff will participate in professional development that includes:

- How to recognize a good a reading/literacy program
  - *Consumers' Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* (University of Oregon, March 2003)
  - *Consumer's Guide to Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Reading Programs Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* (October 2003)
  - *How To Know a Good Adolescent Literacy Program When you See One* (Alliance for Excellent Education, May 2004)
- How to observe children for literacy ability through selecting screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments.
- Strategic interventions addressing the unique educational needs of all learners through literacy supports that infuse practices to augment student achievement in all content areas.

- Content-based research strategies specifically tailored for curriculum areas serving to advance all students' mastery of grade-level expectations.
- Deep curriculum alignment through the addition of enhanced activities that meaningfully engage students will be added to the *Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum.*

IV. Quarterly Leadership Academies – Building leadership capacity to support the literacy plan is critical to guarantee the integrity of the plan's implementation at the school and district level. Principals, District Assistance Team Members, School Building Leaders, Master Teachers, and Literacy Coaches will participate in professional development on a quarterly basis that includes but is not limited to:

- The Three-tiered Instructional Model or Response to Intervention (RtI),
- Organizational structures to sustain and enact the three-tier model of intervention by providing flexibility in scheduling for students to have additional time for literacy skills and for teachers to collaboratively plan to support students.
- Process to evaluate the current method of targeting dollars and assessing ways in which current funding could be collaboratively used and re-targeted to reflect the priority need of enhanced literacy skills.
- How to recognize a good a literacy program.
    - *Consumers' Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* (University of Oregon, March 2003)
    - *Consumer's Guide to Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Reading Programs Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* (October 2003)

- *How To Know a Good Adolescent Literacy Program When you See One* (Alliance for Excellent Education, May 2004)

- How to monitor for professional growth in teachers and enhanced learner outcomes in the area of literacy through data-driven decision making.

- Strategic interventions addressing the unique educational needs of all learners through literacy supports that infuse practices to augment student achievement in all content areas.

- Content-based research strategies specifically tailored for curriculum areas serving to advance all students' mastery of grade-level expectations.

- How to monitor the degree of implementation and write a progress report on the school's success with implementation.

- Role of educational leaders in supporting literacy within a collaborative culture.

V. Role of Consultants - Consultants will be utilized to build knowledge and capacity at the state, district, and school level. They will be recognized experts in the area of research-based strategies as those strategies relate to the enhancement of literacy for all students. These individuals will be responsible to:

- Conduct initial professional development for LDE staff, LEA staff, DAT members, Literacy Coaches, university personnel and principals on the three-tier response to intervention model.

- Conduct initial professional development for LDE staff, LEA staff, DAT member, Literacy Coaches, university personnel and principals on how to know a good a literacy program (which quality criteria to consider).

- Conduct initial professional development for LDE staff, LEA staff, DAT members, Literacy Coaches, university personnel and principal on strategic, intervention strategies addressing the unique educational needs of all learners through literacy supports that infuse practices to augment student achievement in all content areas.

- Conduct initial professional development for LDE staff, LEA staff, DAT members, Literacy Coaches, university personnel and principals on content-based research strategies specifically tailored for curriculum areas serving to advance all students' mastery of grade-level expectations.

- Assist the department in development and implementation of quarterly leadership meetings and the teacher institutes.

- Recommend quarterly improvement strategies

- Make visits to schools and districts as requested/needed.

Consultants will be required to meet the following minimum requirements:

- A minimum of a Master's Degree with concentration in the area of literacy.

- Extensive professional development experiences with adults.

- Two or more pieces of evidence that support a strong knowledge of research-based strategies (successful completion of course work, videotapes of presentations, exhibits from PD sessions, and an explanation of how their evidence demonstrates knowledge of literacy instruction). All evidence is to be within the last three years.

c. Professional Development of Adult Education Personnel

Part-time teachers and volunteers have traditionally provided the adult education and literacy instruction in Louisiana. The state began in 1999 to invest in the "professional development" of adult education instructors, acknowledging the uniqueness and challenge

of adult learning theory. Adult literacy programs require full-time professional staff (nine- to twelve-month employees) to attend a minimum of fifteen hours of professional development each year. Paraprofessionals and part-time teachers are required to attend a minimum of ten hours of professional development each year. This minimal training is in addition to that provided by the individual programs, staff in-services, or professional associations.

Staff completing professional development activities will be required to include in their hours of professional development a focus on reading and literacy instruction for adults. Professional development activities must focus on content-specific knowledge, including strategies for teaching reading to adult learners and essential literacy activities. The next step in the professional development of personnel is to include coursework in reading as part of the certification requirements for adult education.

3. Staffing

Staffing patterns within schools will have to be reevaluated. At the elementary level, the Reading Leadership Team recommends a 20:1 student-to-teacher ratio in Tier I where whole class or large group interventions are provided. As students enter into Tier II, the student-to-teacher ratio should be 5:1, and for Tier III, 3:1. Some schools may elect to use a pull-out program for Tier II and III, while others may prefer to do a "push-in" program. At the middle and secondary levels, the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* recommends a team teaching approach or school-within-a-school model where the ratio of students to teacher is 25:1. The ratio for Tier II and III remains the same as the ratios for elementary schools.

