DIGGING **DEEPER**

into
Content Areas:

English Language Arts (ELA)

K-2 3-5 6-8 **Keystone Literature**

Questions at the LEA/District, School, and Teacher Level

Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Contents

Background

The **Digging Deeper into Content Areas** guides are available in the three content areas: **English Language Arts (ELA)**, **Mathematics**, and **Science**. These guides are designed to help teachers, teacher leaders, school and district/LEA leaders, and data teams move from the initial step of identifying patterns of strengths and needs in their data to determining the "root cause" – or the "why" – to plan for improvements and enhancements leading to continuous growth for all students.

Navigating This Guide

Each of the content area guides are divided into two sections:

- **Variables (questions) at the LEA/School level** – Appropriate for LEA/district administrators, school principals, department chairs, content leaders, teacher leaders, teachers, and data team members.

- **Variables at the teacher level** — Appropriate for use by individual teachers who are engaging in self-reflection of their own data and their own practice.

A divider page between the two sections allows one to refer to their relevant work section.

The questions within each section are organized by grade bands:

- K-2

- 3-5

- 6-8

- Keystone course (Algebra, Biology, Literature)

Within each of the two sections, the variables are also organized under four categories or "buckets", as follows:

- Curriculum

- Instruction

- Assessment

- Organization

Alignment

Additionally, an alignment coding for each question is provided at each level, illustrating a crosswalk between the items in these guides and other PDE frameworks.

PA's Essential Practices for Schools

The LEA/School level section's variables/questions align with the conditions of **PA's Essential Practices for Schools**. The questions in the guide are coded with the condition number(s) that is the most relevant fit, i.e., EP Condition 1, 2, 3, or 4.

EP Condition 1: Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

- Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Collaborative instructional planning
- Variety of assessments to monitor student learning Identify and address individual student learning needs
- Frequent, timely feedback and support on instructional practices

EP Condition 2: Empower Leadership

- Culture of high expectations for success
- Collective vision for teaching and learning
- Empowered staff
- Needs-based organization and allocation of resources
- Continuous monitoring of school improvement plan implementation

EP Condition 3: Provide Student-Centered Supports

- Positive school environment where all members feel welcomed, supported, and safe schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports
- Multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior
- Family engagement to support learning
- Partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies

EP Condition 4: Foster Quality Professional Learning

- Professional learning responsive to teacher and student needs
- Multiple professional learning designs
- Evaluating the impact of professional learning

View more information about PA's Essential Practices for Schools >

PA Observation and Practice Framework (Act 13)

Each teacher-level section's variables/questions align with the **PA Observation and Practice Framework (Act 13)** domains and are coded with initials as shown below.

The Framework for the Evaluation of Classroom Teachers is adapted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education from Charlotte Danielson's 2011 "Framework for Teachers" and adapted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education from Charlotte Danielson's 2020 "Framework for Remote Teaching."

Planning and Preparation (PP)

- Knowledge of content and Pedagogy
- Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
- Setting Instructional Outcomes
- Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources
- Designing Coherent Instruction
- Designing Student Assessment

Classroom Environment (CE)

- Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- Establishing a Culture of Learning
- Managing Classroom Procedures
- Managing Student Behavior Expectations
- Organizing Physical and Digital Space

Instruction (I)

- Communicating with Students
- Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- Engaging Students in Learning Activities and Assignments
- Using Assessment in Instruction
- Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

Professional Responsibility (PR)

- Reflecting on Teaching
- Maintaining Accurate Records
- Communicating with Families
- Participating in a Professional Community
- Growing and Developing Professionally
- Showing Professionalism

Learn more about PA's Observation and Practice Framework on the SAS Website >

How to Use This Guide

1. Choose the content area guide most relevant to your needs. Review the entire document first to become familiar with the format and the scope of questions offered for probing and discussion.

2. Decide which section to use based on your purpose: (1) the LEA/school level section or (2) the teacher level section. **When working as a data team, a group of teachers, and/or administrators, use the LEA/school-level section. When working as an individual teacher, use the teacher-level section.**

3. Determine if there is one area on which you need to focus (Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, or Organization) or if your data patterns suggest looking across all four areas (Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, or Organization).

4. Carefully read and reflect on the areas you are targeting and star/flag those questions that you (or the data team) believe are worth further "digging," discussion, and reflection.

5. Consider all relevant data sources and determine the EVIDENCE to support your reflection and analyses.

6. Choose one or more areas for goal setting and focus applicable to the current group of students in the classroom or school.

Remember, this is not a checklist to be distributed to the data team or individual teacher, nor are the questions sequenced in any specific order. Rather, it is a listing of variables to explore more deeply. The document requires discussion about evidence of practice, honest reflection, and careful selection of where to start and how deeply to probe. The focus and starting point depend on the school's current status and needs, as well as the needs of individual teachers. Each question discussed is to be considered and answered with solid evidence.

Resources

Additional information for reflection on each question may come from many sources, including but not limited to the example resources below. Click on the relevant links below to access more information. Visit https://bit.ly/DiggingDeeper-Word for an editable version of this resource.

- **"What is Direct, Systematic and Explicit Instruction?" from *Literacy Lines***
  https://keystoliteracy.com/blog/what-is-direct-systematic-and-explicit-instruction/

- **"How Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI) Has Improved Reading Outcomes for Students with Reading Difficulties Through Tiered Supports" from The Institute of Education Sciences**
  https://ies.ed.gov/blogs/research/post/how-enhanced-core-reading-instruction-has-improved-reading-outcomes-for-students-with-reading-difficulties-through-tiered-supports

- **"Educating Educators About the Science of Reading" from Stephanie Stollar Consulting**
  https://www.readingscienceacademy.com

- **Evidence-Based Reading Instruction for Grades K-5 (PDF)**
  https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/IC-12_FINAL_12-15-14.pdf

- **Iris Center at Vanderbilt University**
  https://my.vanderbilt.edu/spedteacherresources/iris-center-at-vanderbilt-university-ebp/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20IRIS%20Center%20offers%20high-quality%20online%2C%20open%20educational,students%2C%20especially%20struggling%20learners%20and%20those%20with%20disabilities

- **Pennsylvania's Evidence Resource Center**
  https://www.evidenceforpa.org/

- **Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System/SAS Website** (PA Standards, PSSA, Keystone and PASA Anchors and Eligible Content, Item and Scoring Samplers, PaSLP Toolkit, Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix, and Curricular Examples)
  https://www.pdesas.org

- **Digging Deeper Resources from the Pennsylvania Department of Education**
  https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/pvaas/using-pvaas/digging-deeper-resources.html

- **"What is the Science of Reading?" from The Reading League**
  https://www.thereadingleague.org/what-is-the-science-of-reading/

- **Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools (PDF)**
  https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/3c/f5/3cf58727-34f4-4140-a014-723a00ac56f7/ccny_report_2007_writing.pdf

ELA K-2

System-Level Questions
(LEA/District and School)

THINK ABOUT: How might our system structures and practices at the LEA/district and school level related to Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to our achievement and growth results in English Language Arts?

These questions are offered as a vehicle to guide purposeful reflection and should be considered and answered with clear evidence. This list is not exhaustive and is not a checklist. Note: The questions do not need to be discussed in the order in which they are numbered; they are numbered to reference specific items and for ease of use.

The questions are intended to help generate thinking specific to the district/school-level ELA program. Through the information provided by PVAAS, along with other assessment data, this document is intended to assist in determining potential root causes leading to plans of action (looking back and looking forward). School-level administrators, ELA coordinators, teacher leaders, and individual teachers may find these reflection questions helpful in analyzing data at a system level for the school.

Essential Practice Key:

Each question indicates the related conditions for PA's Essential Practices for Schools:

EP Condition 1
Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

EP Condition 2
Empower Leadership

EP Condition 3
Provide Student-Centered Supports

EP Condition 4
Foster Quality Professional Learning

CURRICULUM   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA   K-2

C-1.   Is the Grade K-2 ELA written curriculum aligned with the PA Core Standards? *EP Condition 1*

    a. How frequently is the written curriculum reviewed/revised through analysis of student data?

    b. Is the curriculum both "guaranteed and viable"? (Marzano)

      • Guaranteed: equal access to the written curriculum for all students

      • Viable: adequate time for teachers to teach content and for students to learn

C-2.   Does the written curriculum frequently undergo a formal or informal audit to identify where certain skills/concepts are not included or are not sufficiently emphasized and which skills and concepts need to be enhanced? *EP Condition 1*

C-3.   Is the written curriculum aligned with the science of reading? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

C-4. Does the written curriculum connect concepts and skills vertically, showing the progression of skills necessary for students to acquire deep understanding and build upon prior knowledge? *EP Condition 1*

 a. Does the K-2 written curriculum's ELA content lay the foundation for acquiring the core standards of upper-level grades?

 b. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration to ensure vertical articulation of the K-2 ELA written curriculum with the 3-5 ELA written curriculum?

 c. Does the written curriculum demonstrate an intentional sequence within and across lessons and within and across grades?

C-5. Does the written curriculum extensively address foundation skills leading to and supporting higher-order skills? *EP Condition 1*

C-6. Does the written curriculum address oral language skills? *EP Condition 1*

C-7. Does the written curriculum address listening comprehension? *EP Condition 1*

C-8. Does the written curriculum address phonemic awareness? *EP Condition 1*

Examples: Isolating, identifying, categorizing, substituting, adding and deleting phonemes, phoneme blending, and segmentation.

C-9. Does the written curriculum address beginning phonics and word skills and articulate these skills using an evidence-based phonics/spelling sequence of instruction? *EP Condition 1*

C-10. Does the written curriculum address reading with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension? *EP Condition 1*

C-11. Does the written curriculum address students' ability to read text with purpose and understanding? *EP Condition 1*

 a. With emergent reader text at the kindergarten level?

 b. With grade-level text in grades 1-2?

C-12. Does the written curriculum specify the use of decodable text as appropriate to the learner? *EP Condition 1*

C-13. Does the written curriculum address instruction in acquiring and enhancing background knowledge? *EP Condition 1*

C-14. Does the written curriculum systematically integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening throughout the day across all subject areas? *EP Condition 1*

 a. Does the written curriculum for science, social studies, math, and all subject areas include ELA concepts and skills?

 b. Do all teachers, including special area teachers, view themselves as ELA teachers?

 c. Is the connection between reading and writing evident in the written curriculum?

