

# WDE WLLP

## Component 1: Introduction



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### Wyoming Department of Education

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## Executive Summary

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The 2025 Wyoming Language and Literacy Plan (WLLP) is a strategic framework designed to serve as Wyoming's North Star for advancing statewide language and literacy outcomes. This plan provides a comprehensive approach aimed at transforming educational practices across the state. By establishing clear goals and measurable objectives, the WLLP provides a roadmap for educators, administrators, and policymakers. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration among families, educators, community organizations, policymakers, caregivers, and stakeholders to create a unified effort toward improving literacy for every child in Wyoming.

The WLLP supports a seamless language and literacy continuum from birth through grade 12, ensuring that all students—especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, multilingual learners, and children with disabilities—receive high-quality literacy instruction. Wyoming's MTSS Literacy-aligned framework and evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading research ensures that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, has equitable access to evidence-based literacy instruction. This commitment acknowledges the diverse needs of students throughout the state and prioritizes instructional excellence that is reliable, effective, and proven to foster student growth. The plan establishes a structured foundation to strengthen statewide literacy instruction through high-quality professional learning, curriculum alignment, and strategic interventions.

The WLLP emphasizes the distinction between evidence-based and research-based practices. While research-based practices are grounded in studies and theoretical frameworks, evidence-based practices adhere to rigorous testing criteria outlined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This distinction ensures that instructional strategies have been independently verified and have demonstrated effectiveness in improving student outcomes. By aligning with the science of reading research, the WLLP strengthens evidence-based literacy instruction that is proven to drive student success. The plan's approach reflects Wyoming's commitment to ensuring that instructional practices are grounded in research-backed, evidence-aligned methodologies that consistently yield positive literacy outcomes.

The WLLP is structured into nine key components, addressing infrastructure, policies, targeted student and system needs, instructional frameworks, and continuous improvement strategies at both the local and state levels. These components provide a cohesive structure that aligns statewide literacy initiatives with best practices in curriculum, assessment, and instruction. This approach ensures that Wyoming's students are equipped with the skills necessary for academic achievement, career readiness, and success in higher education, the workforce, and military service. Additionally, the plan fosters collaborative partnerships among educators, administrators, families, and community stakeholders to sustain long-term literacy success.

This comprehensive initiative underscores the critical role of literacy in shaping Wyoming's future—not only as an academic priority but as a driver of economic growth, workforce development, and community well-being. A literate society contributes to a stronger economy, more engaged civic participation, and improved social outcomes. Through a shared commitment among educators, families, policymakers, and stakeholders, the WLLP establishes a sustainable foundation for literacy improvement that is adaptable to emerging challenges and evolving educational needs. These efforts will ensure that literacy remains a cornerstone of Wyoming's long-term educational strategy.

This plan is dedicated to the 94,488 students who represent the heart of Wyoming's future. Just as the mighty rivers of Wyoming carve paths through the landscape, shaping the land and nourishing life, these students are the driving force of their communities, shaping the future of the state. Their growth in language

and literacy is essential to Wyoming's vitality. By investing in their development, Wyoming ensures that students have the strength and resilience to navigate their paths and contribute to the state's success for generations to come. The WLLP's focus on evidence-based literacy instruction, strong professional learning networks, and cohesive systems alignment will continue to serve as Wyoming's North Star for literacy excellence.

As Wyoming moves forward, the WLLP serves as the North Star for literacy transformation, providing clear direction, aligned policies, and evidence-based literacy instruction to support the next generation of Wyoming learners. With statewide collaboration, targeted interventions, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the WLLP will drive lasting literacy success. By reinforcing this foundation, Wyoming will ensure that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive in an increasingly complex world. This is a call to action for educators, policymakers, families, and communities to uphold Wyoming's commitment to excellence in literacy education, ensuring that every learner has the skills to succeed and contribute meaningfully to the future of the state.

## Acknowledgments

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The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) extends its deepest gratitude to the parents, caregivers, educators, literacy leaders, national experts, higher education institutions, researchers, and stakeholders whose commitment to language and literacy has shaped the Wyoming Comprehensive Language and Literacy Plan (WLLP). This journey began with the Statewide Literacy Needs Assessment in March 2024 and evolved through the dedicated efforts of the initial drafting team, the four-phased review process, and the collaborative contributions of participants from both statewide and national communities.