The role of special education teachers within the school must also be re-evaluated. With the implementation of the three-tier model, students will begin receiving the interventions and support needed to be successful. Research-based strategies will be put into place across the curriculum and all

teachers, including special education, will become responsible for the learning outcomes of all students. With the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), 15% of IDEIA dollars can now be expended on intervention and prevention strategies. The role of special education teachers as interventionists to ensure the continued progress of special education students, as well as the required maintenance of effort for each district, will need to be refined.

The role of pupil appraisal staff will also have to be carefully re-examined. Currently, many pupil appraisal staff members place the majority of their time with evaluation and re-evaluation procedures. The roles of these highly skilled professionals (educational diagnosticians, school psychologist, and school social workers) should be modified to provide support intervention as well as formal evaluations. The knowledge of these individuals in support of research-based intervention strategies can be utilized. In the end, there should not be general education and special education. Within the three-tier intervention model, every teacher is responsible for the education of every student in the school. Thereby, the philosophy of "every ed" must be embraced by all educators.

In addition, schools and districts will need to study options for scheduling and staffing and will need to develop an organizational structure that enables them to establish a staff member to serve as the reading/literacy coach. Furthermore, the new organizational structure should allow time for teachers to meet in study groups for professional development and for them to plan collaboratively. To support schools in this process, the state will provide a consultant to assist schools in this study of staffing and scheduling for implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*.

Adult Education Staffing

The physical environment of the adult education classroom and enrollment patterns of adult learners require adult educators to employ a myriad of teaching strategies. It is not uncommon for adult educators to have students across various educational functioning levels at any one time in the

classroom. The learning difficulties many adult learners experience create a challenge for providing quality instruction. Because of enrollment patterns, an adult educator often employs individual instruction; instead, the educator must focus on small and whole group instruction for learners at multiple educational functioning levels. Adult educators also employ the use of tutoring and peer teaching strategies where the adult educator assumes the role of the facilitator in the learning environment. Equally important to the method of instruction is the necessity to teach across curriculum and content areas. Adult educators must also ensure that teaching strategies are related to real-world contexts and that strategies remained learner-focused and grounded in adult-learning theory, commonly known as ***andragogy***.

To create the most effective learning environment, each adult education program is required to offer small and whole group instruction at each site of instruction on a weekly basis. This requirement was set forth by the Division of Family, Career and Technical Education, beginning with the 2005-2006 program year. Adult educators are also required to develop and provide lessons that cross-educational functioning levels as well as content areas. Adult educators must also plan instruction that takes into account learning style preferences of learners, as well as students with learning differences or disabilities.

4. **Fiscal Resources and Collaborative Funding**

Although federal funding beyond Reading First specifically slated for literacy is limited, the pervasive links between adolescent literacy and many aspects of school and education reform mean that a wide variety of federal resources can be tapped. For example, given the importance of professional development in the guidelines, Title II professional development funds are an obvious resource for financing these efforts. District flexibility in transferring funds from one federal program to another can help put dollars where they can be most effective.

Schoolwide literacy initiatives require sufficient funds to provide schools and teachers with the necessary resources and supports to differentiate instruction for students across ability groups and grades. If allowed to combine the two current 8(g) literacy-related grant projects, the state will be able to supply dollars to a limited number of schools within the pilot project. These districts and schools will show a method of sustaining their initiative once the 8(g) dollars are no longer available to them.

However, districts and schools shall closely examine how dollars are currently expended. Districts and schools should carefully allocate resources that support the strategic goals. To assure that what must get done is funded, districts should target additional resources to the neediest schools, high poverty, low performing, demonstrating an inability to meet growth targets and/or adequate yearly progress for specific subgroups. Old programs and practices that have been implemented over multiple years, but have no data to document their effectiveness, should be eliminated. Sometimes this means that politically difficult, unpopular decisions will have to be made, but with the current fiscal constraints most districts are experiencing, they have no dollars to waste on ineffective programs.

The practice of collaborative funding must be used. Individuals in key positions at the district level must come to the table with the willingness to share the allocated dollars for which they are responsible. The district should already have their needs prioritized. Change in the school-wide systems is expected to be at the top of the list of priorities for schools and districts as they implement the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*. The funding should follow the strategic goals and priorities set. Dollars should be targeted down the list of priorities until the funding runs out. Training and technical assistance will be provided to schools and districts on how existing funding sources can best be coordinated to provide the required components of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*.

5. Leadership

Leadership from principals and teachers who have a solid understanding of how to teach reading and writing to the full array of students present in schools is necessary for the successful implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan.* The importance of connecting reading and writing across the curriculum has never been clearer. Indeed, comprehension instruction promoting strategic behaviors to encourage active and purposeful reading and writing (something which most struggling readers find challenging) should not only be taught explicitly, it should be incorporated into content area teaching, beginning in the early grades and continuing through high school. This is especially important for low-achieving students. The district must support these concepts across grade levels and disciplines. The primary focus should be on the five major factors that have a major impact on advanced literacy skills and on the ability of adolescents to understand and learn from what they read. These skills include speed and accuracy when reading text, vocabulary, background knowledge, comprehension, and motivation.

