

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

“The What”: An Overview.....	3
Foundation: Rigorous Standards	4
Georgia Standards for Birth-to-grade 12	4
Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership	5
A. Action: Administrator demonstrates commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school.	5
B. A literacy leadership team organized by the administrator or other leaders in the community is active.....	5
C. The use of time and personnel is leveraged through scheduling and collaborative planning.....	5
C. A school culture exists in which teachers across the content areas accept responsibility for literacy instruction as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.....	6
D. Literacy instruction is optimized in all content areas.	6
E. The community at large supports schools and teachers in the development of college-and-career-ready students as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards	6
Building Block 2. Continuity of Instruction	7
A. Active collaborative teams ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum (See Engaged Leadership, Building Block 1. C, D).	7
B. Teachers provide literacy instruction across the curriculum.....	7
C. Out-of-school agencies and organizations collaborate to support literacy within the community.	7
Building Block 3. Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments.....	8
A. An infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments is in place to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.....	8
B. A system of ongoing formative and summative assessments is used to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.....	8
C. Problems found in screenings are further analyzed with diagnostic assessment.	8
D. Summative data is used to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress.....	9
E. A clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning is followed.	9

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction.....	9
A. All students receive direct, explicit instruction in reading.	9
B. All students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum.....	10
C. Extended time is provided for literacy instruction.....	10
D. Teachers are intentional in efforts to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students progress through school.	11
Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for All Students.....	11
A. Information developed from the school-based data teams is used to inform RTI process (see Section III. E.).....	11
B. Tier I Instruction based upon the CCGPS in grades K-12 is provided to all students in all classrooms. (See Sections IV. A & B)	11
C. Tier 2 needs-based interventions are provided for targeted students.....	12
D. In Tier 3, Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly.....	12
E. Tier 4-specially-designed learning is implemented through specialized programs, methodologies, or strategies based upon students’ inability to access the CCGPS any other way.	12
Building Block 6. Improved Instruction through Professional Learning	13
A. Preservice education prepares new teachers for all aspects of literacy instruction including disciplinary literacy in the content areas.	13
B. In-service personnel participate in ongoing professional learning in all aspects of literacy instruction including disciplinary literacy in the content areas.....	13

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

“The What”: An Overview

This document is a listing of “what” communities and their schools will need to have in place in order to provide their children and students access to a lifetime of literacy. Building on the foundation of rigorous standards, research has shown that implementation of the seven key building blocks listed here will provide communities with the infrastructure necessary for producing successful readers and writers. Those six building blocks are: (1) Engaged leadership; (2) Continuity of care and instruction; (3) Ongoing formative and summative assessments; (4) Best practices in literacy instruction; (5) System of tiered intervention; (6) Professional learning and resources.

“The What” is a synthesis of the recommendations found in the research portion of Georgia’s Literacy Plan, “The Why.” That document contains the research basis for each of the items included in this list. “The Why” attempts to capture the current consensus from the research in the area of literacy. This research has guided Georgia in the way forward in literacy. The last step is found in “The How.” That final document, an implementation guide, is intended to provide communities and districts with direction in how to implement “The What”--the six building blocks set forth in this document.

All of these are living documents. They will be revised, amended, or added to as further information is learned from research or in response to the advice of Georgia’s many partners in this venture.

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

Foundation: Rigorous Standards

Goals, objectives, and priorities have been clearly articulated, aligned and sequenced throughout the various systems of delivery of educational services to the children of Georgia. These goals, objectives, and priorities have been delineated for different age groups in the Georgia Early Literacy Standards (GELS); the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework; the Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten; and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). To fully implement these sets of state standards, communities will need to develop a carefully crafted plan of transitions from stage to stage, grade to grade, and school to school to ensure that their children are provided with a coherent educational program.

GEORGIA STANDARDS FOR BIRTH-TO-GRADE 12

The following chart provides an overview of the standards. To access the specific standard for any particular age group, click on the highlighted words.

