Tip Sheet

Literacy Priorities in Local District ARP Plans

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CCNETWORK
Comprehensive Center Network

How to Use

This review guide is set up as an interactive template for reviewing and monitoring district and school plans that allocate resources for literacy purposes. The template includes important questions to consider along with tips and relevant links for more information. The template enables you to directly indicate whether considerations have been adequately taken into account adequately and make notes about suggested changes or additional questions. The completed template can be saved and printed.

Reviewers should first read through the template, becoming familiar with the four considerations that apply to all literacy initiatives (beginning page 6). Next identify the type of literacy initiative (e.g., curriculum purchase, professional development) to be reviewed (choices on page 10). Selecting one of the literacy initiatives on page 10 will take you to questions and tips.

Introduction

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) has created opportunities for school districts to address students' learning and social-emotional challenges originating from the pandemic by improving and augmenting existing programs. To receive approval to spend ARP funds, state agencies are required to describe how they will support their local educational agencies (LEAs) in developing high-quality plans for LEAs' use of ARP Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. Local district plans are intended to describe ways they will address the academic impact of lost instructional time, especially for those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This tip sheet is intended to help state-level staff review LEAs' plans regarding ARP funding to accelerate literacy learning to ensure the return on federal investments in the form of student success.

Why Review Literacy Plans

A thorough and systematic review of LEA plans from a literacy perspective serves at least five purposes:

Identify policy and practice areas (e.g., curricular expectations) where additional state-level guidance might be needed

Identify common goals and needs to frame technical assistance

Help school districts to assess readiness to implement plans successfully

Provide targeted support to individual LEAs, as needed, to ensure success

Support use of evidence-based practices wherever possible

To meet those purposes, this tip sheet identifies questions for state educational agencies (SEAs) to consider in their reviews of LEA plans for a variety of proposed literacy initiatives.

Examination of state-level ARP plans shows that states are encouraging districts to use funds for these literacy purposes:

Establishing Learning Acceleration Initiatives, Including Tutoring Programs

Providing Professional Development

Procuring Additional And Improved Assessments And Curriculum Materials

Adding Staff With Literacy Expertise

Extending Learning Time, Including Summer And Out-Of-School Programs

Preparing Families To Support Children's Literacy Development

We encourage SEA reviewers to augment and modify the considerations to better meet their state's context. For example, some states have approved lists of literacy curricula and assessments or guidelines that would limit purchases.

Sections

The template is organized in three sections.

Four Considerations For All Literacy-Related Initiatives

Student Focus   **Alignment**   **Sustainability**   **Evaluation**

Student Focus

All literacy initiatives should address in an explicit way the students most impacted by the pandemic and describe how the initiatives will benefit them. ARP funds are designed to accelerate learning for students who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic in terms of in literacy, which is likely to include younger students, English learners, students with disabilities, students with less family support, and students with limited access to reading materials. It is important for districts to communicate these key messages to school leaders.

Four Considerations For All Literacy-Related Initiatives

Student Focus   **Alignment**   **Sustainability**   **Evaluation**

Alignment

It should be clear how new initiatives align with or intentionally replace or supplement existing literacy programs.

Four Considerations For All Literacy-Related Initiatives

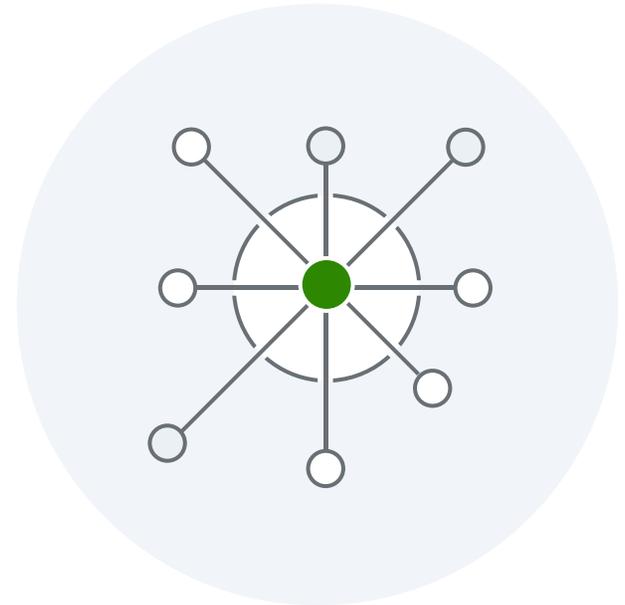**Student Focus**　　　**Alignment**　　　**Sustainability**　　　**Evaluation**

Sustainability

Consider whether the LEA will be able to sustain expenditures for the initiative once ARP funds are no longer available. Students who were most affected by the pandemic are likely to need support for several years, and initiatives that rely on personnel will require funding beyond the scope of ARP funds. The district may consider early on how to use other funding sources to continue programs that show promise, such as supporting some new purposes with Title I, Title II-A, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding.

