

Virginia Literacy Act: Instructional Program Review Process

Introduction

The [Virginia Literacy Act](#) (VLA), passed by the Virginia Legislature in 2022, and expanded in 2023, focuses on improving literacy outcomes for all K-8 students in the Commonwealth. The VLA requires the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to recommend instructional programs – including K-5 core, K-8 supplemental, and K-8 intervention programs – for approval by the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE). The VDOE has partnered with Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) in the School of Education and Human Development at University of Virginia to conduct reviews of instructional programs.

Cycle 3 includes review of **K-8 supplemental and intervention instructional programs**. This process document details the timeline and milestones for review of K-8 supplemental programs and intervention programs. Through this process, instructional programs that implement evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) and align with science-based reading research (SBRR) as well as the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) will be included in a *Recommended Instructional Program Guide*. This guide will be submitted to the VDOE and the VBOE for final review and approval, at which point VDOE will release the *Approved Instructional Program Guide*.

The purpose of the *Approved Instructional Program Guide* is to support local decision-makers by providing them with the review results that help to identify core instructional programs grounded in SBRR, as well as Virginia's SOLs, submitted by participating providers.

Process Summary

VLP aims to develop a comprehensive and transparent process to review instructional programs resulting in a *Recommended Instructional Program Guide* to submit to the VDOE for VBOE approval, as required by the VLA. VLP has developed a single-phase process for supplemental and intervention review, modeled on similar processes in other states, in which providers¹ will be able to submit their programs for review.

Supplemental Review: The Supplemental Program review evaluates supplemental programs that implement EBLI and align with SBRR as well as Virginia's SOLs. Providers submit a comprehensive application including instructional materials, a Supplemental Program Rubric Worksheet, and other supporting materials outlined in the Submission Checklist below.

Intervention Review: The Intervention Program review evaluates intervention programs that implement EBLI and align with SBRR as well as Virginia's SOLs. Providers submit a comprehensive application including instructional materials, an Intervention Program Rubric Worksheet, and other supporting materials outlined in the Submission Checklist below.

Review teams composed of Virginia educators and experts in literacy will review submissions. All programs that receive a rating of "meets expectations," upon initial review or after appeal², will be included on VLP's

¹ Providers include both proprietary and [Open Educational Resources](#) content providers as well as Virginia schools divisions who have developed core instructional programs.

² Instructional Programs that do not receive a rating of "meets expectations" upon initial review will receive a Notice of Denial and Eligibility for Appeal. More information about the Appeal Process can be found in Appendix B.

*Recommended Instructional Program Guide*³, which will be submitted to the VDOE and the VBOE for final review and approval.

Submission Checklist

- Determine Eligibility for Review:** Before beginning the submission process, providers should do the following to ensure their products are eligible for review.
 - Ensure product is aligned to the [review rubrics](#)
 - Program offers high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with science-based reading research
 - Program includes teacher’s manual(s)
 - Program includes a phonics scope and sequence, if relevant
 - Program does not require or encourage three-cueing; MSV cues, or visual memory for word recognition.
 - Ensure product meets the requirements of the review process
 - Available for review online or in digital format
 - Available for public review during the review window
 - Review Terms of Service: [Core Terms of Service](#), [Supplemental Terms of Service](#), [Intervention Terms of Service](#)
 - Review [Accessibility Assurances](#) and ensure product meets standards for accessibility
 - Review the [Publishers’ Submission Forms for Virginia’s Textbook Approval Process](#) (direct download)

- Prepare for Submission:** Providers must complete the following steps to submit their program for review.
 - View Webinar for Providers
 - Review rubrics used to evaluate program submissions.

Submission for Supplemental Instructional Programs:

Complete submission form through the website for each grade level. This includes:

- Provide information for the program, including indication of grade level and instructional focus
- Provide instructional materials (digital only) for each grade level for which you are applying, including:
 - Teacher’s manual
 - Scope and sequence
 - Student materials
 - Assessments
 - Additional instructional materials not listed here
- Sign [Terms of Service](#) document and submit through the website
- Review [Accessibility Assurances](#) and ensure product meets standards for accessibility

³ Inclusion on the *Recommended Instructional Program Guide* does not guarantee final approval by VBOE.

- Complete and sign the [Publishers' Submission Forms for Virginia's Textbook Approval Process](#) (direct download) and submit through the website.
- Create a <20-minute webinar or screencast orienting Reviewers to the program

Submission for Intervention Instructional Programs:

Complete submission form through the website. This includes:

- Provide information for the program, including indication of instructional focus
- Provide instructional materials (digital only), including:
 - Teacher's manual
 - Scope and sequence
 - Student materials
 - Assessments
 - Additional instructional materials not listed here
- Sign [Terms of Service](#) document and submit through the website
- Review [Accessibility Assurances](#) and ensure product meets standards for accessibility
- Complete and sign the [Publishers' Submission Forms for Virginia's Textbook Approval Process](#) (direct download) and submit through the website.
- Create a <20-minute webinar or screencast orienting Reviewers to the program

After submission, providers will receive a confirmation email to acknowledge receipt of submission. Review teams composed of educators will evaluate each program according to the criteria outlined in review rubrics.