C-15. Is the core literacy program aligned to the PA Core Standards? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is the core literacy program evidence-based?

    b. Has an alignment been conducted to determine missing skills/concepts?

    c. Have lessons been created to fill any identified gaps?

C-16. Is the core literacy program aligned with the district's written curriculum? *EP Condition 1*

C-17. Is writing addressed in the written curriculum sequentially and cumulatively, specifying both micro and macro skills? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Are micro-skills (foundational skills including handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/ vocabulary, and sentence writing) appropriately addressed?

    b. Are macro-skills (process skills including planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising) appropriately addressed?

C-18. Are teachers aware of the ELA resources on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org)? *EP Condition 1*

INSTRUCTION   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA K-2

I-1. Do all students receive instruction on grade-level PA Core Standards? *EP Condition 1*

I-2. Is there an observable alignment between the written, taught, and assessed curriculum? *EP Condition 1*

I-3. Are unit and lesson objectives/essential questions/learning intentions clearly articulated and aligned to the written curriculum and the core literacy program? Is the lesson purpose clearly communicated to students? *EP Condition 1*

I-4. Does lesson planning reflect an evidence-based lesson plan? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is there a review of the previous skill before introducing the new skill?

    b. Is the skill practiced at a word level with example and non-example words?

    c. Is the new skill practiced through writing the targeted skill as a sound symbol, within words and within sentences?

    d. Is the new skill practiced within a controlled text with multiple opportunities to practice the target skill?

I-5. Is oral language addressed through routines that explicitly teach vocabulary? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is academic vocabulary addressed, i.e., words used in classrooms that cross multiple contexts/ subjects? (Beck, Tier 2 words)

    b. Is domain-specific vocabulary explicitly taught? (Beck, Tier 3 words)

    c. Are students taught figurative language?

    d. Does vocabulary instruction focus on both depth and breadth of vocabulary?

    e. Does vocabulary instruction include multiple exposures to a word?

    f. Is beginning morphology taught as early as first grade? (Ex: compound words, "s" and "es" indicating plural words in kindergarten and first grade, most common suffixes in second grade (such as less, ful, er, est)

I-6. Are students taught oral narrative skills? (Including sequencing of the story, identifying the characters, the setting, the problem/goal/wish that the main character is attempting to resolve, the barriers presented along the way in the resolution of the problem/goal/wish of the main character, and the final resolution of the problem as appropriate at each grade level) *EP Condition 1*

I-7. Is listening comprehension taught through the use of a variety of books/texts selected to reflect the learning objective? *EP Condition 1*

Examples:

a. Listening for a specific purpose(s)

b. Making predictions using evidence presented in the text

c. Identifying and discussing the salient elements of fiction and non-fiction text

  • Character, setting, problem, barriers, resolution

  • Main idea and supporting details

d. Retelling/summarizing text accurately

e. Monitoring one's comprehension and clarifying information as needed

I-8. Are the books used for reading aloud more challenging than those students read independently? *EP Condition 1*

I-9. Is sufficient time for ELA allocated in the school and classroom schedule at each grade level, and do the actual instructional minutes closely mirror the allocated time on paper? *EP Condition 1*

I-10. Within the ELA time block, is instructional time allocated to whole group, small group, and individual instruction? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

I-11. Are flexible reading skills groups used to provide targeted skill instruction according to identified needs? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

a. Are the groups flexible to align with individual student needs at appropriate points in time?

b. Are groups adjusted, as informed through progress monitoring?

I-12. Is there a grade-level pacing guide used by all teachers with the flexibility to respond to students' needs? *EP Condition 1*

I-13. Is the core literacy program implemented with fidelity? *EP Condition 1*

a. Where appropriate, are supplements/revisions/additions to the core literacy program done intentionally and through evidence-based practice?

b. Is this implementation consistent across classrooms?

c. Is there a consistent observation/reflection protocol in use to ensure the fidelity of the core?

d. Is there a process for determining the use of additional resources and materials?

I-14. **Is phonemic awareness taught to all beginning readers?** *EP Condition 1*

   a. Is the appropriate amount of time spent on phonemic awareness (approximately 20 hours)?

   b. Is phonemic awareness taught in small groups and through individual instruction as appropriate?

   c. Is the emphasis on the sounds in spoken language distinct from and before phonics instruction?

   d. Is the instruction targeted to larger units of phonological awareness in Pre-K and the beginning weeks of kindergarten (syllable, onset-rime), moving to phoneme segmentation and blending as soon as possible?

   e. Is first- and second-grade instruction focusing on phoneme awareness paired with sound-symbol instruction?

   f. Is phonemic awareness instruction paired with phonics/sound-symbol instruction as soon as students demonstrate the understanding that words are made of individual phonemes?

   g. Does the instruction include describing and modeling how sounds are made in the mouth, typically found on sound cards?

   h. Does instruction include blending, focusing students on all sounds in a word (beginning/first, last/final, medial sounds including blends)?

I-15. **Is phonics taught through an explicit and systematic instructional approach? (Easy to more complex, most common letters and letter patterns first)** *EP Condition 1*

   a. Are sound-symbol correspondences taught explicitly to a level of automaticity (using fluency boxes and timed word lists)?

   b. Are segmenting and blending processes to decode and spell words taught explicitly and practiced regularly (using evidence-based practices such as "word chaining/building")?

   c. Are irregular high-frequency words taught by "sounding out" the individual sounds of the word, pointing out the unusual spelling of one or more sounds? (For example, for the word "said," the unusual spelling would be that "ai" represents the "short e" sound instead of its more typical long "a" sound.)

   d. Are phonetically regular and irregular words practiced in isolation and reviewed regularly?

   e. Are basic suffixes, such as "s" and "es," taught in kindergarten and 1st grade?

   f. Is advanced word study instruction occurring, including more complex patterns such as syllable types, word division guidance, and prefixes and suffixes (typically grade 2 and above)?

   g. Is advanced word study (typically grade 2 and above) instruction occurring, including more complex phonics skills such as variant vowels (multiple ways to spell the same sound such as "ee, ea, Y on the end of a two-syllable word all say "long E" sound)?

I-16. **Are students reading text that is controlled to include only those phonics patterns that have been explicitly taught?** *EP Condition 1*

   a. Are they taught using evidenced-based strategies such as repeated reading, partner reading, and phrased cued reading?

   b. Is the objective of each reading communicated to the students? (e.g., accuracy, fluency, prosody, comprehension)

I-17. **Are students instructed and monitored through the phases of acquiring alphabetic principles, i.e., Pre-alphabetic phrase, partial alphabetic phase, full alphabetic phase, as well as consolidated alphabetic phrase/development of automaticity? (Ehri, 2005)** *EP Condition 1*

I-18. **Is there evidence of using manipulatives/visual aids (e.g., Elkonian boxes, affix cards, sound walls)?** *EP Condition 1*

I-19. Is encoding (spelling) instruction provided explicitly and systematically? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is encoding aligned with the phonics sequence of instruction?

    b. Are teachers aware of recent research in spelling, including how words are more efficiently stored in memory?

    c. Are words orthographically "mapped" (direct instruction in how the letters -which may include 1-5 letters- match each of the sounds heard in each "spelling" word)?

I-20. Is reading fluency instructed explicitly and systematically? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does fluency building occur only after accuracy?

    b. Do instructional strategies include:

        • Providing adult models and recorded models of fluent reading?

        • Repeated readings?

        • Timed readings?

        • Practice reading with expression (prosody)?

        • Extensive practice with text?

        • Sufficient opportunities to hear and practice fluent reading?

I-21. Is background knowledge expanded through deliberate instruction? *EP Condition 1*

I-22. Is comprehension taught systematically and explicitly? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is a gradual release model used to explicitly support reading comprehension?

    b. Are students taught multiple strategies to help with comprehension, i.e., including activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, visualizing, fix-up strategies, inferencing, and summarizing or retelling?

    c. Are students given extended opportunities to practice comprehension strategies?

    d. Is comprehension developed through experience reading a range of text genres?

    e. Are students taught organizational text structure?

    f. Are students engaged in plentiful, high-quality talk about text?

I-23. Does error response include immediate corrective feedback? *EP Condition 1*

I-24. Is the appropriate balance of instructional time between decoding and comprehension present at each grade level, K-2? *EP Condition 1*

I-25. Are all skills practiced to mastery and automaticity? *EP Condition 1*

I-26. Is instruction in the general education classroom differentiated by customizing intensity level, degree of explicitness, and amount of scaffolding during guided and/or independent practice? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

I-27. Are students receiving tiered interventions that provide specific instruction targeted to skill needs? *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are intervention supports provided in addition to core ELA instruction?

    b. Are materials and resources used in intervention aligned with student needs?

    c. Is the time allocated for intervention support appropriate to the tier/students' needs?

    d. Are group size recommendations adhered to for intervention support groups?

I-28. Is sufficient time allocated for explicit writing instruction? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Kindergarten allocates ½ hour per day; First grade and beyond allocates 1 hour per day.

    b. Allocated time should include direct instruction in teaching and modeling writing strategies, techniques, and skills and time to practice these skills, including applying writing skills across the curriculum.

I-29. Is writing taught through a systematic and explicit writing sequence of micro and macro skills? *EP Condition 1*

I-30. Is handwriting instruction provided explicitly and systematically? *EP Condition 1*

ASSESSMENT   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA   K-2

A-1. Is there a district/school assessment map accessible to all staff? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are valid and reliable assessment measures in place to screen, diagnose, monitor, and evaluate literacy outcomes for all students?

    b. Do all teachers have access to this plan and follow it, administering all required assessments in a timely manner, as per the schedule, and with the integrity of the administration?

    c. Has the range of assessments been evaluated to ensure no unnecessary redundancy or overlap, or important skill areas missing?