Resources Related to Blending and Braiding Funding:

[Blending and Braiding Funds to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19 on the Most Vulnerable Students](#)

[Leveraging Resources: Blending and Braiding Funds](#)

Four Considerations For All Literacy-Related Initiatives

Student Focus   Alignment   Sustainability   **Evaluation**

Evaluation

The LEA should have a plan for collecting and reviewing relevant data to determine whether the investment of funds is producing desired results and a plan for gathering formative feedback to improve the program. Because any new initiative, especially those that represent substantial investments, will require adaptations to local conditions, it is important to track implementation progress and indicators of success so that course corrections can be made. New literacy initiatives may require rethinking benchmarks and assessments used to gauge results.

Considerations

Select the literacy-related initiative that is the best match for the literacy expenditures you are reviewing.
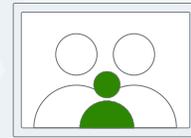
Considerations For Literacy Acceleration Initiatives

Tutoring, Extended Learning Time, Intervention

1. How has the LEA determined the scope of the need for initiatives to accelerate student literacy learning, and how will students be selected and recruited? What information will be used in student selection for tutoring?

   Tip: A selection process should identify students most likely to benefit (e.g., students who need targeted skills work, students who are able to attend three or more sessions per week) but also recognize that some students may require additional supports to participate fully.

2. How will initiatives be integrated and aligned with Tier 1 literacy instruction? What curriculum will be used, for example, in tutoring or during small group interventions? What are plans for communication between interventionists and tutors and classroom teachers?

   Tip: The opportunity for close coordination with Tier 1 instruction is enhanced with in-school scheduling.

3. What type of experience has the district had with similar acceleration initiatives? How will the proposed initiative be similar and different? If there is an existing program, what will ARP funding enable the district to do differently (e.g., add more sessions, enhance professional development)?

   Tip: ARP funding provides the chance to revisit current practices and refresh programs to enhance the potential for success.

4. In the case of a tutoring initiative, does the tutoring plan have the elements of high-dosage tutoring (e.g., no more than 1–4 in a group, at least three sessions per week, scheduled in the school day) to ensure success?

   Tip: Review this brief on the research-based elements of high dosage tutoring

   SEA Resources on Tutoring:

   High Impact Tutoring Toolkit
   Tutoring with TN ALL Corps

5. If the acceleration initiative requires additional staffing, what qualifications will LEAs seek? How will new literacy staff be recruited, compensated, prepared, and supervised? What/who is already in place in the district that can support the initiative (e.g., literacy coaches, parent liaisons)?

   Resource for Locating Potential Tutoring Partners:

   Tutoring Database

6. How frequently will student progress be assessed, and which data and growth expectations will be used to determine the continued value of the initiative?

   Resource on Progress Monitoring:

   Progress Monitoring

Four Considerations For All Literacy-Related Initiatives

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Considerations For Professional Development In Literacy Initiatives

1. What are the goals for literacy-related professional development (e.g., build knowledge of literacy for content area teachers; expand repertoire of pedagogical strategies; expand K-3 teachers' understanding of developing oral language, vocabulary, comprehension)?

    Tip: Professional development entails the building of baseline teacher knowledge and skills with job-embedded teacher follow-up over time. Consequently, relying on professional development provided by curriculum publishers is typically insufficient.

    Resource for elements of high-quality professional development:

    High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources

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2. How will the LEA conduct an assessment of teachers' needs for professional development in literacy?

    Tip: In determining professional development needs, include an analysis of patterns of reading achievement data, literacy screening results, and coaches' recommendations in addition to having teachers self-report.

3. How has the district anticipated the need for flexible modes of professional development delivery (e.g., virtual, hybrid) as needed?

    Tip: Virtual coaching has been proven to be a cost-effective approach with results similar to in-person coaching.