The WDE acknowledges the insightful feedback received during the statewide review process. These contributions highlighted Wyoming's unique educational landscape and refined the plan to meet the diverse language and literacy needs of students across the state. Additionally, input from focus group participants and national experts enriched the plan by ensuring alignment with evidence-based language and literacy practices, establishing a strong foundation for improvement. WDE's cross-unit collaborations further advanced these efforts by aligning the WLLP with state educational goals and policies, providing a progressive framework emphasizing equitable access to evidence-based, high-quality language and literacy instruction for every student.

Completing this plan marks a significant milestone in Wyoming's journey to enhance language and literacy outcomes. It reflects a shared commitment among stakeholders to prioritize evidence-based language practices and equitable access to high-quality instruction. This milestone not only underscores the dedication of educators and advocates but also establishes a clear pathway for meaningful change. It serves as a catalyst for ongoing efforts at the state and local districts, offering a framework that supports continuous growth and addresses the diverse needs of Wyoming's educators and students.

The WDE is proud to stand alongside Wyoming's parents, caregivers, educators, literacy leaders, national experts, higher education institutions, researchers, and stakeholders in this vital work. Together, we celebrate the transformative power of evidence-based language and literacy improvement in shaping the future for every learner. Our collective dedication ensures that every student in Wyoming has the opportunity to thrive. The journey ahead is filled with promise, guided by the WLLP as a strong North Star for continuous growth and success in advancing evidence-based language and literacy improvement for all students.

In Partnership,  
The Wyoming Department of Education Comprehensive Literacy State Development Team

## Component 1: Introduction

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### Purpose

The Wyoming Language and Literacy Plan (WLLP) is like the intricate network of trails that weave through Wyoming's majestic landscapes, guiding students, educators, and communities toward their literacy potential. Its purpose is to serve as a comprehensive roadmap for advancing language and literacy across the state, ensuring all Wyoming students have equitable access to evidence-based literacy programming grounded in the science of reading research that prepares them for success. By aligning evidence-based instruction and fostering continuous improvement from early childhood through grade 12, the WLLP ensures a seamless and effective journey toward literacy excellence.

Central to the WLLP is a continuous improvement process that leverages data-driven decisions to identify statewide priorities, evaluate outcomes, and refine practices. Supported by the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant, this framework strengthens state and local initiatives by integrating the implementation of evidence-aligned, high-quality literacy programs. These efforts align with English Language Arts standards, address Wyoming's literacy priorities, and ensure sustainable progress through collaboration and evidence-based strategies.

The WLLP emphasizes the importance of a cohesive language and literacy continuum that bridges early childhood programs and K-12 systems. As a living document, the WLLP evolves to incorporate new data, monitor progress, and adapt to meet the educational needs of Wyoming. By providing equitable access to evidence-based pathways to literacy, the WLLP ensures that all learners, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. This commitment to continuous improvement fosters a supportive environment where every student can thrive in their literacy journey.

### Context and Need

Wyoming stands at a pivotal moment, presenting unique literacy opportunities that require dedicated and collaborative efforts. Recent state assessments and data reveal areas where significant progress can occur, particularly in supporting students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and those from high-poverty communities. These findings highlight the need for a comprehensive, data-driven strategy to close these gaps. The ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic further intensify the urgency for immediate and effective action.

The WLLP is a visionary initiative that integrates the Comprehensive Literacy State Development framework outlined by the United States Department of Education, current research, and evidence-based language and literacy practices. It builds upon and unifies existing state literacy initiatives, content standards, and related documents, offering cohesive support for educators, families, caregivers, and stakeholders across the state. This plan reflects Wyoming's steadfast commitment to empowering every student, regardless of background or circumstance, to develop strong literacy skills. By transforming challenges into opportunities for growth, the WLLP paves the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for all Wyoming students.

### Overview

The WLLP serves as a comprehensive guide to unify the collective efforts of educators, administrators, researchers, families, caregivers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders in advancing literacy across the state. It provides clear direction on the essential components of Wyoming's literacy initiatives, ensuring each group has the tools and knowledge necessary to contribute effectively.