A-2. Do all teachers know the purpose and difference between summative, formative, benchmark, and diagnostic student learning assessments? *EP Condition 4*

A-3. Have the assessments available in the ELA core literacy program been analyzed to determine which are to be used as required common assessments? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is there a process to determine which core program assessments are to be used by all teachers? Does this process carefully analyze the type and purpose of each assessment?

    b. Will all, some, or none of the core literacy program/package assessments be used? Will they be used in their entirety or just some sections/portions?

    c. How do these assessments align with other local assessments, such as but not limited to AIMSweb, Acadience, STAR, etc.? Is there unnecessary overlap and/or redundancy?

A-4. Are teachers aware of students' reading skills through a universal screening process in place at the school level? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

    a. Does universal screening occur early in the school year to effectively inform instruction and individual student needs?

    b. Are screening measures used during the school year to identify students not meeting expected benchmarks?

    c. Is further diagnostic assessment conducted for each student who is evidenced through screening assessments as needing additional support?

A-5. Are diagnostic assessments in place (e.g., Core Phonics Survey) to inform instruction at Tier 1, as well as Tiers 2 and 3? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

A-6. **Are benchmark assessments used to monitor students' progress throughout a given grade level/year?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

  a. Are students not at benchmark monitored closely with the appropriate frequency? Does this occur formally?

  b. Does this occur daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, using equivalent measures to make comparisons over time?

A-7. **Do all teachers employ various formal and informal formative assessment techniques and use that data to plan instruction?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-8. **Are students not at benchmark provided proactive support through differentiation and a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), including formal progress monitoring at the appropriate frequency?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-9. **Are formal progress monitoring measures implemented by classroom teachers (e.g., Acadience, DAZE, aimswebPLUS)?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

  a. Does this occur daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, using equivalent measures to make comparisons over time?

  b. Is progress monitoring used to measure rates of improvement?

  c. Are students not making adequate progress provided targeted instruction in specific need areas?

A-10. **Is writing assessed through evidence-based assessment practices appropriate to the K-2 level?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

  a. Is a screening process in place to identify students in need of additional supports in writing?

  b. Are curriculum-based measures used to assess and monitor writing progress (e.g., total words written, words spelled correctly)?

  c. Are the PDE holistic rubrics (genre-specific) used to assess specific writing components?

  d. Are analytic rubrics used to assess specific components of writing?

  e. Are these holistic and analytic rubrics modified for the K-2 level?

A-11. **Do data teams exist at three levels: (1) school level, (2) grade/subject level, and (3) classroom/individual student level?** *EP Condition 2* *EP Condition 3*

  a. Are the purposes of each team clear to all staff?

  b. Is the meeting frequency pre-scheduled at appropriate intervals for each level?

  c. Is membership of each data team appropriate to the purpose(s) of the team?

A-12. **Are ELA data analyzed at the (1) school, (2) grade/subject, and (3) classroom/individual student levels?** *EP Condition 2* *EP Condition 3*

  a. Do protocols exist for the analysis of data and the development of action plans? Are the protocols specific to the level and purpose of the data team?

  b. Are groupings for instruction changed as a result of data analysis?

  c. Is the data used to inform MTSS/tiered supports (Tiers 1, 2, and 3)?

ORGANIZATION `SYSTEM LEVEL` `ELA` `K-2`

O-1. Are teachers provided with ongoing professional learning in ELA Standards? *EP Condition 4*

O-2. Are all teachers provided ongoing professional learning on the science of reading? *EP Condition 4*

O-3. Are new teachers trained in the implementation of the core literacy program and the implementation of the ELA curriculum? *EP Condition 4*

O-4. Are teachers knowledgeable of available resources and recent and relevant research on how students learn to read, i.e., the science of reading? *EP Condition 4*

O-5. Is professional learning provided to experienced teachers who are new to the content area or grade level? *EP Condition 4*

O-6. Are teachers aware and knowledgeable of current research findings and implications on instruction in micro and macro skills of writing? *EP Condition 4*

    a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

    b. Macro-level skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

O-7. Are staff (general education, special education, remedial/Title I, intervention specialists, paraeducators) utilized in various ways to maximize small-group instructional opportunities? *EP Condition 2*

O-8. Does the overall school schedule include appropriate time for literacy instruction (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Do all teachers adhere to the school schedule? Is there a check between allocated time on the school schedule and actual instructional time in the classroom?

    b. Do teachers effectively utilize the block of time for whole group and small group instruction, and is this consistent across a grade level?

    c. Is this time protected from meeting time, assemblies, and other interruptions?

    d. Is time specifically set aside for direct writing instruction and practice time?

O-9. Is there an effective schedule in place that ensures that students do not miss instructional time to receive tiered support? *EP Condition 1*

O-10. Has a database been established (and used) to collect and summarize school-level and student-level literacy data (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative) with immediate and easy access for all teachers? *EP Condition 1*

O-11. Has a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) been established to provide additional support to students (Tiers 1, 2, and 3)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

O-12. Are intervention group sizes appropriate to the level of support needed by students (e.g., MTSS, Tiers 2 and 3)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

O-13. Are the core program and intervention program approaches and materials aligned and coordinated for students receiving both core and tiered intervention support? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

O-14. Does the school schedule allow for PLC (professional learning community) time/data meeting time for collaboration and planning? *EP Condition 4*

    a. If so, what is the frequency? Who is responsible for planning and monitoring the effective use of this time?

    b. If not, how can this be built into the school schedule?

O-15. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration on the vertical articulation of the K-2 written curriculum with the 3-5 ELA written curriculum? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

ELA 3-5

System-Level Questions
(LEA/District and School)

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EP Condition 4
Foster Quality Professional Learning

CURRICULUM SYSTEM LEVEL ELA 3-5

C-1. **Is the Grade 3-5 ELA written curriculum aligned with the PA Core Standards?** *EP Condition 1*

   a. How frequently is the written curriculum reviewed/revised through analysis of student data?

   b. Is the curriculum both "guaranteed and viable"? (Marzano)
   - Guaranteed: equal access to the written curriculum for all students
   - Viable: adequate time for teachers to teach content and for students to learn it

   c. Has an alignment been done that shows where certain skills/concepts are missing? Which concepts/skills need to be enhanced? Which concepts and skills are not included? Which concepts and skills lack sufficient practice and are not embedded in the curriculum? Have lessons been developed to fill identified gaps?

   d. Were the PDE SAS ELA Curriculum Frameworks used to develop the written curriculum?

   e. Does the ELA written curriculum address fidelity to the ELA core program, clarifying the use of the ELA core program? Do the core ELA program and the written curriculum meet the rigor required by the PA Core Standards?

   f. Do unit maps exist to guide lesson planning and instruction? Are they reviewed periodically and revised to address students' needs, as identified through data analysis?

C-2. **Does the written curriculum connect concepts and skills vertically, showing the progression of skills necessary for students to acquire deep understanding and build upon prior knowledge?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does this year's curriculum build on students' prior knowledge and experiences from the previous year?

    b. Will the ELA content for this year lay the foundation for topics the students will explore in the next grade or upper-level grades?

    c. Do teachers engage in dialogue with teachers in grade levels above and below to examine the overall program's strengths and weaknesses and prioritize students' needs?

    d. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration on the vertical articulation of the K-5 ELA written curriculum with the 6-8 ELA written curriculum?

C-3. **Does the written curriculum systematically integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening throughout the day and across all subject areas?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does the written curriculum for science, social studies, math, and all subject areas include ELA concepts and skills?

    b. Is writing a regular part of all subject areas?

    c. Do all teachers, including special area teachers, view themselves as ELA teachers?

C-4. **Is the core ELA program aligned to the PA Core Standards?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is the core literacy program evidence-based?

    b. Has an alignment been conducted to determine missing skills/concepts?

    c. Have lessons been created to fill any identified gaps?

C-5. **Does the written curriculum in ELA address the appropriate level of rigor (Webb's Depth of Knowledge/DOK)?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

    a. Is the concept of rigor understood as different from difficulty level?

    b. Does the level of rigor in the curriculum match the rigor of each standard?

    c. Is there a balance of DOK levels 1, 2, and 3?

    d. Are there opportunities for DOK level 4 tasks?

C-6. **Does the written curriculum specify the use of text/resources at the appropriate level of text complexity?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

C-7. **Does the written curriculum explicitly address the modes of writing: narrative, informational, and opinion?** *EP Condition 1*

C-8. **Does the reading curriculum and/or core literacy program explicitly and sufficiently address systematic and explicit instruction in phonics and decoding?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Are phonics skills introduced and reinforced to students following an evidence-based phonics scope and sequence?

    b. Introduced with an easier to more difficult sequence?

    c. Introduced with a more frequent to less frequent sequence?

C-9. Is writing addressed in the written curriculum in a sequential and cumulative manner, specifying both micro and macro skills? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Are micro-skills (foundational skills including handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/ vocabulary, and sentence writing) appropriately addressed?

    b. Are macro-skills (process skills including planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising) appropriately addressed?

C-10. Does the written ELA curriculum/core literacy program address vocabulary instruction through consistent and effective evidence-based methods? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does the written curriculum address vocabulary in a purposeful and explicit manner?

    b. Is there a school-wide program in place?

    c. Is vocabulary instruction embedded in unit maps? And, in lesson plans?

    d. Are specific vocabulary terms identified at each grade level?

    e. Are there evidence-based practices in place to teach vocabulary?

C-11. Is there an appropriate balance between fiction and informational text, and is the balance appropriate and aligned to PA Core Standards? If not, how is this addressed in the LEA/ district written curriculum? In the core literacy program? *EP Condition 1*

C-12. Is fluency appropriately addressed in the core literacy program/district written curriculum? *EP Condition 1*

C-13. Is differentiation of instruction an expectation, and is it specified in the district's written curriculum? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

C-14. Are teachers aware of the ELA resources on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org)? *EP Condition 1*

INSTRUCTION   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA   3-5

I-1. Do all students receive instruction on grade-level PA Core Standards? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is the delivery of instruction equitable across all students/all student groups?

    b. For students performing significantly below the benchmark, are the appropriate scaffolds in place to allow them to access and benefit from the core ELA curriculum?

