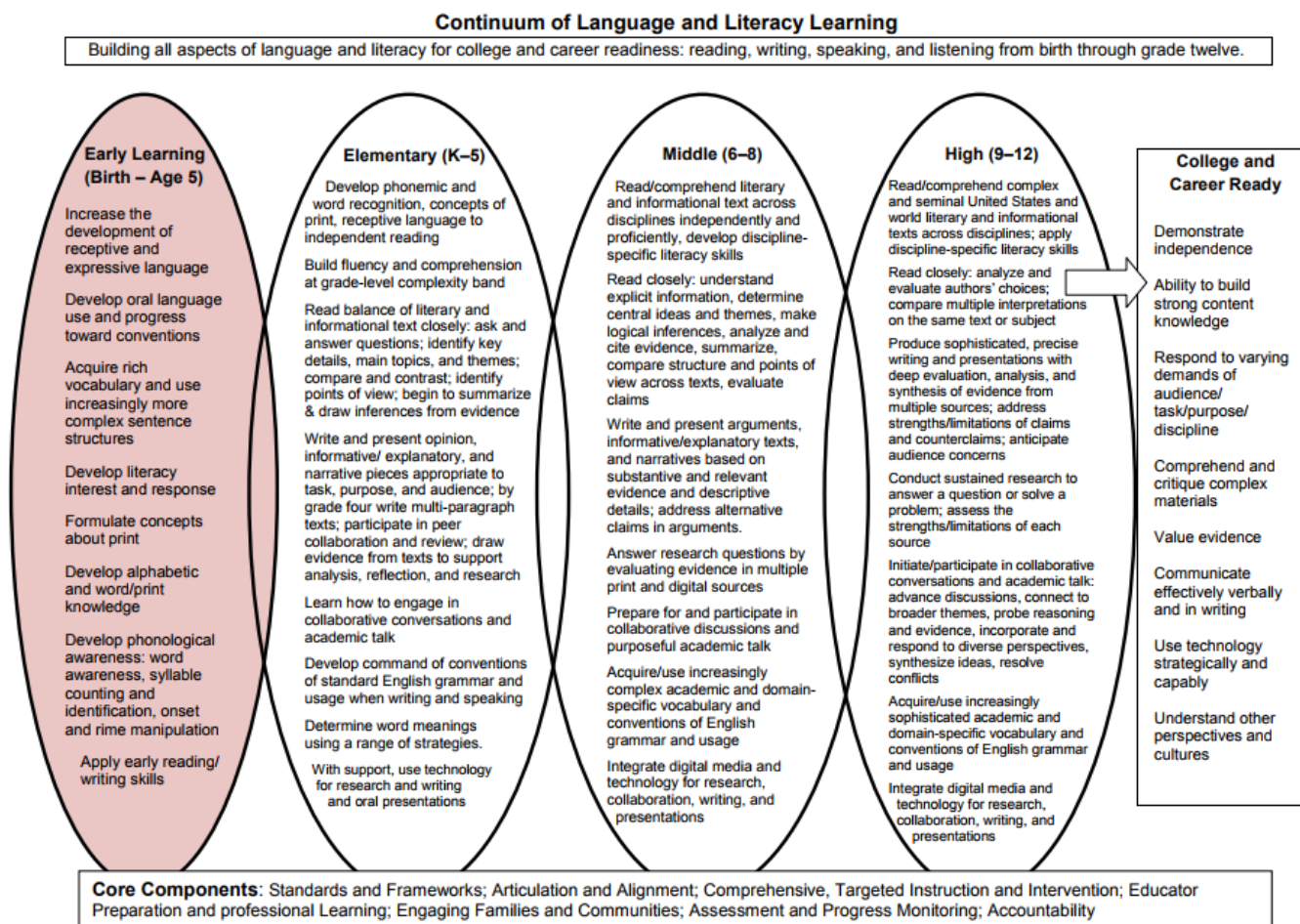


Educators know how to teach literacy. Here is how:

1. Establish research-based literacy programs based on the stage of education

- From kindergarten to third grade, students should learn the following:
 - **Alphabetics**, or the idea that written spellings systematically represent spoken words. Alphabetics includes instruction in both phonemic awareness (awareness that spoken language is made up of phonemes) and phonics (the use of correspondences between written and spoken language to decode or spell words). Alphabetics help students learn to read more quickly, decode words, learn to spell, and improve reading comprehension.
 - **Fluency** is the ability to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency can be improved by guided repeated oral reading procedures.
 - **Reading comprehension** must be taught directly. It involves vocabulary learning but also specific procedures that guide students to develop awareness of how they are comprehending as they attempt to read and write.
- For adolescents, literacy instruction requires the following:
 - **Comprehension** is the most important component of reading instruction at the secondary level and it should be a classroom activity for both language arts and content-area teachers.
 - **Motivation** is essential. Students must be motivated and engaged in order to develop their literacy, and teachers need to tune in to their students' lives in order to understand what students find relevant.
 - **Vocabulary instruction** must be provided explicitly. Adolescent learners need to understand the words they encounter in increasingly difficult text and need strategies to figure out unknown words.
 - **Word study** and **fluency** instruction are also important for struggling readers.

In the SRCL Plan, the State recognizes that these skills are essential to a continuum of literacy learning across the grades.¹



2. Implement assessments and interventions

As the State recognizes, and as educators know, effective literacy assessments and interventions that inform teacher practices are critical to literacy education:

“Developing educator awareness of research-based interventions, when to use them, and, based on individual student needs, which interventions are most effective for struggling readers, students with disabilities, and English learners is essential. Examples of strategies for differentiating instruction include adjusting pacing, complexity, novelty, and depth.”²

¹ Glen Thomas et al., *California Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Plan: A Guidance Document* 64 (2012), <https://tinyurl.com/SRCLP>.

² *Id.* at 74.

Educators know that

- Students should be screened for potential reading problems through screening assessments, diagnostic tests, and annual reading tests.
- Multi-tiered intervention strategies should be used when reading difficulties are identified.

3. Support Teachers

- Practices and policies to stabilize and professionalize the teaching force should be used to enable the delivery of consistent, high-quality literacy instruction and intervention, including implementing systemic, coordinated, and high-quality professional development; implementing programs designed to address secondary/vicarious trauma among educators; and providing support and incentivizing teaching.
- Professional development opportunities should be built into the regular school schedule.
- According to the State’s SRCL Plan, “[t]o successfully implement the new standards and increase student academic achievement, district and school leaders need to engage teachers in ongoing professional learning to stay informed of current research and best practices in literacy instruction and assessment. To ensure effectiveness, professional learning should become a system-wide priority at the district level—not simply a strategy for individual educator growth. Key to the success of any professional learning initiative at the district level is a system based on research, collaboration, learning resources, and access to high quality learning opportunities on an ongoing basis.”³

4. Implement Practices to Promote Parent Involvement

- One component of a research-based program for ensuring that schools have the capacity to deliver basic education affording meaningful access to literacy is involving parents as participants in their children’s literacy education.⁴ Parent involvement positively impacts student academic achievement regardless of a parent’s education, income, or background.
- Essential elements of a parental involvement plan include emphasizing ongoing communication between school and home in English and the home language, as needed; creating a welcoming environment at school to encourage family involvement as partners in learning; providing services in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner; and encouraging parent education and school, home, and community activities that promote family literacy.

³ *Id.* at 81-82.

⁴ *Id.* at 47, 87, 137, 184.

5. Implement Practices to Promote Learning Readiness

- One component of a research-based program for ensuring that schools have the capacity to deliver basic education affording meaningful access to literacy is to address children’s social-emotional needs.
- The State has recognized that “prolonged exposure to violence and trauma can seriously undermine a child’s ability to learn, form relationships, and focus appropriately in the classroom.”⁵ For more information on trauma’s effect on learning, visit <http://www.traumaandlearning.org/how-trauma-impacts-learning>
- At minimum, educators must be provided training to understand, proactively recognize, and address the effects of complex trauma; incorporate social-emotional learning into curricula; avoid re-traumatizing students through the use of punitive discipline; and provide access to mental health support.⁶

⁵ California Department of Education, *Focusing on Children Under Stress*, Aug. 9, 2017 <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr17ltr0809.asp>.

⁶ California Commission on Teaching Credentialing, California Teaching Performance Expectations 7 (2016) <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/adopted-tpes-2016.pdf> (stating that beginning teachers should recognize that students come to school with traumatic childhood experiences, mental health issues, and social-emotional and physical health needs); *Focusing On Children Under Stress, Suggested Education Protocol*, FOCUSCalifornia.org, <https://www.focuscalifornia.org/education-protocol> (last visited Nov. 14, 2017) (“School districts are encouraged to provide trauma sensitive training to all school employees if possible.”).