The transformation of day-to-day practices of our schools begins with the fundamentals of school effectiveness and good instruction and then goes a step beyond—to continuously monitor, correct, and infuse our growing knowledge base about teaching students to read and write well. Nothing less than a new paradigm is required by the leaders of local school districts—one based on joint problem-solving, collaborative practice, and collective accountability that engages students in purposeful reading and writing in the service of subject area learning. Personnel within the central office must be prepared to support and undeniably lead the shift in paradigm as they begin to think systematically about the teaching and learning of literacy.

6. Ongoing Summative Assessment of Students and Programs

Louisiana's current statewide assessment system provides a series of assessments from grades 3-10 in the area of English Language Arts that will

allow the state, school systems, and individual schools to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*. These assessments are informed by and aligned with the *Louisiana Content Standards* and *Grade-Level Expectations*. Therefore, the data from these assessments will inform all entities regarding the effectiveness of the model in preparing students to meet the state's expectations at each grade level.

In addition to the existing assessments, an additional summative assessment in Reading has been recommended. Research is still needed to determine the appropriate grade levels for this assessment and how this assessment might be used as part of the state's overall assessment and accountability system.

7. **Comprehensive and Coordinated Literacy Program**

Each school should have a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program that is interdisciplinary and interdepartmental so that literacy activities are integrated into all content areas. There should be no less than 90 minutes of protected literacy instruction at each grade level with the specific and systematic elements in place as required for elementary and middle grades. In addition, instruction and/or tutoring being provided by out-of-school organizations or the local community should be aligned to the literacy program of the school to ensure continuity and consistency for the students. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education should evaluate the possibility of requiring Supplemental Education Services providers to include these instructional elements within their programs.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In order to ensure the attainment of the State's objectives in the area of literacy, it will be necessary for the state to monitor and evaluate both the implementation of the plan at the district and school levels and the effectiveness of the plan in attaining the objectives set forth. Therefore, the

state has developed the following monitoring, reporting, and evaluation processes to ensure progress over time:

    a. <u>State Monitoring Plan</u> - The State's monitoring plan includes the following methods:

- Desk review of each District Literacy Plan and School Improvement Plan, along with the Quarterly Degree of Implementation report.

- Conference calls and telephone interviews with staff from schools and districts to determine level of district support and involvement.

- Dialogue via electronic mail and or facsimiles to ensure activities are finalized by benchmarks indicated on School Improvement Plan strategy action sheets.

- Conducting site visits, inclusive of classroom observations, from a team of LDE staff representing various divisions and offices (educational improvement and assistance, curriculum, and professional development).

- Review of student performance-based data on the state developed website to establish the impact of professional development and implementation of three-tier model, along with literacy instruction across content areas.

    b. <u>The State's Reporting Process</u> - The LDE will provide to BESE quarterly reports on the State's implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*. These quarterly reports will include documentation showing how all requirements and obligations are being met, related to the implementation and administration of the plan. An annual report will be submitted using valid and reliable measures. The LDE report will include:

- A list of participating schools and districts showing the most significant gains in literacy based on the objectives set forth in this document.

- A list of specific schools and districts showing insufficient progress in literacy, based on the objectives set forth in this document.

- A summary description of schools showing insufficient progress that includes LDE technical assistance provided.
- Progress reports of the schools and districts increasing the number of students with literacy skills at basic and above.
- Subgroup performance data analysis of LEAP and *i*LEAP results.
- Rate of referral to special education for students having difficulty in areas of literacy.
- Annual report for adult education provided to BESE. The Adult Education End-of-Year report includes all annual performance data on the core indicators for student achievement.

c. <u>Evaluation</u> – Based on the availability of funds, the Department intends to enter into a contractual agreement with an independent and external evaluator. One reason for evaluating a literacy program is to ensure the program is being used for its intended purposes. Program evaluation will help educators assess program appropriateness, as well as program quality. A prevention-oriented, school-based assessment and intervention system provides for the prediction of literacy success and literacy difficulty and informing instruction responsively.

<u>Questions to be answered as part of the evaluation</u>:
- Are there significant differences in student literacy performance between the participating and nonparticipating schools?
- Can differences in student literacy performance be attributed to the implementation of the three-tier intervention model and literacy across the curriculum being used?
- To what extent has the referral rate to special education been reduced as a result of the activities?
- To what extent does teacher knowledge affect instructional strategies, language structures, and factors associated with individual differences in reading growth changed as professional development is provided?

Mixed methods will be used to collect data as part of this initiative. Data analyses will address the questions above and provide descriptive statistics to help understand conditions within the instructional environment as they currently exist in Louisiana as well as the impact of this literacy initiative.