Appeal for Supplemental and Intervention Instructional Programs:

After the review process is complete, **providers whose programs do not receive a rating of “meets expectations”** will receive a *Notice of Denial and Eligibility for Appeal*. Providers will have 14 days to appeal the rubric scoring. This process is outlined in the *Notice of Denial and Eligibility for Appeal*. If an appeal is unsuccessful, providers will receive a *Notice of Denial of Appeal*.

Providers whose programs receive a rating of “meets expectations” in the initial review or after appeal will receive a *Notice of Inclusion on the Recommended Supplemental Program Guide* or *Notice of Inclusion on the Recommended Intervention Program Guide*. This guide will be submitted to the VDOE and VBOE for review and approval. Inclusion in VLP's *Recommended Supplemental Program Guide* or *Recommended Intervention Program Guide* does not guarantee final approval by VBOE.

Supplemental and Intervention Program Review

Review Dates	Milestones
December 8, 2023	VLP releases call for providers to submit supplemental and intervention programs for inclusion on VLP’s <i>Recommended Program Guides</i> .
January 2, 2024	Application window for Cycle 3 opens.
Deadline January 16, 2024 12:00 EST	Application window for submissions closes. Providers submit applications by noon EST.
January - February 2024	VLP and Virginia educator review teams conduct supplemental & intervention program reviews.
February 2024	VLP sends initial results of review to providers. Providers who did not receive a rating of “meets expectations” may submit appeal.
March 2024	VLP and Virginia educator review teams conduct appeal reviews and send final decisions to providers.
March 2024	VLP submits <i>Recommended Intervention Program Guide</i> and <i>Recommended Supplemental Program Guide</i> to VDOE and VBOE for review and approval.
April 2024	Final Board vote on <i>Approved Instructional Program Guide</i> for all supplemental and intervention programs from Cycle 2 and Cycle 3.

Appendix B: Additional Information

Appeal Processes

A provider may submit an appeal within 14 days of receiving a *Notice of Denial and Eligibility for Appeal* that states that its program will not be included in VLP's *Recommended Program Guide*. The only ground for appeal is that the program, as submitted for review, has sufficient evidence for a "meets requirement" rating. Providers may not submit additional materials but will have an opportunity to indicate what the Review Teams should reconsider in making their decision.

Review Teams

VLP will establish Review Teams to review instructional programs for inclusion in the *Recommended Program Guides*. Each Review Team will include four people, including one VLP team facilitator. The Review Teams will be composed of educators from various geographical regions of Virginia and represent the diversity of Virginia's schools. Every attempt will be made to include the following members on each review team: teachers, division-level content specialists, and subject matter experts. Each person who wishes to serve on a Review Team will complete an application and seek permission from their school division. VLP will screen applicants to ensure that they have no affiliation with any provider products and will review applicants' knowledge of EBLI/SBRR.

All reviews are conducted by Review Teams composed of Virginia educators and experts in literacy who receive training and ongoing support. To ensure the entire Review Team considers the full program, all Review Team members look at the full provider application and submission and evaluate every grade and indicator. Final results reflect multiple quality control measures including team training and norming, analyzing every indicator by all Reviewers, calibrating all findings, and reaching a consensus.

Ongoing Program Review

The VDOE will determine timelines for upcoming review cycles. Approved programs do not need to be re-reviewed unless the publisher has updated the previously approved program or the Standards of Learning have changed. School divisions that adopt programs from the VDOE's *Approved Program Guides* can continue to use the approved programs without purchasing updated editions.

Definitions

The VLA defines "science-based reading research" as research that (i) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective observational or experimental procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading and writing difficulties and (ii) explains how proficient reading and writing develop, why some children have difficulties developing key literacy skills, and how schools can best assess and instruct early literacy, including the use of evidence-based literacy instruction practices to promote reading and writing achievement.

The VLA also defines "evidence-based literacy instruction" as structured instructional practices, including sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative teaching, that (i) are based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence consistent with science-based reading research; (ii) are used in core or general instruction, supplemental instruction, intervention services, and intensive intervention services; (iii) have a demonstrated record of success in adequately increasing students' reading competency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension and in building mastery of the foundational reading skills of phonological and phonemic

awareness, alphabetic principle, phonics, spelling, and text reading fluency; and (iv) are able to be differentiated in order to meet the individual needs of students.

Research Process

To determine which states to look to for process models, two main criteria were considered: 1) has the state passed comprehensive literacy legislation, aligned with science-based reading research, in the last 10 years, and 2) has the state followed a process aligned with science-based reading research to review core curricula, supplemental instruction, and/or intervention programs?

Laws recently passed in Arkansas, Colorado, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Tennessee require certain aspects of early literacy instruction to align with science-based reading research, consistent with the VLA. In addition, the legislation passed by Arkansas, Colorado, and Tennessee specifically requires early reading instructional programs to align with science-based reading research. Finally, Mississippi and Rhode Island have enacted legislation that more broadly requires the use of science-based reading research in early literacy education. Each of these states, both those with specific curricular requirements and those with a broader mandate, curate approved programs by, in part, determining whether the instructional programs align with science-based reading research.