This plan offers practical insights and strategies tailored to the diverse needs of all participants, ranging from policymakers to those directly supporting student learning. By organizing its content into key sections, the document highlights the collaborative roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group, ensuring a cohesive approach to literacy development throughout the state. This structured framework facilitates effective communication among stakeholders and fosters a unified effort to enhance literacy outcomes for all learners. Ultimately, the plan serves as a vital resource for guiding the collective commitment to improving literacy across Wyoming.

## **1. Introduction**

This section underscores the significance of the WLLP and its integral connection to evidence-based language and literacy instruction.

## **2. Infrastructure, Legislation, and Related Policies**

This section explores the state's language and literacy infrastructure, legislation, and policies that influence education.

## **3. Targeted Student and Systems Needs**

This section identifies specific student and system needs, highlights literacy gaps and strengths, and outlines additional priorities for language and literacy.

## **4. Alignment of WLLP With Other State Initiatives**

This section inventories existing state literacy initiatives to align and enhance efforts toward advancing language and literacy outcomes.

## **5. Goals and Activities**

This section outlines SMART goals—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable—including the activities designed to achieve them.

## **6. Effective Evidence-Based Framework for Literacy Instruction**

This section outlines the evidence-based framework that guides the alignment of theoretical frameworks, scientific research, and evidence-based models in language and literacy instruction in Wyoming.

## **7. Implementation and Continuous Improvement at the Local Level**

This section delineates the roles and responsibilities of the SEA and LEAs in implementing and sustaining the WLLP.

## **8. Continuous Improvement at the State Level**

This section establishes timelines, defines state-level improvement strategies, and outlines mechanisms for continuous feedback and adaptation.

## **9. Resources and Tools**

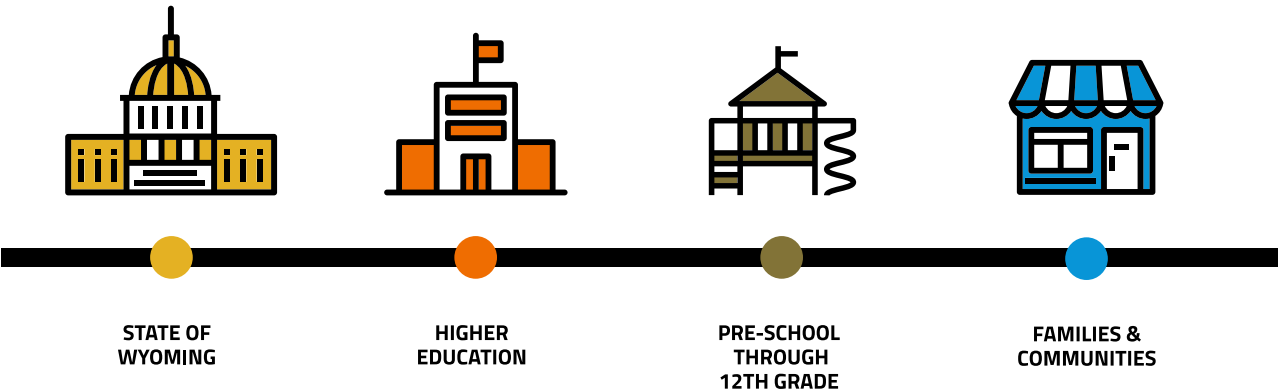
This section provides a curated collection of resources and tools to support implementation and foster ongoing improvements.

Together, these components create a robust framework for improving language and literacy outcomes across Wyoming. The WLLP effectively addresses the multifaceted challenges of literacy instruction, fostering a collaborative and systematic approach that enhances educational outcomes for all students. By unifying the efforts of educators, policymakers, families, and caregivers, the plan provides clear direction and practical strategies tailored to the diverse needs of each stakeholder. This collaborative effort not only clarifies roles and responsibilities but also cultivates a unified commitment to advancing literacy for every learner. As we transition to the next section, we will delve into the audience overview, highlighting the specific roles each stakeholder plays in achieving the ambitious goals set forth by the WLLP.