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT PLANNING

Schools and district must recognize the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* as a resource to assist them in developing comprehensive literacy programs. Since 1997, all schools have been required to have a school improvement plan to guide their school-level reform efforts. Funds through NCLB and IDEA are provided for the implementation of the school improvement plan. This plan is the vehicle for implementing the literacy activities at the school level.

School Improvement Plan

Each school shall have a School Improvement Team knowledgeable in the school improvement process and familiar with the school improvement tools, including the *Louisiana Needs Assessment*, *School Improvement Plan Template* and *Degree of Implementation Guide*. These tools are already part of the School Improvement training modules. School Improvement Teams will be required to use these tools to facilitate the implementation of the three-tier intervention model addressing the literacy needs of the students as identified through the data analysis process. Each school's plan will be supported by the district literacy improvement plan.

Each school will develop a School Improvement Plan that addresses the need to improve literacy achievement in the school, the strategies and activities to attend to this need, and the formative and summative measures of implementation and success. The School Improvement Plan must address the implementation of all of the key elements of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* appropriate to the grade-level configuration of the school and must include

appropriate research-based strategies and instructional materials; a connection to extended learning opportunities provided to students by the school, Supplemental Education Service Providers, or other providers; and assessment of the implementation of the plan using the *Louisiana Degree of Implementation Guide.*

As part of the School Improvement Plan, each school must commit to the following assurances:

- 80% of the faculty vote to participate in the literacy plan.
- An active School Improvement Team will serve as key leaders in the implementation of the school improvement plan and the degree of implementation checks on a quarterly basis.
- The principal will serve as an active member of the School Improvement Team. It is critical to the success of the literacy plan for the school leader to support the processes as an active participant, including all aspects of professional development sessions.
- Hire a full-time literacy coach and provide this individual with the necessary support to serve as the site-based professional development leader and coach. The primary work of the school-based literacy coach (80% of the time) will be to provide professional development to classroom teachers through in-class assistance, including model lessons, assistance in lesson planning, and observing as a critical friend. The literacy coach should spend at least one hour of the day in direct student service to demonstrate how appropriate interventions should be implemented. Participating schools must commit to providing the literacy or behavior coach with an appropriate workspace, equipment, and supplies to carry out the assigned responsibilities within the school. This individual is not to be assigned to the central office or any other off-site building away from the school.
- Provide the literacy coach with a computer, internet connection and an email account.

- Plan for and guard the collaborative teacher teaming time scheduled to ensure time for reflection around student work. These groups are to meet not less than one hour weekly, or at least every two weeks, to increase their knowledge of teaching literacy in the content area, to plan lessons, to analyze student work, and to monitor individual progress. This strategy works best when teachers are able to meet collaboratively each day.

- Administrators and literacy coaches will lead teachers in analysis of assessment data and in developing plans for intervention for students in danger of falling behind their peers. This time may be released-time, banked-time, bought-time, before school time, or existing professional development days divided into small increments over time. The one-hour collaborative team period provides the environment to build a strong, collaborative work culture that enhances the school's capacity to change. Participating schools must acknowledge that at least 85% of the faculty endorses the study group process, and that percentage obligates all members of the faculty to participate in the process.

- Ensure release time throughout the year for teachers to participate in half-day or full-day professional development workshops and study groups. The professional development plan of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan: Literacy for All* is built upon the premise that if teachers are to be prepared to provide literacy instruction across the content around research-based strategies, they need an intensive, long-term, standards-based professional development structure.

- Work cooperatively with the selected university partner and Regional Education Service Center partner.

District Literacy Improvement Plan

Each district will be required to develop and submit a District Literacy Improvement Plan. The district team members should include at least the following members: the district superintendent, any curriculum directors or supervisors, content area specialist, adult education representative, the Special

Education Director, the Title I Director, a university partner, Regional Education Service Center Partner, the principals from the participating schools, the gifted coordinator, an alternate assessment curriculum representative, and a family representative from each school who is not an employee of the system.

Within the narrative of the plan, the districts must document how they will implement the three-tier intervention model. Included will be the ratio of students-to-teachers and how students will move into and out of the tier levels. A discussion must be included regarding how additional time will be allocated for literacy instruction and how the district will support literacy across the curriculum.

The districts must submit a narrative plan for the processes and procedures to be implemented for central office support of the school's initiative toward enhancing literacy instruction and learning. This plan should address how the districts will support the following specific elements of the literacy plan.

- Commit to participate in the initiative for five years with the same set of feeder schools involved for year one schools.
- Establish full participation of the reading leadership team with the primary function to create capacity of reading knowledge within each participating school.
- Require full participation of school administration and literacy coaches in professional development sponsored or approved by the state.
- Hire a full-time reading/literacy coach for each school who meets the criteria as outlined in this document.
- Allocate and procure school-wide resources for literacy instruction.
- Provide ongoing progress monitoring of in-class literacy instruction across content areas through the use of valid and reliable measures.
- Collect and analyze assessment data to determine additional intervention and support needs within the three-tier intervention model.
- Ensure effective role of literacy coaches in demonstrating lessons using reading research-based materials and providing professional development to all teachers within the school building.