Birth-to-3 years old	4-years-old	3-to-5 years old	K-5	6-12
Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS)	Learning Standards for Georgia Pre-Kindergarten Students	Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework	Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects	Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GELSSection11.pdf	http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/Content_Standards_Full.pdf	http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/teaching/ecd/Assessment/Child%20Outcomes/HS_Revised_Child_Outcomes_Framework(rev-Sept2011).pdf	https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&AID=245075&MID=15932 , pp. 9-33	https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&AID=245075&MID=15932 , pp. 34-66

These standards are state-mandated and, as such, are the core components in any educational plan in Georgia. However, the transitions between each of sets of standards can only be ensured at the community level by community leadership.

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

A. Action: Administrator demonstrates commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school.

Administrator demonstrates commitment by the following:

1. participating in state-sponsored Webinars and face-to-face sessions to learn about the transition to CCGPS
2. studying research-based guidelines strategies and resources for literacy instruction set forth in “The Why” document
3. participates in literacy instruction with his/her faculty
4. regularly monitors literacy instruction within his/her school
5. schedules protected time for literacy and teacher collaboration

B. A school literacy leadership team organized by the administrator or other leaders in the community is active.

1. The literacy leadership team consists of the following stakeholders and partners, at a minimum:
 - a. Faculty
 - b. Representatives from the stakeholders for your school (i.e., preschools, daycares, middle schools within your school’s feeder pattern as well as students and representatives from higher education)
 - c. Community and government leaders
 - d. Parents
2. A shared literacy vision has been agreed upon by the school and community that is aligned with the state literacy plan.
3. Multiple forms of student, school, and teacher data (including results of the Literacy Instruction Observation Checklist or its equivalent) have been analyzed to develop a list of prioritized recommendations and goals for improvement.
4. Research-based guidelines, strategies and resources for literacy instruction (as set forth in the “The Why” document of the most current iteration of the Georgia Literacy Plan) have been incorporated into all practices and instruction.

Note: Administrators or community leaders may refer to anyone within the school or community who is willing to initiate action, e.g., local school board, local school officials, building principal(s), business leaders, individual parents or parent groups, teachers, local literacy group.

C. The effective use of time and personnel are leveraged through scheduling and collaborative planning.

1. A protected, dedicated 90-120-minute block is allocated for literacy instruction in grades K-3 for all students.

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

2. In grades 4-12 students receive two to four hours of literacy instruction across language arts and in content area classes.
3. Time for intervention is built into the school schedule for each day.
4. Instructional time for literacy has been leveraged by scheduling disciplinary literacy in all content areas.
5. Protected time for collaborative planning teams within and across content areas are part of the school-wide calendar.
6. Intentional efforts have been made to identify and eliminate inefficient use of student and faculty time within the schedule.

D. A school culture exists in which teachers across the content areas accept responsibility for literacy instruction as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

1. Faculty and staff participate in targeted, sustained professional learning on literacy strategies within the content area.
2. A walk-through and/or observation form (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA or some other instrument) is used to ensure consistency of effective instructional practices that include disciplinary literacy across content areas.

E. Literacy instruction is optimized in all content areas.

1. The school agrees upon a plan to integrate literacy in all subjects as articulated within CCGPS.
2. Teachers have adopted a common, systematic procedure for teaching academic vocabulary in all subjects.
3. Writing is an integral part of every class every day.
4. Teachers have or will participate in professional learning on the following:
 - a. Incorporating the use of literary texts in content areas
 - b. Using informational text in English language arts classes
 - c. Incorporating writing instruction (narrative, argument, and informational) in all subject areas
 - d. Selecting text complexity that is appropriate to grade levels as required by CCGPS
 - e. Selecting text complexity that is adjusted to the needs of individual students
 - f. Instructing students in the following:
 - i. Conducting short research projects that use several sources
 - ii. Identifying and navigating the text structures most common to a particular content area (e.g., social studies, cause and effect; science, problem/solution)
 - iii. Supporting opinions with reasons and information
 - iv. Determining author bias or point of view

F. The community at large supports schools and teachers in the development of college-and-career-ready students as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

1. A community advisory board actively participates in developing and achieving literacy goals. Members include governmental, civic, and business leaders, as well as parents.
2. A network of learning supports within the community that targets student improvement is active (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, afterschool programming).
3. Social media is utilized to communicate and promote the goals of literacy throughout the community at large.
4. Academic successes are publically celebrated through traditional and online media.