    Resource for online learning:

    Online Professional Learning Quality Checklist

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4. What opportunities are planned for teachers to observe model demonstrations of skills/practices?

    Tip: Given the complexity of strategies involved in teaching literacy, optimal learning opportunities include observing skilled teachers applying the strategies with students in a classroom context.

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5. What ongoing support structures are in place to support professional development (e.g., coaching, networking across districts, professional learning communities)? Assess their value.

    Tip: Provide opportunities for teachers who have participated to reflect on and self-assess their practice as well as receive feedback on their use of skills/practices.

Four Considerations For All Literacy-Related Initiatives

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Considerations For Newly Added Roles

E.G., Reading Coach, Literacy Specialist

1. What is the district's capacity to recruit (and then retain) qualified staff for the proposed positions, especially in light of overall shortages of staff, without depleting the classroom teaching staff?

2. Are proposed roles defined with clear job functions so that qualifications can be specified?

   Tip: Prior to adding new roles, assess the literacy strengths and interests of current staff. Consider whether some staff reassignment/reorganization—instead of or in addition to adding literacy staff—might meet literacy goals.

3. Given the short-term nature of ARP funding, what likely sources of funding for continuation of roles has the district identified to avoid future disruptions?

   Tip: If the role is not simply a short-term position (e.g., a professional development specialist hired to work for 2 years with K–3 staff), starting early to blend funding sources for partial support of positions could help to avoid disruptions.

Four Considerations For All Literacy–Related Initiatives

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Considerations For Purchasing Curriculum Materials

1. What messages has the district provided about whether any new reading curriculum materials are replacements for existing materials or supplementary?

    Tip: If curricula are not implemented with fidelity (that is, as intended by the developer), it is difficult to link to student outcomes. Without specific guidance, teachers are left to decide how to use materials.

2. What criteria will be used to select reading curriculum materials? Do the criteria reflect tenets of scientifically based reading and applicable state curriculum guidelines?

    Tip: It is important to review materials in some depth, not simply rely on publishers' promotional materials, to ensure that they are aligned with evidence-based practices

3. If the curriculum is new, what are the plans for implementation?

    Tip: An implementation plan would include a timeline for curriculum rollout, training for teachers and other staff, and expectations about dosage (e.g., amount of time to be used with students, progress monitoring, essential pedagogical strategies, related materials, and aligned interventions).

4. What are the provisions for technology support for new curriculum to ensure that curriculum can be delivered in different modes (e.g., hybrid, remote)?

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Considerations For Purchasing Assessments For Literacy

1. How do assessments reflect the theory of literacy being promoted by the district's literacy standards and curriculum?

   Tip: Ensure that members of the district's literacy team are involved in reviewing and selecting assessments, especially to ensure validity, (i.e., congruence with literacy approaches represented in the district's literacy standards).

   Resources for selecting assessments:

   Progress Monitoring

   Academic Screening Tools Chart

2. Has the district identified the users of new assessments and specific purposes (i.e., decisions that assessments will inform)? How do any new assessments complement or replace existing assessments, avoiding duplication?

   Tip: It is important to clarify how any new assessments will complement or replace existing assessments to avoid duplication and over-assessing students.
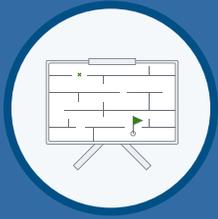
3. How will the users of new assessments be trained and supported to appropriately administer as well as interpret and use the results of assessments?

   Tip: Incorporate attention to assessments within professional development plans.

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Considerations For Initiatives To Develop Out-of-School/ Vacation And Summer Literacy Programs

1. Does the community have a source of centralized information about providers of out-of-school/extended learning time to help ensure that equitable opportunities are available to students who have been most affected by the pandemic?

   Tip: The district might initiate an inventory of options (e.g., provider, types of services, eligibility, duration) if none exists.

2. Has the district identified qualified out-of-school providers who have the intention of providing academic (as well as enrichment) support?

   Tip: Including out-of-school staff in literacy professional development supports alignment of instruction

3. What agreements are in place for information sharing between schools and out-of-school providers to facilitate meaningful planning of student learning activities? Does data exist to help determine the experiences that are effective for different groups of students?

   Tip: Formal memoranda of understanding help to safeguard student privacy while facilitating information exchange.

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Considerations For Initiatives To Support Family Engagement In Literacy

1. Does professional development include providing teachers with training and support to engage with families, using strategies that have been identified as promising?