I-2. Is there an observable alignment between the written, taught, and assessed curriculum? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does daily instruction in all classrooms align with the written curriculum?

    b. Is there a process in place to monitor that there is alignment between what is written, what is taught, and what is assessed?

    c. Does differentiated instruction occur in all classrooms with attention to the necessary pacing of the curriculum?

I-3. **Are unit and lesson objectives/essential questions/learning intentions clear to students?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Are the objectives communicated clearly in written and oral form?

    b. Are the objectives aligned to PA Core Standards?

    c. Are the objectives aligned with the district ELA written curriculum?

I-4. **Do all students receive effective instruction in all components of the curriculum (reading process, literary analysis, writing process, writing applications, communication, information, and media literacy)?** *EP Condition 1*

I-5. **Is sufficient time for ELA allocated in the school's overall school schedule at all grade levels, and do the actual instructional minutes closely mirror the allocated time on paper?** *EP Condition 1*

I-6. **Is sufficient time allocated for explicit writing instruction (30-40 min/day)?** *EP Condition 1*

I-7. **Is writing practice provided at least 30 minutes/day (integrated across all subjects)?** *EP Condition 1*

I-8. **Is instructional time allocated to the whole group, small group, and individual instruction within the ELA time block?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Do all teachers provide whole group, small group, and individual instruction for all students?

    b. Is there a grade-level pacing guide used by all teachers with the flexibility to respond to students' needs?

    c. Do all students participate in whole-group instruction, such as shared reading?

I-9. **Are flexible reading skills groups used to provide targeted instruction according to identified needs?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are the groups flexible to align with individual students' needs at appropriate points in time?

    b. Are groups adjusted, as informed through progress monitoring?

I-10. **Is the core literacy program being implemented with fidelity?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is there evidence that all core program components are implemented as designed?

    b. Is this implementation consistent across classrooms?

    c. Is there a consistent observation/reflection protocol in use to ensure the fidelity of the core?

    d. Is there a process for determining the use of additional resources and materials?

I-11. **Is there evidence of appropriate emphasis and instruction on both comprehension and decoding skills at each grade level?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Are advanced phonics skills taught at grade levels 3-5 for decoding multi-syllabic words (e.g., affixes, root words, and r-controlled vowels)?

    b. Are students instructed in an efficient routine for dividing multiple syllable words by identifying affixes and guidance for division (such as identifying different syllable types and thereby knowing if the vowel would reflect the "long/short/schwa" sound; flexing the vowel from a "short vowel" sound to a "long vowel" sound in a syllable to make it a real word and visa-versa; flexing the stress from one syllable to another to make it a real word)?

I-12. Do students have the opportunity to synthesize or critique information from multiple texts about the same subject/idea? *EP Condition 1*

I-13. Are all students instructed to use texts at the appropriate level of text complexity? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

I-14. Do all students have multiple opportunities for reading practice through choral reading, close reading, partner reading, or individual turns in small groups? *EP Condition 1*

I-15. Is vocabulary explicitly and consistently taught using evidence-based techniques and strategies? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Can all teachers identify how vocabulary words are chosen at each grade level?

    b. Can all teachers identify effective vs. ineffective vocabulary strategies? Is vocabulary taught using evidence-based strategies?

    c. Is there a school-wide vocabulary program in place?

    d. Is instruction in morphology (the study of meaningful units – e.g., root words) in place at all levels?

I-16. Is comprehension taught through explicit modeling and a gradual release of responsibility (*I do, We do, You do*)? *EP Condition 1*

I-17. Are students required to respond to and/or create higher-level questions (e.g., inferential, analytical) about shared readings and selections read? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

    a. Are activities and tasks at appropriate Webb's Depth of Knowledge levels?

    b. Are there opportunities for students to write academic responses to questions about texts?

    c. Are all teachers using effective questioning techniques, including but not limited to wait time, student name placement in questioning, random and strategic calling on students, and high-level questioning mixed with appropriate lower-level questions?

I-18. Is independent work purposeful and directly related to building literacy skills? Is it consistent across all classrooms? *EP Condition 1*

I-19. Is there evidence of using manipulatives/visual aids (e.g., Elkonin boxes, affix cards, sound walls)? *EP Condition 1*

I-20. Is instruction differentiated in both whole group and small group instruction? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are teachers trained and supported in differentiating instruction specific to learning objectives/targets in ELA?

    b. Is differentiation of instruction an expectation, as supported and documented by the core program and district-written curriculum?

    c. Are small groups/flexible groups used to provide differentiation within the ELA classroom?

    d. Are extension tasks provided for students demonstrating mastery at the expected level?

    e. Are organizational frames used to scaffold explicit instruction in writing?

I-21. Are students receiving tiered interventions that provide specific instruction targeted to skill needs? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

I-22. **Is technology used to differentiate instruction and provide additional practice on targeted skill areas?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Is technology used as a medium for reading in all content areas?

    b. Is there a process for selecting effective technology resources?

    c. Do all teachers have access to technology resources?

I-23. **Are students provided with exemplary writing samples, mentor texts, assessment rubrics, real-world writing tasks, writing in response to reading, and oral and written feedback on their writing?** *EP Condition 1*

I-24. **Is writing instruction taught explicitly and systematically at all grade levels?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Do daily lesson plans include a variety of instructional components (explicit instruction, independent writing, conferencing)?

    b. Are sentence-level skills (structure and mechanics) taught explicitly?

I-25. **Is spelling instruction explicitly and systematically aligned with phonics scope and sequence?** *EP Condition 1*

I-26. **Is handwriting instruction provided explicitly and systematically?** *EP Condition 1*

I-27. **Does writing instruction include authentic writing, text-based writing, and classroom-based writing tasks?** *EP Condition 1*

ASSESSMENT   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA   3-5

A-1. **Is there a LEA/district assessment map accessible to all leaders and teachers?**
EP Condition 1 *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are valid and reliable assessment measures in place to screen, diagnose, monitor, and evaluate literacy outcomes for all students? Is this followed and implemented by all teachers?

    b. Has the range of assessments been evaluated to ensure no unnecessary redundancy or overlap, nor are important skill areas missing?

    c. Do all teachers have access to this plan and follow it, administering all required assessments in a timely manner, as per the schedule, and with administration integrity?

    d. Is there consistency and agreement on using assessments available through the literacy program and other school-wide evaluations?

    e. Are there scheduled times for staff to review new data in a timely manner to adjust instruction, groupings, etc.?

    f. Are ELA data analyzed at the (1) school, (2) grade/subject, and (3) classroom/individual student levels?

A-2. Have the assessments available in the ELA core literacy program been analyzed to determine which are to be used as common assessments? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Will all assessments in the core literacy program/package be used? Will they be used in their entirety or just some sections/portions?

    b. How are these assessments chosen?

    c. How do these assessments mesh with other locally chosen assessments (e.g. aimsweb or Acadience)?

A-3. Are students assessed at appropriate levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge, reflecting the rigor of the standards being addressed? (Performance tasks, objective assessments, and oral questioning)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

A-4. Are formative and summative assessments established and used by all teachers? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are common assessments in place?

    b. Are the assessments valid?

    c. Do all teachers have strong assessment literacy skills?

    d. Do all teachers employ various formative assessment techniques and use that data to plan instruction?

A-5. Do formative assessment measures, specifically questioning strategies, include higher-level questions (e.g., inferential, analytical) about shared readings and selections read? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-6. Are teachers aware of students' reading skills through a universal screening process in place at the building level? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Does universal screening occur early in the school year to inform instruction effectively?

    b. Is the universal screening considered along with PVAAS student projections?

A-7. Is a screening process in place to identify students' levels of risk relative to writing? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-8. Are benchmark assessments used to monitor students' progress throughout a given grade level/year such as, but not limited to, Firefly from PDE? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-9. Are diagnostic assessments in place (e.g., CDTs, Core Phonics Survey) to inform instruction at Tier 1 as well as Tiers 2 and 3? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-10. Are formal progress monitoring measures implemented by classroom teachers (e.g., Acadience®, aimswebPlus™, DAZE) for all students below benchmark? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-11. Are curriculum-based measures used to assess and monitor writing progress (e.g., total words written, words spelled correctly)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-12. Is writing assessed through evidence-based assessment practices, i.e., a common framework/rubric, ensuring a consistent approach across subjects and grade levels? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are the PDE holistic rubrics (genre-specific) used to assess specific writing components?

    b. Are analytic rubrics used to assess specific components of writing?

A-13. Are both micro and macro writing skills assessed through indirect writing tasks (i.e., multiple choice, true/false, error correction) and direct/on-demand writing tasks? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

   a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

   b. Macro-level skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

A-14. Is student progress closely monitored to ensure that students falling behind are provided proactive support through differentiation and a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)? Is there a structure in place that ensures this monitoring occurs on a prescribed basis? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-15. Are additional data/information on reading, writing, speaking, and listening available at the classroom and individual student level? How is this additional information analyzed along with PVAAS reporting? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-16. Are school-wide and grade-level data teams established for teachers to collaborate on data analysis and action planning? *EP Condition 2* *EP Condition 3*

   a. Do protocols exist for the analysis of data? Are the protocols specific to the level and purpose of the data team?

   b. School-level data teams?

   c. Grade/subject-level data teams?

   d. Classroom/individual student data teams?

   e. Are key data team members identified and trained?

   f. Is data analyzed frequently, and groupings for instruction changed due to data analysis?

A-17. Is a grading policy established at the LEA/district and school level that uses grades/marks that correspond to students' academic achievement and proficiency levels? Additionally, are soft skills evaluated separately from academic performance? *EP Condition 2*

ORGANIZATION SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA 3-5

O-1. **Are teachers provided ongoing professional learning in ELA standards and effective practices?** *EP Condition 4*

    a. How are new teachers trained in the implementation of the core literacy program and the implementation of the ELA curriculum?

    b. Are teachers knowledgeable of available resources and recent and relevant research on how students learn to read?

    c. How is professional learning provided to experienced teachers new to the content area or grade level?

    d. Are teachers aware of current research findings and implications on curriculum and instruction in micro and macro skills of writing?

       • Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

       • Macro-level skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

O-2. **Are staff (general education, special education, remedial/Title I, intervention specialist, paraeducator) utilized in various ways to maximize small group instructional opportunities?** *EP Condition 1*

O-3. **Does the overall school schedule include appropriate time for literacy instruction (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Do all teachers adhere to the school schedule? Is there a check between allocated time on the school schedule and actual instructional time in the classroom?

    b. Do teachers effectively utilize the block of time for whole group and small group instruction, and is this consistent across a grade level?

    c. Is this time protected from meeting time, assemblies, and other interruptions?

    d. Is there a grade-level pacing guide/schedule in place with flexibility to address students' pacing needs?

    e. Is time specifically set aside for direct writing instruction and practice time?

O-4. **Has a database been established (and is it used) to collect and summarize school-level and student-level literacy data (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative) with immediate and easy access for all teachers?** *EP Condition 1*

O-5. **Has a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) been established to provide additional support to students (Tiers 2 and 3)?** *EP Condition 3*

O-6. **Is there an effective schedule ensuring students do not miss instructional time to receive tiered support?** *EP Condition 1*

O-7. **Are intervention group sizes and intensity of instruction appropriate to the level of support needed by students (e.g., MTSS, Tiers 2 and 3)?** *EP Condition 3*

O-8. **Are the core program and intervention program approaches and materials aligned and coordinated for students receiving both core and tiered intervention support?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

O-9. Does the school schedule allow for PLC (professional learning community) time/data meeting time for collaboration and planning? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

    a. If so, what is the frequency? Who is responsible for planning and monitoring the effective use of this time?

    b. If not, how can this be built into the school schedule?

O-10. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration on the vertical articulation of the K-5 written curriculum with the 6-8 ELA written curriculum? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

O-11. Do all teachers engage in regular conversations regarding connecting skills and concepts horizontally and vertically from grade to grade? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

    a. Is there knowledge and planning for the vertical progression of skills?

    b. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration to ensure vertical articulation of the K-5 written curriculum with the 6-8 ELA written curriculum?

ELA 6-8

System-Level Questions
(LEA/District and School)

THINK ABOUT: How might our system structures and practices at the district and school level related to Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to our achievement and growth outcomes in English Language Arts?

These questions are offered as a vehicle to guide purposeful reflection and should be considered and answered with clear evidence. This list is not exhaustive and is not a checklist. The questions do not need to be asked in the order in which they are numbered; they are numbered to reference specific items and for ease of use.

The questions are intended to help generate thinking specific to the district/school-level ELA program. Through the information provided by PVAAS, along with other assessment data, this document is intended to assist in determining potential root causes leading to plans of action (looking back and looking forward). School-level administrators, ELA coordinators, teacher leaders, and teachers may find these reflection questions helpful in analyzing data at a system level for the school.

Essential Practice Key:

Each question indicates the related conditions for PA's Essential Practices for Schools:

EP Condition 1
Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

EP Condition 2
Empower Leadership

EP Condition 3
Provide Student-Centered Supports

EP Condition 4
Foster Quality Professional Learning

CURRICULUM   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA 6-8

C-1. **Is the Grade 6-8 ELA written curriculum aligned with the PA Core Standards?** *EP Condition 1*

   a. How frequently is the written curriculum reviewed/revised through analysis of student data?

   b. Is the curriculum both "guaranteed and viable"? (Marzano)
   - Guaranteed: equal access to the written curriculum for all students
   - Viable: adequate time for teachers to teach content and for students to learn it

   c. Has an alignment been done that shows where specific skills and concepts are missing? Which concepts and skills need to be enhanced? Which concepts and skills are not included? Which concepts and skills lack sufficient practice embedded in the curriculum? Have lessons been developed to fill identified gaps?

   d. Were the PDE SAS ELA Curriculum Frameworks used to develop the written curriculum?

   e. Does the ELA written curriculum address fidelity to the ELA core program, clarifying the use of the ELA core program? Do both the core ELA program and the written curriculum meet the rigor required by the PA Core Standards?

   f. Do unit maps exist to guide lesson planning and instruction? Are they reviewed periodically and revised to address students' needs, as identified through data analysis?

C-2. Does the written curriculum connect concepts and skills vertically, showing the progression of skills necessary for students to acquire deep understanding and build upon prior knowledge? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does this year's curriculum build on students' prior knowledge and experiences from the previous year?

    b. Will the ELA content for this year lay the foundation for topics the students will explore in the next grade or upper-level grades?

    c. Do teachers engage in dialogue with teachers in grade levels above and below to examine the overall program's strengths and weaknesses and prioritize students' needs?

    d. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration on the vertical articulation of the K-5 written curriculum with the 6-8 ELA written curriculum?

C-3. Does the written curriculum systematically integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening throughout the day in all subject areas? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Does the written curriculum for science, social studies, math, and all subject areas include ELA concepts and skills?

    b. Is writing a regular part of all subject areas?

    c. Do all teachers view themselves as teachers of ELA?

C-4. Is the core ELA program aligned to the PA Core Standards? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Is the core literacy program evidence-based?

    b. Has an alignment been conducted to determine missing skills and concepts?

    c. Have lessons been created to fill any identified gaps?

C-5. Are all the components of an effective ELA course included in the written curriculum (reading process, literary analysis, writing process, writing applications, communication, information, and media literacy)? *EP Condition 1*

C-6. Does the written curriculum in ELA address the appropriate level of rigor (Webb's Depth of Knowledge/DOK)? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 2*

    a. Is the concept of rigor understood as different from difficulty level?

    b. Does the level of rigor in the curriculum match the rigor of each standard?

    c. Is there a balance of DOK levels 1, 2, and 3?

    d. Are there opportunities for DOK level 4 tasks?

C-7. Does the written curriculum specify the use of text/resources at the appropriate level of text complexity? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 2*

C-8. Does the written curriculum explicitly address the modes of writing: narrative, informational, opinion/argumentative? *EP Condition 1*

C-9. What is the balance between fictional and informational text? *EP Condition 1*

    a. What is the balance in the LEA/ district written curriculum? In the core literacy/English program?

    b. Is the balance appropriate and aligned to PA Core Standards, and if not, how is this addressed?

C-10. Is writing addressed in the written curriculum in a sequential and cumulative manner? *EP Condition 1*

 a. Are micro-skills (foundational skills including handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/ vocabulary, and sentence writing) appropriately addressed?

 b. Are macro-skills (process skills including planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising) appropriately addressed?

C-11. Does the written curriculum address vocabulary in a purposeful and explicit manner? *EP Condition 1*

 a. Is there a school-wide program in place?

 b. Does all written curriculum – in all subjects and grades– identify critical vocabulary?

 c. Are there evidence-based practices in place?

 d. Is instruction in morphology addressed?

C-12. Are teachers aware of the ELA resources on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org)? *EP Condition 1*

INSTRUCTION `SYSTEM LEVEL` `ELA` `6-8`

I-1. Do all students receive instruction on grade-level PA Core Standards? *EP Condition 1*

 a. Is the delivery of instruction equitable across all students/all student groups?

 b. For students below the benchmark, are the appropriate scaffolds in place to allow them to access and benefit from the core ELA grade-level curriculum?

I-2. Is there an observable alignment between the written, taught, and assessed curriculum?
 EP Condition 1

 a. Does daily instruction in all classrooms follow the written curriculum?

 b. Is there a process in place to monitor that there is alignment between what is written, what is taught, and what is assessed?

 c. Does differentiated instruction occur in all classrooms, with attention to the necessary pacing of the curriculum?

I-3. Are unit and lesson objectives/essential questions/learning intentions clear to students?
 EP Condition 1

 a. Are these communicated clearly in written and oral form?

 b. Are they aligned with PA Core Standards?

 c. Are they aligned with the LEA/district ELA written curriculum?

I-4. Is the core ELA program being implemented with fidelity? *EP Condition 1*

 a. What is the evidence that all core program components are implemented as intended?

 b. Is this implementation consistent across classrooms?

 • Is there a consistent observation/reflection protocol in use to ensure the fidelity of the core?

 • What is the process for determining the use of additional resources and materials?

I-5. Do all students receive effective instruction in all components of the curriculum (reading process, literary analysis, writing process, writing applications, communication, information, and media literacy)? *EP Condition 1*

I-6. Is sufficient time allocated in the school schedule for ELA at all grade levels, and do the instructional minutes closely mirror the allocated time on paper? *EP Condition 1*

I-7. Is sufficient time allocated for explicit writing instruction (30-40 min/day)? *EP Condition 1*

I-8. Is writing practice provided at least 30 minutes/day (integrated across all subjects)? *EP Condition 1*

I-9. Is instructional time allocated to the whole group, small group, and individual instruction within the ELA time block? *EP Condition 1*

   a. Do all teachers provide whole group, small group, and individual instruction for all students?

   b. Is there a grade-level pacing guide used by all teachers, with the flexibility to respond to students' needs?

   c. Do all students participate in whole group instruction, such as shared reading?

I-10. Are all students instructed to use text at the appropriate level of text complexity? Is the text used rigorous enough for the grade level? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

I-11. Is comprehension taught through explicit modeling and a gradual release of responsibility? *EP Condition 1*

I-12. Do all students have multiple opportunities for reading practice through choral reading, close reading, partner reading, or individual turns in small groups? *EP Condition 1*

I-13. Do students have the opportunity to synthesize or critique information from multiple texts about the same subject/idea? *EP Condition 1*

I-14. Are students required to respond to higher-level questions (e.g., inferential, analytical) about shared readings and selections read? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

   a. Are activities and tasks at appropriate DOK (Depth of Knowledge) levels?

   b. Are there opportunities for students to write academic responses to questions about texts?

   c. Are all teachers using effective questioning techniques, including but not limited to wait time, student name placement in questioning, random and strategic calling on students, and high-level questioning mixed with appropriate lower-level question?

I-15. Is writing instruction taught explicitly and systematically at all grade levels? *EP Condition 1*

   a. Do daily lesson plans include a variety of instructional components (i.e., explicit instruction, independent writing, conferencing)?

   b. Are sentence-level skills (structure and mechanics) taught explicitly?