- Include strategic instruction for effective reading and writing across the curriculum, not just in language or English classes.
- Provide flexibility in scheduling to establish 90 minutes of reading instruction in grades K-12.
- Providing flexibility in scheduling and appropriate professional development to teachers to ensure that approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content area classes at the middle and high school levels.
- Offer students who have greater literacy needs with more intensive intervention and supports beyond what can be provided in regular core classes.
- Link performance evaluations to student achievement in literacy.
- Continue progress monitoring for determining intensity of interventions in terms of effectiveness of interventions based on the most reliable and valid data.
- Incorporate research-based instructional materials for core, supplemental, and intervention settings and to build motivation.
- Include options for teaming and collaboration through data study teams and grade-level meetings to discuss students' reading and writing performance.
- Connect each school's School Improvement Plan with the district Literacy Improvement Plan.

University Involvement

Public and private institutions with teacher education colleges shall be invited by the district to participate in one or more of the following ways, depending upon demonstrated expertise in a particular area of literacy research appropriate to the grade level at the schools.

- Participate in the development of the district literacy plan with the district leadership team and attend the required professional

development sessions to acquire the knowledge and focus of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*.

- Provide weekly support through on-site visits equal to the amount of time spent on a three-hour course at the university.

- Work with new teachers assigned to the school to enhance their instructional reading competency as it relates to the subject area and grade level to which they are assigned.

- Conduct classroom visits with the literacy coach to determine the professional development needs of the teachers and assist in the delivery of the professional development and the evaluation of its effectiveness based on student work.

- Assist in the analysis of data from screening assessments, progress monitoring assessments, and formative assessments, inclusive of statewide assessments, and make recommendations based on this analysis.

- Participate in the collection and analysis of data for the quarterly degree of implementation check.

- Participate in quarterly leadership meetings with the district and school leadership teams.

- Assess the needs of teachers within the school, identifying ways to strengthen the university curriculum for pre-service teachers.

STATE ACTION STEPS AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A review of literature documents a common thread of basic elements such as research-based comprehension strategies, ongoing assessment, data analysis, and school-wide interventions that include targeted instruction for struggling readers. State policy and practices must foster the support of literacy in all classrooms, whether in mathematics, social studies, or language arts. In doing so, teachers need to know their students and how to instruct and apply key strategies to cultivate subject matter learning. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Study Group on Middle and Secondary Literacy

has provided a "State Policymakers Literacy Checklist." This checklist, along with the references found in the reference list of this document, was used as guidance in developing the *Louisiana Literacy Plan.*

The NASBE Study Group on Middle and Secondary Literacy created a list of **six steps** to provide states some guidance in the development of state-wide instructional intervention models. By no means should these steps be considered totally comprehensive, but they do present a starting point. The steps to be taken must occur in a coordinated fashion. This section provides the six key steps identified by NASBE and the actions Louisiana will take to address each of these steps. Where possible, timelines have been provided for these actions. For actions where timelines are not yet available, these timelines will be developed by the end of the July 2006.

Step #1: Set state literacy goals and standards, ensuring alignment with curricula and assessments and raising literacy expectations across the curriculum for all students in all grades.

Louisiana has set the standards for what students should know and be able to do. These standards have been further defined by *Grade-Level Expectations* provided for each of the four core subject areas, grades PreK through twelve. In addition, based on the request of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the department developed the *Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum* (LCC) that was provided to districts in the spring of 2005. The standards, *Grade-Level Expectations*, and the curriculum have all been aligned to the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) that assesses student academic performance in the four core subject areas. The state's goals, standards, accountability system, and assessments are aligned in both state policy and in the state-to-district-to-school-to-classroom connections.

In 1998 and 1999, BESE set into policy high stakes testing in fourth, eighth, tenth, and eleventh grades. The performance criteria for promotion to the next grade have been gradually increasing over the past six years, ensuring proficiency standards are sufficiently rigorous. BESE continually takes into

consideration the number of students meeting state proficiency standards versus the number of these same students reaching proficiency on NAEP. BESE also has policy pertaining to the administration of alternate assessments for students with disabilities for whom the general statewide assessment does not provide an accurate measure of what they know and are able to do. Expectations remain high for these students, and any statewide focus on literacy must include the performance of these students as well.

As originally developed, the *Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum* addressed literacy at the middle and secondary level, combining the teaching of reading and writing. Many teachers are struggling with the implementation of the curriculum as written in this combined form and have requested the state to separate out the "reading" grade-level expectations from the "language/English grammar" grade-level expectations. If the importance of connecting reading and writing across the curriculum in context subject area learning at the adolescent level is to be fully accomplished, the state must implement improvement action steps to support the paradigm shift that districts, schools, and teachers must make in day-to-day classroom instructions.