## Audience

The WLLP engages a broad and essential audience, relying on stakeholders’ collective collaboration and commitment across the state for its success. These stakeholders include families, parents, and caregivers, who serve as the foundation of a child’s language and literacy development; policymakers and legislators, who shape supportive education policies; and the WDE, which play a supportive role in implementing state statutes by assisting Local Education Agencies (LEAs). LEAs are vital in overseeing and managing public education within their communities. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) also play a critical role in preparing the next generation of educators, while community organizations and partners provide valuable local support. By fostering these partnerships, WLLP ensures a comprehensive and unified approach to enhancing language and literacy outcomes for all learners in Wyoming. These roles and responsibilities are represented in Figure 1 below, illustrating the collaborative framework that drives WLLP’s success.

Figure 1





The following section provides a deeper exploration of these roles, emphasizing how their collective efforts are essential to achieving the goals of the WLLP and ensuring literacy success for all students across the state.

## **Parents, Families, and Caregivers**

Parents, families, and caregivers are foundational to this effort, serving as a child's first and lifelong teachers. They establish the critical foundation for education, shaping the environment where literacy skills emerge well before formal schooling. Their involvement is essential to the success of the WLLP, as they reinforce literacy efforts at home, model positive reading behaviors, and nurture a love for learning that supports children throughout their educational journey. By actively engaging caregivers and families, the WLLP fosters literacy development from the earliest years, creating a cohesive and supportive pathway for students as they grow. This foundational engagement is crucial for building a strong literacy base that extends beyond the classroom, driving the success of Wyoming's comprehensive literacy initiatives.

## **Policymakers and Legislators**

Policymakers and Legislators play a defining role. Their support in crafting and endorsing legislation that positively impacts literacy education is vital, as it directly influences the allocation of funding, the establishment of educational standards, and the creation of accountability systems that hold districts and schools responsible for student outcomes. The decisions policymakers create shape the environment in which these literacy initiatives take place, ensuring that schools and districts are equipped with the necessary resources, such as evidence-based Tier 1 core instructional and intervention materials, professional development for educators, and interventions for struggling readers. By aligning legislative efforts with the goals of the WLLP, policymakers can create a supportive landscape in which literacy initiatives can thrive, fostering an educational system responsive to the needs of all students, particularly those at risk of falling behind. Through thoughtful legislation and sustained commitment, policymakers play a crucial role in driving statewide literacy improvements and ensuring that every student in Wyoming has the opportunity to achieve literacy success.

## **Wyoming Department of Education (WDE)**

The WDE plays a supportive role in implementing state statutes, assisting LEAs, and ensuring compliance with federal requirements, as guided by the U.S. Department of Education. The WDE partners with LEAs to develop and maintain rigorous academic standards, administer statewide assessments, and establish accountability systems to monitor school and district performance. They work collaboratively with LEAs to ensure equitable access to education for all students, including those from underserved populations, students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students, while addressing disparities in resources and opportunities to close achievement and opportunity gaps. The WDE provides technical assistance, professional development, and resources to LEAs, oversee the distribution of federal funds, and ensure these funds are used to implement evidence-based, high-quality instructional practices and interventions. Additionally, they collect and report data on student performance, graduation rates, and other key metrics to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, ensure transparency and accountability, and provide accessible information about school performance.

## **Local Education Agencies (LEAs)**

LEAs play a critical role in overseeing and managing public education within their communities by balancing state and federal requirements with local priorities. LEAs are responsible for the adoption and implementation of high-quality curricular resources, ensuring compliance with education laws, and addressing the unique



needs of their students through evidence-based programs and interventions. They manage school operations, allocate resources, provide professional development for educators, and offer services to support all students, including those with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged populations. LEAs also administer statewide assessments, monitor student performance, and report data to ensure accountability and transparency. In partnership with the WDE, LEAs collaborate to align local efforts with state goals, leveraging resources and expertise to improve educational outcomes. By fostering community engagement and tailoring programs to reflect local values, LEAs ensure students receive the support and opportunities to succeed academically and thrive within their communities.

### **Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)**

IHEs within and beyond Wyoming play a critical role in teacher preparation by aligning programs with scientifically based reading instruction. These programs equip future educators with the skills and knowledge to support students across the PreK–12 literacy continuum. Emphasizing the five core components of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—programs require explicit, systematic instruction, adequate instructional time, objective assessments, and practical application opportunities. High-quality, evidence-based materials are prioritized, while outdated practices like three-cueing, balanced literacy, and guided reading are explicitly avoided.