I-16. Is spelling instruction taught explicitly and systematically? *EP Condition 1*

I-17. Is vocabulary explicitly and consistently taught using evidence-based techniques and strategies? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Can all teachers identify how vocabulary words are chosen at each grade level?

    b. Can all teachers identify effective vs. ineffective vocabulary strategies? Is vocabulary taught using evidence-based strategies?

    c. Is there a school-wide vocabulary program in place?

    d. Is instruction in morphology (the study of meaningful units – e.g., root words) in place at all levels?

I-18. Are students provided with exemplary writing samples, mentor texts, assessment rubrics, real-world writing tasks, writing in response to reading, and oral and written feedback on their writing? *EP Condition 1*

I-19. Do students have sufficient opportunities to hear and practice fluent reading? *EP Condition 1*

I-20. Are flexible reading skills groups used to provide targeted instruction at students' instructional levels and according to identified needs? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are they flexible to align with individual student needs at appropriate points in time?

    b. Is progress measured with ongoing progress monitoring?

I-21. Is technology used to differentiate instruction and provide additional practice on targeted skill areas? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

    a. Is technology used as a medium for reading in all content areas?

    b. Is there a process for selecting effective technology resources?

    c. Do all teachers have access to technology resources?

I-22. Is independent work purposeful and directly related to building literacy skills? Is it consistent across all classrooms? *EP Condition 1*

I-23. Are students receiving interventions being closely monitored and provided specific instruction targeted to skill deficits? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

I-24. Is instruction differentiated during whole group and small group instruction? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

    a. If so, how and in what ways?

    b. Are teachers trained and supported in differentiating instruction specific to learning objectives/targets in ELA?

    c. Is differentiation of instruction an expectation that is supported and documented by the core program and district written curriculum?

    d. Are small groups/flexible groups used to provide differentiation within the ELA classroom?

    e. Are extension tasks provided for students demonstrating mastery at the expected level?

    f. Are organizational frames used to scaffold explicit instruction in writing?

I-25. Does writing instruction include authentic writing, text-based writing, and classroom-based writing tasks? *EP Condition 1*

A-1. Is there an LEA/district assessment map accessible to all teachers? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are valid and reliable assessment measures in place to screen, diagnose, monitor, and evaluate literacy outcomes for all students? Is this followed and implemented by all teachers?

    b. Has the range of assessments been evaluated to ensure no unnecessary redundancy/overlap or important skill areas missing?

    c. Do all teachers have access to and follow this plan, administering all required assessments on time, per the assessment schedule?

    d. Is there consistency and agreement on using assessments available through the literacy program and other school-wide assessments?

    e. Are there scheduled times for staff to review new data in a timely manner to adjust instruction, groupings, etc.?

A-2. Are students assessed at appropriate levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (performance tasks, objective assessments, and oral questioning), and are assessment items reflective of the rigor of the standards being addressed? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 2*

A-3. Are formative and summative assessments established and used by all teachers?
EP Condition 1 *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are common assessments in place?

    b. Are the assessments valid?

    c. Do all teachers have strong assessment literacy skills?

A-4. Do formative assessment measures, specifically questioning strategies, include higher-level questions (e.g., inferential, analytical) about shared readings and selections read? Is there an analysis of the assessment data to inform the need for additional, specific skill instruction?
EP Condition 1 *EP Condition 3*

A-5. Are teachers aware of students' reading skills through a universal screening process in place at the school level? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Does universal screening occur early in the school year to inform instruction effectively?

    b. Is the universal screening considered along with PVAAS projections on individual students?

A-6. Is a screening process in place to identify students' levels of risk relative to writing?
EP Condition 1 *EP Condition 3*

A-7. Are benchmark assessments used to monitor students' progress throughout a given grade level year such as, but not limited to, Firefly from PDE? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-8. Are diagnostic assessments in place (e.g., CDT, Core Phonics Survey) to inform instruction at Tier 1 as well as Tiers 2 and 3? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-9. Are curriculum-based measures used to assess and monitor writing progress (e.g., total words written, words spelled correctly)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are the PDE holistic rubrics (genre-specific) used to assess specific writing components?

    b. Are analytic rubrics used to assess specific components of writing?

A-10. Is additional data/information available at the classroom and individual student level on reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and how is this information analyzed along with PVAAS reporting? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

Example:

a. What information from the CDT can be integrated for analysis along with PVAAS data?

b. Are common formative and summative assessment data used along with PVAAS data to inform instruction?

A-11. Is writing assessed through evidence-based assessment practices, i.e., a common framework and rubrics ensuring a consistent approach across subjects and grade levels? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

a. Are the PDE holistic rubrics (genre-specific) used to assess specific writing components?

b. Are analytic rubrics used to assess specific components of writing?

A-12. Are progress monitoring measures in place and conducted by classroom teachers (e.g., DIBELS® Next, AimswebPlus™ CBM)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

a. Are students not at benchmark monitored closely with the appropriate frequency?

b. Does this occur formally?

A-13. Are both micro and macro writing skills assessed through indirect writing tasks (i.e., multiple choice, true/false, error correction) and direct/on-demand writing tasks? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

b. Macro-level skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

A-14. Is student progress closely monitored to ensure that students falling behind are provided proactive support through differentiation and a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)? Is there a structure in place that ensures this monitoring occurs on a prescribed basis? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-15. Are school-wide/grade-level data team meetings established for teachers to collaborate on data analysis and action planning? *EP Condition 2* *EP Condition 3*

a. Do protocols exist for the analysis of data?

b. Is the data frequently analyzed, and groupings and instruction changed due to data analysis?

c. Are key data team members identified and trained?

d. Do grade-level data meetings align closely with the district/school assessment plan?

A-16. Is a grading policy established at the district and school level that uses grades/marks that correspond to students' academic achievement and proficiency levels, and are soft skills evaluated separately from academic performance to indicate a student's true performance on identified concepts and skills? *EP Condition 2*

O-1.   Are teachers provided with ongoing professional learning in ELA Standards and best practices?
EP Condition 4

    a. How are new teachers trained to deliver the ELA curriculum/program?

    b. Are teachers knowledgeable of resources and the most relevant research on how students learn to read?

    c. How is professional learning provided to experienced teachers new to the content area or grade level?

    d. Are teachers aware of current research findings and implications on curriculum and instruction in micro and macro skills of writing?

        • Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

        • Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

O-2.   Does the school schedule include appropriate time for literacy instruction (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Do all teachers adhere to the school schedule? Is there a check between allocated time on the school schedule and actual instructional time in the classroom?

    b. Do teachers effectively utilize the block of time for whole group and small group instruction, and is this consistent across a grade level?

    c. Is this time protected from meeting time, assemblies, and other interruptions?

    d. Is a grade-level pacing guide/schedule flexible to address students' pacing needs?

    e. Is time specifically set aside for direct writing instruction and practice time?

O-3.   Are staff (regular education, special education, remedial/Title I, intervention specialist, paraeducator) utilized in various ways to maximize small group instructional opportunities?
EP Condition 1

O-4.   Has a database been established (and is it used) to collect and summarize school-level and student-level literacy data with immediate and easy access for all teachers? *EP Condition 1*

O-5.   Has a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) been established to provide additional supports (Tiers 2 and 3)? *EP Condition 3*

O-6.   Are intervention group sizes appropriate to the level of support needed (i.e., MTSS Tiers 2 and 3)?
EP Condition 1 *EP Condition 3*

O-7.   Are the core program and intervention program materials/approaches aligned and coordinated for students receiving both core and tiered intervention support? *EP Condition 3*

O-8.   Is there an effective schedule that ensures students do not miss instructional time to receive tiered support? *EP Condition 1*

O-9.   Does the school schedule allow for PLC (professional learning community) time/data meeting time for collaboration and planning? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

    a. If so, what is the frequency? Who is responsible for planning and monitoring for the effective use of this time?

    b. If not, how can this be built into the master schedule?

O-10. Are there opportunities for teacher collaboration on the vertical articulation of the K-5 written curriculum with the 6-8 ELA written curriculum? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

O-11. Do all teachers engage in regular conversations regarding connecting skills and concepts horizontally and vertically from grade to grade? *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 4*

ELA KEYSTONE LITERATURE

System-Level Questions
(LEA/School)

THINK ABOUT: How might our system structures and practices at the district and school level related to Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to our achievement and growth outcomes in English Language Arts?

These questions are offered as a vehicle to guide purposeful reflection and should be considered and answered with clear evidence. This list is not exhaustive and is not a checklist. The questions do not need to be asked in the order in which they are numbered; they are used to reference specific items and for ease of use.

The questions are intended to help generate thinking specific to the district and school-level ELA program. Through the information provided by PVAAS, along with other assessment data, this document is intended to assist in determining potential root causes leading to plans of action (looking back and looking forward). School-level administrators, ELA coordinators, teacher leaders, and individual teachers may find these reflection questions helpful in analyzing data at a system level for the school.

Essential Practice Key:

Each question indicates the related conditions for PA's Essential Practices for Schools:

EP Condition 1
Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction

EP Condition 2
Empower Leadership

EP Condition 3
Provide Student-Centered Supports

EP Condition 4
Foster Quality Professional Learning

CURRICULUM SYSTEM LEVEL ELA KEYSTONE LITERATURE

C-1. **Is the written curriculum for the Keystone Literature course appropriately aligned with the PA Core Standards?** *EP Condition 1*

a. Has an alignment been done that shows where certain skills and concepts are missing? Which skills and concepts need to be enhanced? Which skills and concepts are not included with sufficient practice embedded?

b. How frequently is the written curriculum reviewed/revised through analysis of student data?

c. Is the curriculum both "guaranteed and viable"? (Marzano)
   - Guaranteed: equal access to the written curriculum for all students
   - Viable: adequate time for teachers to teach content and for students to learn it

d. Is the Keystone written curriculum made accessible to teachers?

e. Have the textbooks/texts for the course been examined for degree of alignment to the PA Core Standards/Keystone Exam eligible content? Are texts at the appropriate complexity levels?

f. Is there a written map that provides a crosswalk between the course-approved textbook and the PA Core Standards? Does the curriculum focus on the priorities addressed in the PDE SAS 9-10 ELA Curriculum Frameworks?

g. Does the curriculum tightly align with the Keystone Literature assessment anchors and eligible content?