Already in place is a high quality continuous improvement system where school progress is measured through school performance scores. These scores are publicly transparent summative evaluations well-aligned with the state's *Grade-Level Expectations*. Each school receives a school report card, which documents the performance and growth score achieved annually. Through the school improvement process, schools and districts are required to triangulate their student performance data to identify specific strengths, weaknesses, and needs that are then addressed in individual School Improvement Plans.

Literacy goals and standards for adult education are embedded in the USED National Reporting System. One of the standards for student achievement is evidenced by an increase in educational functioning level. The benchmarks of performance on the core indicators are negotiated annually between the Department and the USDE, and each district/private provider is accountable to meet the state-negotiated level of performance.

The adult education and literacy field has major work to accomplish in the area of assessment of learner gains and program performance. Many researchers see a "disconnect" between what policies are demanding programs to track and what standardized tests measure. There is a similar disconnection between the instructional content that adults need and that which is commercially produced and measured by standardized instruments. The more individualized a learner's course of instruction, the more likely learner goals will be met.

The state has made great strides in tracking outcomes across programs through the implementation of the National Reporting System for Adult Education over the past five years. Through the National Reporting System for Adult Education, the Department of Education's Division of Family, Career and Technical Education tracks the following core measures on students enrolled in adult education and literacy programs:

- *Educational Gains* that are in relation to the student's EFL in reading, writing, speaking and listening and functional areas. This measure applies to all students.

- *Entered Employment*, defined as students who obtain a job by the end of the first quarter after exit quarter. This measure applies to students who have set this as a goal.

- *Retained Employment*, defined as students who remain employed in the third quarter after program exit. This measure applies to students who have set this as a goal.

- *Receipt of secondary school diploma or GED*, defined as students who obtain a GED, secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent. This measure applies to students who have set this as a goal.

- *Placement in postsecondary education or training*, defined as a learner who enrolls in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills program building on prior services or training received. This measure applies to students who have set this as a goal.

The Reading Leadership team elected to use the NASBE Study Group on Middle and Secondary Literacy as a reference to strengthen the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*. The following key state policy or action steps in the area of literacy goals and standards are needed to support the implementation of the

Louisiana Literacy Plan. Recommended timelines for each policy or action step follow each item.

1. Policy addressing a high quality continuous improvement system using formative evaluations, which are well aligned with the states' *Grade-Level Expectations*.

Actions for Success	Responsible Party	Timeline
Develop a list of screening and progress- monitoring literacy assessment tools that are psychometrically sound instruments schools can use as multiple indicators of academic ability providing enough detail to inform daily instruction (formative assessment).	Assessment/Curriculum/Reading and Literacy staff members LDE/External Consultants	By May 2006
Train assessment team members in administration and in scoring of selected assessment instruments	Consultants Coordination by Assessment/Curriculum/Reading and Literacy staff members	By August 2006 for Year 1 schools
Train all teachers in interpretation of progress monitoring assessment results and in placement of student Intervention tiers based on results	Consultants Coordinated by Professional Development/ Assessment/ Reading and Literacy staff members	By August 2006 for Year 1 schools
Monitor administration and use of selected progress monitoring assessments	Assessment/ Reading and Literacy staff	Ongoing for 2006-07 for Year 1 schools

2. Development of literacy-infused activities for *Comprehensive Curriculum* to support literacy in all classrooms, whether in mathematics, social studies, science, or language arts.

Actions for Success	Responsible Party	Timeline
Identify appropriate consultants to work with teachers in Year 1 schools and districts on curriculum development to integrate literacy activities into all content area courses	Curriculum/Reading and Literacy staff members	By May 2006
Introductory sessions for teachers in Year 1 schools and districts	Consultant Coordinated by Reading and Literacy/Professional Development staff members	July/August 2006 for Year 1 schools
Regular school level sessions with consultants on development of literacy integration activities for *Comprehensive Curriculum*	Consultants Coordinated by Professional Development/ Curriculum/ Reading and Literacy staff members	Ongoing for 2006-07 for Year 1 schools and districts
Quarterly sessions for sharing work activities and lessons developed between schools and districts	Consultants Coordinated by Professional Development/Curriculum/ Reading and Literacy staff members	Quarterly for 2006-07 for Year 1 schools and districts

3. Review of the current *Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum* to determine the appropriateness of activities to supporting the instruction of literacy across the curriculum and how this applies to students with the most significant impairments.

