

Pennsylvania State Literacy Plan Six Essential Elements

Standards

Literacy programs (birth-grade 12) require a well-articulated, coherent set of goals based on PDE standards. Articulation is needed between all levels, but especially at important transition points, (i.e., pre-school to kindergarten; elementary school to middle school; and middle school to secondary school). Such programs also require an understanding that there is a reciprocal relationship among the language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), and that each contributes to the learning of the others. Moreover, successful learning of complex information in the disciplines requires the meaningful integration of literacy experiences (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening).

Oral Language and Academic Discourse

Oral language is the foundation for learning and for literacy development. Speaking and listening are tools of communication that become the basis for the written word.

Assessment

An assessment system that addresses the dual purposes of assessment (i.e., accountability and informing decision-making) is a critical component of a district comprehensive literacy plan. An effective assessment plan requires the inclusion of technically adequate information, multiple measures, and provides opportunities for educators to learn how to administer, analyze, interpret, and apply data results to inform instructional practices and improve student learning.

21st Century Classrooms

Students in 21st century classrooms will need to be equipped with skills that go beyond what classrooms currently offer to meet future demands and address complex problems that can't be anticipated or presently conceived. Classrooms must offer students opportunities to develop real-world problem-solving skills that enable them to think critically and creatively, work collaboratively with others, and analyze, interpret, and synthesize information. Additionally, teachers in 21st century classrooms must have the knowledge and skills that allow them to provide students with opportunities to grapple with new, challenging, and difficult information. Such difficult learning should occur in an environment that is engaging, fosters resiliency, and includes both print and digital resources.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is key to enhancing students' ability to learn. Teachers must have the literacy knowledge and knowledge of students that enable them to plan instruction that accounts for the differences in students' needs, interests, cultures, and experiential backgrounds.

Disciplinary Literacy

Learning information in the academic disciplines is enhanced when teachers provide students with supported experiences and opportunities to read, write, talk, and think deeply in service of content learning. This allows students to experience deep disciplinary literacy as a means of learning content.