Teacher candidates are trained to use evidence-based instructional materials (HQIM) and practices (HQIP) to support diverse learners, multilingual students, and those with characteristics of dyslexia. With training in data-informed instruction, candidates learn to differentiate teaching to meet all students' needs and provide equitable literacy support. Programs also focus on preparing educators to assist striving secondary learners, including struggling readers and multilingual learners, while maintaining high expectations for mastery, structured feedback, and increased instructional time. Continuous evaluation and improvement ensure these programs remain responsive to evolving needs and prepare educators to advance literacy outcomes effectively.

### **Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB)**

Teacher Licensure in Wyoming, ensures educators have the skills and knowledge necessary to foster student success. In Wyoming, ensuring that educators are well-prepared and highly qualified is a cornerstone of the state's commitment to providing students with a high-quality education. The PTSB plays a pivotal role in upholding these standards by establishing clear pathways for teacher licensure. Adhering to Wyoming state law, all teachers and administrators employed in Wyoming school districts must meet rigorous licensing requirements. This process includes completing an approved teacher preparation program, reflecting the state's dedication to maintaining excellence in education. Wyoming offers distinct routes to teacher licensure, providing opportunities for aspiring educators to meet these high standards and contribute to the success of students across the state.

### **Community Partners**

Community Partners are indispensable in extending the reach and impact of literacy initiatives, providing crucial supplementary support and resources to students and families that schools alone cannot address. These organizations create a well-rounded support system that reinforces the skills students develop in the classroom by offering after-school programs, tutoring services, and family literacy sessions. Their deep connections within the community allow them to engage with families personally, building trust and encouraging participation in literacy efforts. These partnerships also facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise, enabling literacy initiatives to be tailored to the unique needs of each community. Through

collaboration with schools, families, and other local entities, community organizations amplify the impact of literacy efforts, fostering a holistic approach to education that benefits students across Wyoming and cultivating a culture of literacy that supports lifelong learning.

### **Business and Industry Leaders**

Business and industry leaders are encouraged to engage as key contributors to the WLLP, recognizing the critical role of a literate workforce in driving Wyoming's economic development. Their involvement highlights the strong connection between literacy and broader goals of economic growth and community well-being. By supporting literacy initiatives, these leaders help ensure Wyoming's future workforce has the essential skills to succeed in a rapidly evolving economy. Contributions can include partnerships with schools to provide resources, mentorship opportunities, and support for literacy programs that prepare students for the demands of the modern workplace. Collaboration between business, industry, and education is essential to fostering a thriving state. By aligning their efforts with the goals of the WLLP, business and industry leaders can play a pivotal role in building a more literate and prosperous Wyoming.

## **Conclusion and Transition to Component Two**

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The WLLP is a transformative initiative that unites stakeholders across the state in a shared mission to improve literacy outcomes for all students. By fostering collaboration among families, educators, policymakers, community partners, and business leaders, the WLLP creates a cohesive framework that addresses the diverse needs of Wyoming's learners. Wyoming's MTSS Literacy-aligned framework and evidence-based programming grounded in the science of reading research ensures that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, has equitable access to evidence-based literacy education. This commitment reflects Wyoming's dedication to strengthening instructional practices and creating sustained progress in language and literacy.

This collective effort highlights the fundamental role of literacy in shaping Wyoming's future by equipping students with the skills needed for academic achievement, career readiness, and lifelong learning. Strong literacy skills prepare students to engage with complex content, think critically, and effectively communicate—key competencies for success in higher education, the workforce, and military service. Beyond individual achievement, literacy is a driver of economic growth, fostering a highly skilled workforce that strengthens industries, attracts businesses, and ensures long-term economic stability. Additionally, literacy enhances community well-being by empowering individuals to participate in civic life, make informed decisions, and support future generations, creating a more engaged and prosperous society.

As the WLLP transitions into Component 2, the focus shifts to the policies, infrastructure, and legislative framework that support Wyoming's literacy vision. Just as a well-designed foundation is critical to the stability of a structure, a strong, policy-aligned literacy infrastructure is essential to sustaining these efforts. Research-backed policies, funding mechanisms, and accountability measures must work harmoniously to ensure that literacy initiatives remain impactful, equitable, and enduring. By reinforcing this foundation, Wyoming will continue to expand access to evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading research, ensuring that every learner—regardless of background—has the opportunity to thrive.