Actions for Success	Responsible Party	Timeline
LDE staff will develop sample activities that support the LCC, utilizing accommodations appropriate for students with disabilities, incorporating information on identifying/implementing accommodations from other sources, i.e., LDE bulletins, handbooks.	Personnel from LDE divisions: • School and Community Support • Regional Education Service Centers • Educational Improvement and Assistance • Standards, Assessment, and Accountability • Louisiana Center for Educational Technology	Dec. 2005
A task force of teachers, administrators, parents, etc. will be convened to continue the development of activities/accommodations relevant to a variety of disabilities.	Same	Feb. 2006
Through the LA Leads Conference in 2006, the LDE will present to districts an overview of this project and seek volunteers to pilot sample activities/accommodations	Same	August 2006
LEAs will pilot sample activities/accommodations	Same	Fall 2006
Volunteer LEAs will complete an evaluation of these activities/accommodations	Same	Spring 2007
LDE will reconvene the original task force to review the recommendations/evaluations of the LEAs that participated in the pilot. The task force will determine the measures that will indicate progress.	Same	May 2007
LDE will have the revised activities/accommodations and prepare them for	Same	August 2007

dissemination at the LA Leads Conference 2007		
LDE will train teachers on the use of the activities/accommodations in their classroom activities	Same	Winter 2007
LEAs will begin to use the final activities/accommodations that will support students with disabilities in the LCC	Same	Spring 2007
Evaluate LEA implementation of sample activities/accommodations statewide based on task force identified measures.		Ongoing

4. Identify scientifically based literacy and reading programs appropriate for grades 4-12 and Adult Education for use in Year 1 schools and districts.

Actions for Success	Responsible Party	Timeline
Issue publisher call for submission of literacy and reading programs	Textbook Adoption, Reading and Literacy, Curriculum, High School Redesign, and Adult Education staff	Feb/Mar 2006
Contract national experts in adolescent literacy and adult education to review programs	Same	March/April 2006
Receive literacy and reading programs submitted by publishers	Same	May/June 2006
Conduct committee review of programs submitted	Same	July 2006
Submit list of recommended programs to BESE for approval	Same	August 2006

Step #2: Ensure that teachers have the preparation and professional development to provide effective, content-based literacy instruction.

Both pre-service and in-service teachers must have considerable knowledge to use research-based strategies in content-area instruction. Currently in Louisiana, SBESE is working with the colleges' Board of Regents to establish instructional reading competencies for pre-service teachers. Through an 8(g) state funded project, each college of education will complete a rubric that identifies where specific instructional reading competencies are addressed within the outline of courses students must master prior to graduation. The rubric from each institution of higher learning will be evaluated by external consultants, who are experts in the teaching of reading. These consultants will provide feedback regarding the quality of instructional knowledge mastered through the course work presented. This process should be completed by June 2006.

To address the needs of teachers currently working in the field, SBESE has requested that the department develop an assessment of an individual's instructional reading competencies. In addition, the state must continue to address comprehensive policies related to preparation program approval and teacher certification, as well as professional development of university personnel to ensure that pre-service teachers have the training and support to maximize student learning. The following must be considered.

1. Review current certification for Reading Specialist to determine appropriateness based on current research and develop Literacy Master Teacher certification by determining appropriateness of defining this certification based on specialization by grade level or grouping (K-3, middle grades, high school, Adult Ed).

2. Review current certification policies related to teaching reading at the middle and/or high school level. Determine the certification needed to teach reading at these levels.

3. Review Institutes for Higher Education (IHE) coursework for alignment with state reading competencies.

4. Develop or adopt state reading competencies assessments for teachers.

5. Support current teacher preparation accountability system to determine possible indicators to encourage universities to support advanced literacy certifications.

6. Review current Adult Education certification requirements to determine need to include coursework in reading and literacy based on scientifically based research.

Step #3: Strategically use data to identify student needs, design cohesive program, and evaluate quality of implementation and impact of the program.

Currently, the state of Louisiana collects data on students through state-wide assessments, graduation exams, dropout rates, and graduation rates. All of these elements are currently a part of the state accountability system and comprise the indices which compute middle and high schools' school performance scores. The importance of data-driven decision making to design effective strategies for advancing literacy cannot be overstated. These data are instrumental in identifying state and local needs for literacy initiatives, exemplars in producing high reading achievement and in addressing areas of need.

In addition to these types of summative assessment, schools need access to formative data that is ongoing and timely and provides a snapshot of student progress during the course of the school year. Teachers and school leaders should have access to formative data to guide instructional decisions based on the progress of the students. Formative assessment data is provided to educators through the three-tier model that utilizes screening and ongoing progress monitoring.

1. Review current policies that define the role of the pupil appraisal staff and instructional/behavioral support specialists and make necessary revisions to those policies that would enable the staff and specialists to assist in the implementation of these assessments as part of an early intervention model.

2. Establish a monitoring schedule to periodically evaluate implementation and impact at the district and school level. Use a collection of data around literacy

levels, state assessments, graduation exams, dropout rates, suspension and expulsion rates, and graduation rates.

3. Develop a web-based site for participating schools to enter student based data for fall, winter, and spring assessment and to report results from progress monitoring.

Step #4: Require the development of district and school instructional intervention models that infuse research-based literacy support in all content areas.

The State of Louisiana has a template for school improvement that is required for all Title I schools and in all schools in School Improvement II-VI. The format of the template requires schools, with assistance from the district, to analyze their student performance data and make a determination regarding their strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Based on the information gathered by the School Improvement Team, specific research-based strategies are identified and then developed through strategy action planning sheets. A review of current School Improvement Plans reveals that additional professional development is needed to use in conjunction with the School Improvement Plans as a driving force for systemic change. With the three-tier model of instruction, schools will be guided to identify student needs and implement research-based strategies to address these identified needs. Districts and private providers who submit competitive applications for adult education funds must include in their applications instructional models that infuse research-based literacy support in all content areas.