Building Block 2. Continuity of Instruction

A. Active collaborative teams ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum (See Engaged Leadership, Building Block 1. C, D).

Guidelines for these teams include:

1. Cross-disciplinary teams for literacy instruction.
2. Protocols for team meetings, such as those found on <http://www.lasw.org/methods.html>.
3. Scheduled time for teams to meet for regular collaboration and examination of student data/work.
4. Team roles, protocols, and expectations are clearly articulated.
5. The components of the professional learning community model (www.allthingsplc.info) are understood and in place.
6. Specific, measurable student achievement goals aligned with grade-level expectations are shared by teachers in all subjects.

B. Teachers provide literacy instruction across the curriculum.

1. Reading teachers in grades K-5 use core programs that provide continuity and a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts.
2. Teachers coach, model, co-teach, observe, and give feedback to fellow teachers using videos and social media where possible on the use of literacy strategies in the classroom.
3. Teachers use a school-wide, commonly adopted writing rubric that is aligned with the CCGPS to set clear expectations and goals for performance.
4. All types of literacy are infused into all content areas throughout the day (e.g., print, non-print, online, blogs, wikis, social media).
5. For more information see Building Block 1. C & D.

C. Out-of-school agencies and organizations collaborate to support literacy within the community.

1. Various models of coordinating “wrap-around” services have been studied, (e.g., Community Schools, <http://dhs.georgia.gov/portal/site/DHS-DFCS>).

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

2. Avenues of communication (both virtual and face-to-face) are active with key personnel in out-of-school organizations and governmental agencies that support students and families.
3. A comprehensive system of learning supports to enhance motivation and capability of the critical mass of stakeholders is in place.
4. Technologies are utilized to more creatively and effectively support stakeholder engagement, i.e., blogs, Twitter, electronic newsletters.

Building Block 3. Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments

A. An infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments is in place to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

1. Effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools have been selected to identify achievement levels of all students, advanced as well as struggling.
2. Common mid-course assessments are available for use across classrooms and include a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay).
3. Assessment and intervention materials aligned with students’ needs are available and personnel trained.
4. A data collection plan for storing, analyzing, and disseminating assessment results is in place.
5. A calendar for formative assessments based on local, state, and program guidelines, including specific timeline for administration and persons responsible has been developed.

B. A system of ongoing formative and summative assessments is used to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

1. The instructional levels of all students are screened and progress monitored with evidence-based tools.
2. Commonly shared mid-course assessments, which include a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay), are used across classrooms to identify classrooms needing support.
3. Universal screening, progress monitoring, and curriculum-based assessments are used to determine instructional decisions regarding flexible 4-tier service options for Response to Intervention (RTI).
4. Technology infrastructure is adequate to support administration and storage of assessments as well as the dissemination of results.
5. Intervention materials aligned with students’ needs are in use and staff is trained.
6. A formative assessment calendar based on local and state guidelines includes times for administration and the persons responsible.
7. Assessment measures are regularly used to identify high achieving/advanced learners who would benefit from enrichment or advanced coursework.

C. Problems found in screenings are further analyzed with diagnostic assessment.

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

1. A protocol is in place for ensuring that students identified by screenings routinely receive diagnostic assessment.
2. Where possible, diagnostic assessments isolate the component skills needed for mastery of literacy standards.
3. Interventions include diagnostic assessments and multiple-entry points to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

D. Summative data is used to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress.

1. Specific times for analysis of the previous year’s outcome assessments are identified in the school calendar to determine broad student needs and serve as a baseline for improvement. Those assessments are:
 - a. Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) in grades 3, 5, and 8
 - b. End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) in grades 9-12 in math, social studies, science, and English language arts
 - c. Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) for students with disabilities
 - d. Georgia High School Writing Test (GHWT) given in fall of junior year
2. Time is devoted in teacher team meetings to review and analyze assessment results to identify needed program and instructional adjustments.
3. During teacher team meetings, discussions focus on changes that can be made to improve the instructional program for all students.
4. Data is disaggregated to ensure the progress of subgroups.

