

Select Language

Adults & Community

How Can We Help?

DESE COVID-19 Updates || COVID Relief Information

DESE's Literacy Initiatives & Efforts

Missouri Read, Lead, Exceed



DESE is excited to support evidence-based literacy instruction focused on the Science of Reading. The **Missouri Read, Lead, Exceed initiative** is the state's comprehensive plan to dedicate \$25 million in state funding and just over \$35 million in federal relief funding to support student literacy. As part of this plan, up to 15,000 K-3 classroom teachers could receive training in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®). This course of study gives teachers the skills needed to teach language and literacy to every student by providing in-depth training in the Science of Reading. K-3 classroom teachers will receive this training at no cost to them or their local education agency (LEA).

This opportunity for LETRS® training provides sustained and job-embedded professional learning. Teachers will develop evidence-based foundational knowledge and skills to deliver explicit and systematic instruction focused on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and language that positively affect long-term systemic change in literacy outcomes. Nearly 4,000 Missouri educators have already participated in LETRS® training offered by DESE, their Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs), and/or LEA and have responded with excitement and positive feedback.

Why is this important?

Aligning instruction with the science of reading gives students the best chance of becoming successful readers. The creation and development of connections in our brains, created primarily through instruction, is necessary for reading.

- Regardless of the textbook or instructional materials used, if the teacher does not have the knowledge of evidence-based practices and standards, all students will not acquire what is needed to learn.

Language Essentials for Teachers and Spelling (LETRS®) Training



We are pleased that all of our year one cohorts have been filled, and nearly 4,000 teachers are engaging in LETRS training in the Read, Lead, Exceed Initiative! Pre-registration for Summer and Fall 2023 cohorts is now open, and we are now taking pre-registrations for year two cohorts. Please use the following link to pre-register for the **Read, Lead, Exceed LETRS Training** by April 30, 2023, for cohorts beginning in July, 2023. Once pre-registration is complete, the district's local Regional Professional Development Center will contact teachers to schedule the training dates.

For questions about LETRS® training availability, contact your local RPDC or Heather Knight, Director of Literacy, at Heather.Knight@dese.mo.gov.

Literacy-Based Quick Reference Guide

DESE's Literacy-Based Quick Reference Guide is now available for LEAs here on DESE's Literacy Initiatives webpage. The guide is intended to help school leaders navigate the changes in legislation aimed to improve how Missouri students are taught to read. Additionally, the guide provides information regarding the roles and responsibilities at the state, LEA, school, and classroom level. The most significant changes that go into effect on January 1, from **Section 167.645**, address literacy instruction being delivered to students who are exhibiting a reading deficiency or who are at risk for dyslexia.

Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Program Funding

DESE's Introduction to Missouri's Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Program Funding is now available. In the summer of 2022, the Missouri legislature approved the Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Program Fund (Senate Bill 681, Section 161.241, RSMo) to be used to reimburse local education agencies (LEAs) for efforts to improve student literacy. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will administer this funding and provide support to LEAs as they move through the application process. These state funds, along with federal COVID-19 relief funds, will be used to improve student literacy, encourage and promote alignment with evidence-based literacy instruction practices, and overcome the learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the **federal** and **state** comprehensive guidance documents for detailed information and allocation amounts.

State Literacy Plan - Steps to Success Series

The purpose of the **Missouri Read, Lead, Exceed: Steps to Success** series is to provide a framework for action with the intent of aligning state, district, and local literacy efforts and ensuring that our students develop the strong literacy skills they need for the future. This initiative will empower educators, inspire students, and encourage leaders with high-quality learning, support, and resources making literacy accessible to all.

Step One: Preparing for your Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Step One: Preparing for Your Comprehensive Literacy Plan introduces and provides a comprehensive look at the research behind each component of a well-designed literacy plan. An integrated literacy model ensures that high-quality literacy instruction occurs within the context of inclusive and equitable systems of schooling and features high levels of engagement, a focus on continuous improvement, and application of the Comprehensive Literacy Framework. Step 1 includes the understanding that the framework is not a mandated document for districts but rather a collection of resources, ideas, and themes that might be considered in building a local, Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP). It sets the direction for literacy programs statewide by describing the alignment and integration of state literacy initiatives.

Additional DESE Literacy Information

- **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program**
- **English Language Arts**
- **Dyslexia**
- **English Language Development**

English Language Development (ELD) instruction is designed specifically to advance English learners (ELs) knowledge and use of English in increasingly sophisticated ways. In the context of the larger effort to help English learners succeed in school, ELD instruction is designed to help them learn and acquire English to a level of proficiency that maximizes their capacity to engage successfully in academic studies taught in English.

Although there might be multiple goals for ELD instruction—engaging in social interactions inside and outside of school and in other pursuits requiring English proficiency (e.g., obtaining news, serving as a juror, voting, shopping, banking, and locating and using information)—we would argue that preparation for academic studies taught in English remains the top priority because of its relevance to school and career success. Helping ELs succeed in academic contexts is no doubt the most challenging goal and most likely the greatest need to emerge in recent English learner research.

- **Blueprint for English Learner Success.**
- **Office of Childhood**

The Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS) are a framework of expectations for what children can do from infancy to kindergarten entry. Each standard includes a description of what the child may be doing to demonstrate meeting the standard, as well as, activities to give adults examples of ways to support the child in learning and mastering a skill or knowledge.

The MELS provides a comprehensive set of early childhood educational expectations for children's development and learning in all developmental areas, including language and early literacy skills. Visit the Early Learning Standards webpage for a copy of the full document, an informational video, and other resources to support the use of the MELS in your early learning program.

- **Adult Education & Literacy**

A division of DESE, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provides free virtual and face-to-face classroom instruction to eligible Missouri citizens in Reading, Language, Mathematics, English Language Competency, Workplace Literacy, Digital Literacy, Civics, and Citizenship. All classes are taught by certified instructors. Adult students receive preparation for Missouri's High School Equivalency exam (HiSET®) integrated with career specific workforce training. English learners become literate in the English language while learning the responsibilities of citizenship and workforce preparation.

The purpose of DESE AEL is to assist adults to become literate, attain their high school equivalency (which is the HiSET® in Missouri), obtain employment, and to become self-sufficient. In addition, the programs assist parents in obtaining educational skills necessary to become full partners in the education of their children as well as assist those students learning English to become literate and understand the responsibilities of citizenship in the United States.

Categories

College and Career Readiness

- **Adult Education & Literacy (AEL)**
- **Career Education**
- **Curriculum**
- **High School Equivalency**
- **Lifesmarts**
- **MO LEAP**
- **Missouri Career Pathways**
- **School Counseling**
- **Student Health and Wellness**



Administrative Memos



Webinars



DESE Application Sign-In (DAS)

About Us

Careers
Commissioner of Education
Communications
Non-Discrimination Statement
State Board of Education

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Resources

Accessibility
DESE Application Sign-In
Data Acquisition Calendar
Data Portal
Missouri Learning Standards
Employee Email Access

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[Proposed Rules](#)
[DESE Periodic Rule Review](#)

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