Through *Bulletin 741*, district and schools have some flexibility allowing schools to increase time for literacy instruction to meet graduation credits and cover extensive material across content areas.

1. Require schools and districts to set rigorous annual performance targets in reading and literacy that are aligned to the state's objectives as delineated in this plan.

2. Require schools to develop, as part of their School Improvement Plan, the specific research-based strategies, activities and timelines required to

meet or exceed the rigorous annual performance targets for reading and literacy.

3. Require districts to develop District Literacy Plans that set rigorous annual performance targets for reading and literacy and delineate the specific research-based strategies with activities and timelines to meet or exceed these targets.

Step #5: Provide districts and schools with funding, supports, and resources.

School-wide literacy initiatives require sufficient funds to provide schools and teachers with the necessary resources and supports (e.g., policies on staffing, instructional/planning time, instructional organization, assessments, curriculum, textbooks, materials, and professional development) to differentiate instruction for students across abilities and grades. As additional funds become available, they should be applied to the literacy initiative, specifically targeting those funds and resources to high-poverty districts and schools with large numbers of students who lack basic literacy skills. Louisiana Department of Education staff will need to provide district and school staff with the assistance to reallocate their resources in more effective ways.   This can be accomplished by the following.

1. Commit to leverage available funding to support the implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* at the state, district, and school levels and to seek additional funding as available.

2. Provide professional development necessary for implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* to districts and schools based on a multi-year implementation schedule, to include:
    - The Three-tiered Instructional Model or Response to Intervention (RtI),
    - Organizational structures to sustain and enact the three-tier model of intervention by providing additional time for literacy skills as needed through flexibility in scheduling and course work offered.
    - How to evaluate the current method of targeting dollars and assessing ways in which current funding could be collaboratively used and re-targeted to reflect the priority need of enhanced literacy skills.

- How to recognize a good literacy program:

  - *Consumers' Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* (University of Oregon, March 2003)

  - *Consumer's Guide to Evaluating Supplemental and Intervention Reading Programs Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* (October 2003)

  - *How To Know a Good Adolescent Literacy Program When you See One* (Alliance for Excellent Education, May 2004)

- How to monitor professional growth in teachers and enhanced learner outcomes in the area of literacy through data-driven decision making.

- Strategic interventions addressing the unique educational needs of all learners through literacy supports that infuse practices to augment student achievement in all content areas.

- Content-based research strategies specifically tailored for curriculum areas serving to advance all students' mastery of grade-level expectations.

- How to monitor the degree of implementation and write a progress report on the school's success with implementation.

- Role of educational leaders in supporting literacy within a collaborative culture.

3. Consider policy regarding the role and function of the Reading/Literacy Coach as a lead professional developer in schools.

4. Provide policy and support allowing infrastructural components to sustain and enact strategic instruction in reading and writing across the curriculum, as follows:

   a. Allow freshman academies, such as providing about six weeks of extra instruction prior to entering ninth grade;

   b. Allow for flexibility to institute two to four hours of literacy-connected learning daily;

   c. Ensure state staff alignment and collaboration to support local efforts; and

d. Develop a policy that would allow students who have greater literacy needs to receive more intensive interventions and supports beyond what is provided in regular classes (rights without labels).

Step #6: Provide state guidance and oversight to ensure strong implementation of comprehensive quality literacy programs.

The individuals charged with assisting with the development of this document's plan were drawn from offices, divisions and sections within the department. To ensure continued seamless collaboration and implementation of the plan, individuals should

1. Consider appropriate roles of each office, division, section, and staff member within LDE, including the Regional Education Service Centers, in the implementation of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*.

2. Review current LDE-sponsored professional development programs for educators and assess need to integrate appropriate content to support the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* into these programs.

3. Review current LDE programs and initiatives and adjust if necessary to ensure alignment to and support for research-based literacy models and the *Louisiana Literacy Plan*.

4. Develop a specific timeline for the monitoring of implementation through on-site monitoring of each participating school.

5. Consider a policy that would increase intervention through stricter adherence to specific strategies within the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* for schools and districts that fail to meet rigorous annual performance targets or for those that enter and continue in School Improvement for multiple years.

6. Consider a policy that requires more structured monitoring and Corrective Action reports for those schools/districts mandated to implement the *Louisiana Literacy Plan* as an intervention for continuing low performance.

Louisiana has taken a strong leadership role in meeting the challenges of implementing scientifically based reading research strategies for kindergarten

through third grade students. The *Louisiana Literacy Plan: Literacy for All* has been designed to further that initiative by addressing the instructional literacy needs for fourth through twelfth grades. In addition, the state has gone even further by including an adult literacy component. The plan, an extended initiative, is a model for closing the achievement gap between all student sub-groups, resulting in the development of a more literate and capable citizenry.