E. A clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning is followed.

1. A protocol has been developed and is followed for making decisions to identify the instructional needs of students.
2. A data storage and retrieval system is adequate and is understood and used by all appropriate staff members.
3. Procedures and expectations for staff to review, analyze, and disseminate assessment results are in place.
4. Protocols for team meetings, such as those found on <http://www.lasw.org/methods.html>, are regularly followed.

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

A. All students receive direct, explicit instruction in reading.

1. A core program is in use that provides continuity based on a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts.
2. Student data is examined regularly to identify areas of instruction with greatest needs (e.g., phonological awareness, word identification, fluency, vocabulary, word study, comprehension, motivation and engagement).

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

3. Administration conducts classroom observations (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA, the FCRR Literacy Walkthrough, or some other instrument) using an assessment tool to gauge current practice in literacy instruction.
4. Daily literacy block in K-3 includes the following for **all** students:
 - a. Whole group which includes explicit instruction in word identification, vocabulary, and comprehension
 - b. Small groups for differentiation
5. Various aspects of literacy instruction students have been allocated for instruction within specific content areas.
6. Faculty participates in professional learning on the following:
 - a. Using of data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching
 - b. Selecting of appropriate text and strategy for instruction
 - c. Telling students specific strategies to be learned and why
 - d. Modeling of how strategy is used
 - e. Providing guidance and independent practice with feedback
 - f. Discussing when and where strategies are to be applied
 - g. Differentiating instruction

B. All students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum

1. A plan for instruction in writing is consistent with CCGPS that is articulated vertically and horizontally.
2. A coordinated plan has been developed for writing instruction across all subject areas that includes:
 - a. Explicit instruction
 - b. Guided practice
 - c. Independent practice
3. All subject area teachers participate in professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all content areas.
4. In every class at least one day a week, teachers provide instruction in and opportunities for one of the following:
 - a. Developing an argument citing relevant and reliable textual evidence
 - b. Writing coherent informational or explanatory texts
 - c. Writing narratives to develop real or imaginary experiences to explore content area topics
5. Technology is used for production, publishing, and communication across the curriculum.

C. Extended time is provided for literacy instruction.

1. A protected, dedicated 90-120-minute block is allocated for literacy instruction in grades K-5 for all students in self-contained classrooms.
2. In any grade in which instruction is departmentalized students receive two to four hours of literacy instruction across language arts and in content area classes.
3. Instructional time for literacy has been leveraged by instruction in disciplinary literacy in all content areas.

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

D. Teachers are intentional in efforts to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students progress through school.

Teachers’ efforts may include the following:

1. Providing students with opportunities to self-select reading material and topics for research
2. Taking steps to provide students with an understanding of the relevance of academic assignments to their lives
3. Increasing access to texts that students consider engaging
4. Increasing opportunities for collaborating with peers in the learning process
5. Scaffolding students’ background knowledge and competency in navigating literary and informational texts to ensure their confidence and self-efficacy
6. Leveraging the creative use of technology within the learning process to promote engagement and relevance

Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for All Students

A. Information developed from the school-based data teams is used to inform RTI process (see Section III. E.)

1. The percentage of students currently served by grade levels K-12 in each tier is determined regularly to determine efficacy of instruction in each tier.
2. Protocols for identifying students and matching them to the appropriate intervention are in place.
3. Interventions are monitored frequently to ensure that they occur regularly and with fidelity.
4. The results of formative assessment are analyzed frequently to ensure students are progressing or adjusting instruction to match their needs.

B. Tier I Instruction based upon the CCGPS in grades K-12 is provided to all students in all classrooms. (See Sections IV. A & B)

If fewer than 80% of students are successful in any area:

1. Student data is examined to determine instructional areas of greatest need (e.g., decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, written expression).
2. Current practice in literacy instruction in each subject area has been assessed using a checklist (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA or some equivalent instrument) and a review of teachers’ lesson plans.
3. Teachers participate in ongoing professional learning on the following:
 - a. Direct, explicit instructional strategies that build students’ word identification, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills. (See Building Block 4. A.)
 - b. Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) resources for RTI, universal screening (e. g., GRASP, Aimsweb, DIBELS, STEEP, etc.)