C-2. Are appropriate materials and resources used in the instruction of Keystone Literature?
EP Condition 1

    a. Is the textbook considered a resource for instruction rather than the curriculum?

    b. Has the textbook for the course been examined for degree of alignment to the PA Core Standards/ Keystone exam eligible content?

C-3. Are texts, excerpts, and other written resources at the appropriate text complexity level?
EP Condition 1   *EP Condition 2*

    a. How is that determined at the school level?

    b. Do teachers understand the importance of text complexity?

C-4. Do unit and lesson plans include objectives for explicitly teaching key vocabulary? *EP Condition 1*

    a. Do plans include objectives for the explicit teaching of morphology?

    b. Do plans include objectives for the explicit teaching of etymology?

    c. Can all teachers identify how vocabulary words are chosen?

    d. Can all teachers identify effective vs. ineffective vocabulary strategies? Is vocabulary taught using evidence-based strategies?

    e. Is there a school-wide vocabulary program in place?

C-5. Is explicit writing instruction embedded in the Keystone Literature course curriculum?
EP Condition 1

C-6. Are teachers aware of the resources on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org) for Keystone Literature? *EP Condition 1*

INSTRUCTION   SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA   KEYSTONE LITERATURE

I-1. Are all teachers adhering to the written curriculum for the Keystone Literature course (i.e., the taught curriculum matches the written and assessed curriculum)? *EP Condition 1*

I-2. Are teachers appropriately using the materials and resources identified in the written curriculum? *EP Condition 1*

I-3. Are teachers adapting instruction for those who need differentiated instruction yet still having students grapple with complex text? Are teachers emphasizing the importance of perseverance as students grapple with complex texts? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

I-4. Are teachers providing enrichment for those students whose rate of learning exceeds the average pace? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

I-5. Are all teachers pacing through the curriculum at the established and appropriate pace?
EP Condition 1

I-6. Do teachers provide explicit instruction in close reading? In text-dependent analysis?
EP Condition 1

I-7. Is technology used to differentiate instruction and provide additional practice in targeted skill areas? *EP Condition 1*   *EP Condition 3*

A-1. **A-1. Are common formative and summative assessments in place to provide consistency for all students across courses/sections/teachers?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

    a. Are the assessments valid?

    b. Do all teachers have strong assessment literacy skills?

    c. Are common summative assessments in place?

    d. Are assessments analyzed for cognitive thinking levels (Webb's Depth of Knowledge/DOK)?

    e. Are there common unit assessments, mid-terms, and finals?

    f. Are students engaged in peer analysis?

A-2. **Are formative and summative assessments truly assessing the intended learning targets, and do they include open-ended and text-driven items?** *EP Condition 3*

A-3. **Are test items aligned to the level of cognitive thinking required by the relevant standard? Do tests reflect a range of DOK (Webb's Depth of Knowledge) levels?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-4. **Is there a universal screening process to determine which students may need additional support before and/or during enrollment in the Keystone Literature course? Are PVAAS projection reports considered such as, but not limited to, Firefly from PDE?** *EP Condition 1* *EP Condition 3*

A-5. **Do Keystone course teachers conduct item analysis on common assessments to revise curriculum and instruction as indicated? Is there time allocated for re-teaching items needed?** *EP Condition 1*

A-6. **Are students receiving feedback on their writing specific to the structure of writing, including topic sentence, details, transitions, and clincher sentence?** *EP Condition 1*

A-7. **Are PVAAS growth reports and PVAAS student projection reports used to reflect on past practices and apply information to future planning/work?** *EP Condition 1*

    a. Are they used during the curriculum review/revision process?

    b. Are they used in planning and delivery of instruction?

    c. Are they used during planning for (proactive) intervention supports?

    d. Are they used for secondary ELA course design and sequence?

    e. Are they used for the placement of students?

A-8. **Do students' grades/marks accurately reflect their academic achievement and proficiency levels? Are accurate and relevant grades provided to students to reflect their progress?** *EP Condition 2*

ORGANIZATION SYSTEM LEVEL   ELA   KEYSTONE LITERATURE

O-1. Are supplemental supports available to students who may not be on a path toward at least proficiency or higher during their enrollment in the Keystone Literature course? *EP Condition 3*

O-2. Are there opportunities for Keystone Literature teachers to collaboratively plan, prepare, and analyze common assessment data during the course? *EP Condition 4*

O-3. Have teachers participated in professional learning on the topic of assessment literacy? *EP Condition 4*

O-4. Are remediation courses and/or intervention supports available to students who have not achieved proficiency on the Keystone exam, and are these targeted to individual students' needs, as data indicates? *EP Condition 3*

Teacher-Level Questions
(Classroom)

THINK ABOUT: How might my practices and knowledge level related to Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to my students' growth and achievement results?

These questions are offered as a vehicle for individual teachers to guide self-reflection purposefully and systematically. Each question/probe should be thoughtfully considered, reflective of data findings, and answered with clear evidence.

Teachers: As you consider each question/probe, ask yourself, *"What is my evidence?"*

This list is not exhaustive, and it is not a checklist. The questions do not need to be discussed in the order in which they are numbered; they are numbered to reference specific items and for ease of use. The questions help generate thinking as a teacher annually considers classroom/student-level data. Teachers are encouraged to use all the available data, for example, PVAAS teacher-specific reports, attendance data, and summative and benchmark data. When considered through the lens of data available through PVAAS and other assessments, these questions are intended to guide the self-reflection process to assist in identifying root causes and developing action plans for the current group of students.

Teachers are encouraged to access PDE's Self-Reflection Guides:
- Teacher Self-Reflection Guide (Data Available Teachers) (PDF)
- Teacher Self-Reflection Guide (Non-Data Available Teachers) (PDF)

Framework Key:

Each question in the teacher section(s) are coded to show the related domain(s) from The Observation and Practice Framework, Act 13:

PP
Planning and Preparation

CE
Classroom Environment

I
Instruction

PR
Professional Responsibilities

CURRICULUM TEACHER LEVEL ELA K-2

C-1. Am I knowledgeable about the PA Core Standards at my grade level? *PP*

    a. Am I aware of the standards in the grade(s) above and below the grade I am teaching?

    b. Am I clear on the expected outcomes as documented in the written curriculum for each grade, K-2?

C-2. Am I highly knowledgeable, and do I stay current relative to the continuing research from/in the "science of reading?" *PP PR*

    a. Can I point to components of the written curriculum that are directly aligned with the science of reading?

    b. Do I stay current by reading the available research and evidence in the science of reading?

C-3. Can I contribute and collaborate on an informal or formal audit of the written curriculum, identifying where enhancements or changes are needed? *PP PR*

    (Example: more emphasis on decodable texts, increased balance on fiction vs. non-fiction text, etc.)

C-4. Am I using the LEA/district written curriculum and core literacy program, integrating the two and following prescribed protocols and procedures for literacy instruction? *PP*

    a. Can I plan lessons to fill in gaps in the core literacy program in areas of the written curriculum that aren't emphasized enough or perhaps are not appropriately prioritized?

    b. Am I using student learning assessment data to identify written curriculum/core literacy program gaps or needed emphasis?

C-5. Can I identify specific sections of the written curriculum that build the necessary foundational skills at the K-2 level and plan lessons accordingly? (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, listening/oral language skills) *PP PR*

C-6. Am I aware of the aspects of the written curriculum that address the teaching of writing at the kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 levels? Do I understand the difference between macro and micro writing skills, and what is the expected outcome at my grade level? *PP PR*

C-7. Am I knowledgeable about the importance of cursive writing in developing written expression? *PP PR*

C-8. Am I aware of the ELA resources on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org)? *PP PR*

INSTRUCTION TEACHER LEVEL ELA K-2

I-1. Am I providing all students with whole group instruction based on grade level PA Core Standards, including scaffolding instruction for students who need additional support to provide them opportunities to access and benefit from the ELA core curriculum at their grade level? *PP I*

I-2. Am I clear with students on each lesson's learning target(s)? *I*

    a. Are lesson objectives/essential questions communicated in student-friendly language?

    b. Do lesson plans delineate the lesson objectives/essential questions/learning intentions?

    c. Are students able to articulate the learning target for the lesson?

I-3. Am I able to articulate how I ensure the alignment of the written, the taught, and the assessed curriculum at my grade level? *PP* *I*

I-4. Am I using the allocated reading block time effectively and efficiently? *CE* *I*

    a. Are there smooth transitions between whole group and small group instruction?

    b. Is my pace of explicit instruction brisk yet responsive to students' needs?

    c. Am I prepared for each small group to maximize allocated small group time?

    d. Are independent learning tasks/stations aligned to specific learning targets? Are they meaningful and differentiated for the various small groups?

I-5. Am I providing the appropriate and effective instruction in phonemic awareness for my grade level? *I*

    a. Am I spending appropriate time on phonemic awareness at my grade level (ex: Kdg-20 hours)?

    b. Do I know and can I articulate the importance of emphasizing sounds in spoken language before phonics instruction?

    c. Am I pairing phonemic awareness with sound-symbol instruction in grades 1 and 2?

    d. Am I providing scaffolding and differentiation based on individual student needs for students in grades 1 and 2?

    e. Am I modeling how sounds are made in the mouth, as typically seen on sound cards?

    f. Does my phonemic awareness instruction include blending and segmenting, focusing students on all sounds in a word (beginning/first, last/final, medial sounds including blends)?

I-6. Do I have deep knowledge of the importance of explicit and systematic instruction in phonics? *I*

    a. Do I understand and ensure that phonics is taught to the level of automaticity?

    b. Am I teaching segmenting and blending processes to decode and spell words explicitly and ensuring students practice regularly (using evidence-based practices such as "word chaining/building")?

    c. Am I teaching irregular high-frequency words by "sounding out" the word's individual sounds, pointing out the unusual spelling of one or more sounds? (Word example "said," the unusual spelling would be that "ai" represents the "short e" sound instead of its more typical sound (long "a" sound).

    d. Am I ensuring that students practice phonetically regular and irregular words in isolation and reviewing and doing so regularly?

    e. Am I teaching the expected phonics skills following the prescribed scope and sequence at my grade level, aware of the expectations and vertical articulation from kindergarten through grade 2?