   Tip: Teacher training programs typically have not included information on working with families. See tools for [working with families](#).

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2. Does the plan include supplementary funds to ensure that all families have the books, materials, and technology that enables them to participate in literacy support activities?

   Tip: Systematic assessment of families' needs for support is a key part of ongoing communication with caregivers.

Four Considerations For All Literacy–Related Initiatives

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ARP Logic Model

For guidance on developing logic models, associated definitions, and processes, please visit:
Logic Model Development Guide.

Problem

Students' education was interrupted due to COVID-19. It is anticipated that learning trajectories were negatively impacted. Activities to accelerate student learning and return each student to their appropriate learning trajectory will be necessary.

Inputs

ARP funds

Local staff

Content Area and methodological expertise

Community organizations/ Volunteers

Parents/Caregivers

Student data and formative assessment processes

Strategies, and Outputs

Outcomes

Constraints

Ongoing impact of the COVID-19 virus

ARP Logic Model: Strategies, Outputs, and Outcomes

Strategies/ Activities   Outputs   Short-term Outcomes   Mid-term Outcomes   Long-term Outcomes

List the key strategies and activities included in the initiative. Ex: Conduct individual needs assessments for each student.

ARP Logic Model: Strategies, Outputs, and Outcomes

Strategies/ Activities   **Outputs**   **Short-term Outcomes**   **Mid-term Outcomes**   **Long-term Outcomes**

What are the intended outputs, that is, the direct products or by-products of the activities? Ex: Individualized acceleration plans developed for each student.

ARP Logic Model: Strategies, Outputs, and Outcomes

Strategies/ Activities   **Outputs**   **Short-term Outcomes**   **Mid-term Outcomes**   **Long-term Outcomes**

What are the intended immediate outcomes (often awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills) over which the district or school has most direct influence?
Ex: Students achieve Year 1 goal set in individualized plan.

ARP Logic Model: Strategies, Outputs, and Outcomes

Strategies/ Activities　　**Outputs**　　**Short-term Outcomes**　　**Mid-term Outcomes**　　**Long-term Outcomes**

What are the intended changes directly connected to short-term outcomes (often behaviors or decisions), bridging between short and long term outcomes?
Ex: Students achieve Year 2 goal set in individualized plan.

ARP Logic Model: Strategies, Outputs, and Outcomes

Strategies/ Activities   **Outputs**   **Short-term Outcomes**   **Mid-term Outcomes**   **Long-term Outcomes**

What are the intended ultimate changes or impacts directly connected to mid-term outcomes (often achievement, attainments such as graduation rates, changes in teaching practices)? Ex: Retention rates are lower and graduation rate is higher compared to spring 2018.

Appendix

Resources   **Credits**   **Disclaimer**

[Blending and Braiding Funds to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19 on the Most Vulnerable Students](#)
https://www.wested.org/resources/blending-braiding-federal-title-funds/

[Leveraging Resources: Blending and Braiding Funds](#)
https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Blending-and-Braiding-061121.pdf

[Brief on The Research-Based Elements of High Dosage Tutoring](#)
https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/EdResearch_for_Recovery_Design_Principles_1.pdf

[High Impact Tutoring Toolkit](#)
https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/high_impact_tutoring_toolkit.pdf

[Tutoring with TN ALL Corps](#)
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/esser-planning-resources/TDOE-TNALLCorps-Guidance_FINAL.pdf

[Tutoring Database](#)
https://studentsupportaccelerator.com/database/tutoring

[Progress Monitoring](#)

https://intensiveintervention.org/data-based-individualization/progress-monitoring

[High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources](#)
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520732.pdf

[Online Professional Learning Quality Checklist](#)
https://tech.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Section-5-Online-Professional-Learning-Quality-Checklist-FINAL.pdf

[Progress Monitoring](#)
https://intensiveintervention.org/data-based-individualization/progress-monitoring

[Academic Screening Tools Chart](#)
https:// www. charts.intensiveintervention.org/ascreening

[Parents & Families](#)
https://www.improvingliteracy.org/family

[Logic Model Development Guide](#)
https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resources/2004/01/logic-model-development-guide

Appendix

Resources   **Credits**   **Disclaimer**

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The product was created by the National Center's literacy work group which is composed of RC7, RC8, RC9, RC13, RC14, and RC17.

Appendix

Resources   Credits   **Disclaimer**

The contents of this interactive template were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government.