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

- c. Team teaching and inclusion of students with special learning needs (EL, SWD, gifted) in the general education setting
- d. School-wide understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery during the school year

C. Tier 2 needs-based interventions are provided for targeted students.

1. Interventionists participate in professional learning on the following:
 - a. Using appropriate supplemental and intervention materials
 - b. Diagnosing reading difficulties
 - c. Using direct, explicit instructional strategies to address instructional needs
 - d. Charting data
 - e. Graphing progress
 - f. Differentiating instruction
2. Specific times for collaborative discussion and planning between content area T1 teachers and interventionists are built into the school calendar (teachers or para-educators).
3. Teachers participate in professional learning to ensure school-wide understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery during the school year.
4. Effectiveness of interventions is ensured by the following:
 - a. Providing sufficient blocks of time in the daily schedule for intervention
 - b. Providing adequate space in places conducive to learning
 - c. Providing competent, well-trained teachers and interventionists

D. In Tier 3, Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly.

1. In addition to everything that occurs at T1 and T2, data teams (expanded to include school psych, ESOL teacher, SLP, etc.) meet to:
 - a. Discuss students in T3 who fail to respond to intervention.
 - b. Receive professional learning on Student Support Team processes and procedures as outlined in the GaDOE manual and guidance.
 - c. Verify implementation of proven interventions.
 - d. Ensure that interventionists have maintained fidelity to intervention protocol prior to referral to SST.
2. T3 SST/data teams meet at least once a month to discuss student progress based on daily interventions that include a minimum of four data points.
3. Interventions are delivered 1:1 – 1:3 during a protected time daily by a trained interventionist.
4. T3 SST/data teams follow the established protocol to determine the specific reason when an EL fails to make progress (i.e., language difficulty or difference vs. disorder).

E. Tier 4-specially-designed learning is implemented through specialized programs, methodologies, or strategies based upon students’ inability to access the CCGPS any other way.

1. School schedules are developed to ensure least restrictive environment (LRE).

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

2. Building and system administrators are familiar with funding formulas affecting students in special programming.
3. Most highly qualified and experienced teachers support the delivery of instruction for students with the most significant needs (i.e., best Math II teacher teams with best special education teacher for team-taught instruction).
4. Special education, ESOL, and gifted teachers participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with delivery of CCGPS, even in separate settings.

Building Block 6. Improved Instruction through Professional Learning

A. Preservice education prepares new teachers for all aspects of literacy instruction including disciplinary literacy in the content areas.

Representatives from the community and/or school leadership meet with representatives from Professional Standards Commission to enlist support for ensuring that:

- a. Preservice teachers receive coursework in disciplinary literacy within content areas.
- b. Teacher preparation is revised to reflect needs that districts report with new teachers.

B. In-service personnel participate in ongoing professional learning in all aspects of literacy instruction including disciplinary literacy in the content areas.

1. The school calendar includes protected time for teachers to collaboratively analyze data, share expertise, study the standards, plan lessons, examine student work, and reflect on practice.
2. Teachers participate in professional learning in the CCGPS based on the needs revealed by student data as well as by surveys, interest inventories and teacher observations.
3. Teachers participate in ongoing professional learning on the use of the core program.
4. Teachers’ instruction is monitored through classroom observations or walkthroughs using a variety of assessment tools tied to professional learning.
5. An instructional coach provides site-based support for administrators, faculty and staff, where possible.
6. Intervention providers receive program-specific training before the beginning of the year to prepare teachers and staff for implementation.
7. Administrators, faculty, and staff have received training in administering, analyzing and interpreting results of assessments in terms of literacy.
8. Some or all of the following personnel participate in all professional learning opportunities:
 - a. Paraprofessionals
 - b. Support staff
 - c. Interventionists

Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12

Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”

- d. Substitute teachers
- e. Pre-service teachers working at the school
- f. Administrators
- g. All faculty

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