I-7. Am I effectively instructing and monitoring students through the phases of acquiring alphabetic principle, i.e., pre-alphabetic phrase, partial alphabetic phase, full alphabetic phase, and consolidated alphabetic phrase/development of automaticity? (Ehri, 2005) *I*

I-8. Am I ensuring that students are reading controlled text to include only those phonics patterns that have been explicitly taught? *I*

    a. Am I using evidenced-based strategies such as repeated reading, partner reading, and phrased cued reading?

    b. Am I clear with students as to the purpose of each reading (e.g., accuracy, fluency, prosody, comprehension)?

I-9. **Am I using visuals/manipulatives effectively, such as sound walls/cards, Elkonian boxes, affix cards, etc.)?** /

I-10. **Am I teaching spelling using evidence-based instructional strategies and routines?** /

    a. Is encoding aligned to the phonics sequence of instruction?

    b. Can I discuss how words are stored in memory and provide instruction effectively?

    c. Are words orthographically "mapped" (direct instruction in how the letters -which may include 1-5 letters- match each of the sounds heard in each "spelling" word)?

I-11. **Am I teaching fluency in an explicit and systematic manner and routines?** /

    a. Do I understand that fluency building occurs after accuracy?

    b. Am I providing my students with adult models and recorded models of fluent reading?

    c. Am I using repeated readings and timed readings?

    d. Do I provide students with instruction on reading with prosody?

    e. Are students receiving sufficient practice to develop and enhance fluency?

I-12. **Am I using evidence-based routines to teach vocabulary to students?** /

    a. Am I teaching vocabulary that is cross-subject/contexts and vocabulary that is domain-specific (Beck, Tier 2 and 3 words)?

    b. Am I addressing figurative language as grade level appropriate?

    c. Am I skilled in teaching morphology as early as first grade (Ex, compound words, "s" and "es" indicating plural words in kindergarten and first grade, most common suffixes in second grade such as less, ful, er, est)?

I-13. **Am I skilled in teaching listening comprehension? Do I understand the components underlying the purposes of teaching listening skills?** /

    Examples:

    a. Listening for a specific purpose(s)

    b. Making predictions using evidence presented in the text

    c. Identifying and discussing the salient elements of fiction and non-fiction text

      • Character, setting, problem, barriers, resolution

      • Main idea and supporting details

    d. Retelling/summarizing text accurately

    e. Monitoring one's comprehension and clarifying information as needed

I-14. **Am I skilled in teaching oral narrative skills to students?** /

    (Example: Including sequencing of story, identifying the characters, the setting, the problem/goal /wish that the main character is attempting to resolve, the barriers presented along the way in the resolution of the problem/goal/wish of the main character and the final resolution of the problem as appropriate at each grade level?)

I-15. **Am I choosing challenging texts for read-aloud to build background knowledge vocabulary and enhance listening and comprehension skills?** /

I-16. Am I knowledgeable about evidence-based practices to teach reading comprehension? *I*

    a. Do I understand the role that background knowledge plays in comprehension and, therefore, explicitly teaching background knowledge?

    b. Am I using the gradual release model to explicitly support reading comprehension?

    c. Am I teaching my students multiple strategies to help with comprehension, i.e., including activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, visualizing, fix-up strategies, inferencing, summarizing, or retelling?

    d. Am I providing my students with extended opportunities to practice comprehension strategies?

    e. Am I providing my students with a wide range of text genres?

    f. Am I teaching my students organizational text structure?

I-17. Am I using the allocated literacy block time effectively, i.e., using every minute effectively and appropriately? *CE* *I*

    a. Have I developed smooth transitions from whole group to small group to independent work?

    b. Have I organized materials and resources in the classroom for quick access by students?

    c. Have I appropriately allocated time for the whole group, small group, and individual instruction?

I-18. Are my groups flexible, monitored, and adjusted through analysis of individual student data? *I*

I-19. Am I using formal progress monitoring tools to measure individual student growth for all students who are not at benchmark? *I*

I-20. Am I able to differentiate my instruction by customizing intensity level, degree of explicitness, amount of scaffolding during guided practice, and/or amount of independent practice? *I*

I-21. Are my students not at benchmark receiving some level of tiered supports? *I*

    a. Do I collaborate and co-plan with other teachers providing instruction to my students?

    b. Do I ensure that the instruction for students receiving tiered support is aligned and coordinated with the classroom instruction and the student's needs as indicated through continual data analysis?

    c. Are Tiers 1, 2, and 3 support focused on targeted skills, as identified through student learning assessments?

I-22. Am I explicitly teaching writing, both micro and macro skills? *I* *PR*

    a. Do I understand the difference between micro-skills and macro-skills?

      • Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

      • Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

    b. Am I ensuring the appropriate writing instruction and practice time at my grade level?

      • Kindergarten allocates ½ hour per day; First grade and beyond allocates 1 hour per day.

      • Allocated time should include direct instruction in teaching and modeling writing strategies, techniques, and skills and time to practice these skills, including applying writing skills across the curriculum.

I-23. Am I teaching handwriting with an understanding of how to teach both manuscript and cursive? Do I understand the recent research supporting cursive writing to facilitate written expressions? *I* *PR*

ASSESSMENT TEACHER LEVEL ELA K-2

A-1. Am I following the LEA/school assessment map, administering the required assessments as per the schedule and protocols for administration? *I*

A-2. Am I able to identify and communicate the purpose of each assessment used? *I*

    a. Do I know the differences between formative, summative, benchmark, and diagnostic student learning assessments?

    b. Do I use formal and informal formative assessments (Ex, formal progress monitoring probes; informal checks for understanding)?

A-3. Am I using the prescribed assessments in our core literacy program, and can I interpret those along with other local assessments given to my students? *I*

A-4. Do I understand and use the universal screening process to effectively inform my instruction? *I*

A-5. Do I understand the differences between beginning-of-year, middle-of-year, and end-of-year benchmarks, and understand the need for appropriate progress, and use those results to inform my instruction? *I*

A-6. Do I use formal diagnostic assessments to identify target skills for supporting individual students in their progress (e.g., Core Phonics Survey, Phonological Assessment Screener for Intervention (PASI))? *I*

A-7. Do I employ a variety of formal and informal formative assessment techniques /tools and use the data results to plan my instruction? *I*

    a. Do I use formal progress monitoring probes with individual students at the appropriate frequency given the level of supports needed?

    b. Do I use a wide variety of informal formative assessments measures, including but not limited to questioning strategies, thumbs up/thumbs down, choral responses, etc.)?

A-8. Do I engage students in goal setting, using student-friendly language and charting? *I*

A-9. Do I assess students' writing on an ongoing basis? *I*

    a. Do I use curriculum-based measures to assess and monitor writing progress, such as total words written words spelled correctly?

    b. Do I use holistic and analytic rubrics, modified for age-appropriate and student-friendly use, to assess students' writing?

A-10. Do I participate in data team meetings at the grade level, collaborating with teachers to analyze instruction and discuss student progress? *I* *PR*

A-11. Do I identify students who need additional support, such as those offered through an MTSS program that provides Tier 2 and 3 support? *I*

    a. Do I work collaboratively with other teachers who may also be contributing to the instruction of my students?

    b. Do I ensure students receive instruction through my classroom and additional streamlined, aligned, and well-planned support?

ORGANIZATION   TEACHER LEVEL   ELA   K-2

O-1. Am I knowledgeable about the findings detailed in the literature aligned with the science of reading? *PP* *PR*

O-2. Do I stay current with the reading and writing research by seeking professional learning opportunities? *PP* *PR*

O-3. Do I stay current on the reading research through my professional outreach? *PP* *PR*

O-4. Have I participated in professional learning relative to the core reading program at my grade level? *PP* *PR*

O-5. Do I adhere to the allocated time at my grade level for literacy instruction? *PP* *CE* *I*

    a. Do I monitor my time closely as students move between whole group, small group, and/or independent instruction time?

    b. Do I keep the time for literacy instruction as protected time, not infringed on by activities best placed elsewhere in the schedule?

O-6. Do I effectively collaborate with my grade-level colleagues and any teachers who also provide instruction to my students? *PP* *PR*

    a. Do I communicate frequently with a teacher, providing interventions to ensure alignment?

    b. Do I participate in PLC and/or data meetings to plan for cohorts of students?

O-7. Do I seek opportunities to engage with colleagues for the vertical articulation of skills at each grade level? *PP* *PR*

O-8. Do I keep accurate records on my students, using the schools' data system and supplement with my data as needed? *PP* *PR*

O-9. Do I engage in self-reflection regarding my practice, with a continual desire for professional growth? *PR*

ELA 3-5

Teacher-Level Questions
(Classroom)

THINK ABOUT: How might my practices and knowledge level related to Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to my students' growth and achievement results?

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Teachers: As you consider each question/probe, ask yourself, *"What is my evidence?"*

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Framework Key:

Each question in the teacher section(s) are coded to show the related domain(s) from The Observation and Practice Framework, Act 13:

PP
Planning and Preparation

CE
Classroom Environment

I
Instruction

PR
Professional Responsibilities

CURRICULUM TEACHER LEVEL ELA 3-5

C-1. **Am I knowledgeable about the PA Core Standards at my grade level (assessment anchors, eligible content, etc.)?** *PP*

  a. Am I familiar with the resources on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org)?

  b. Do I have strong knowledge of the PA Core Standards, assessment anchors, and eligible content, and plan accordingly?

  c. Am I knowledgeable about effective instructional techniques and tools in all areas of literacy (reading, writing, speaking, listening)?

C-2. **Am I using the LEA/district written curriculum and core literacy program, following prescribed protocols and procedures for literacy instruction?** *PP*

C-3. **Am I implementing all components of the core literacy program as intended?** *PP* *I*

C-4. **Am I choosing appropriate materials and resources?** *PP*

C-5. **Am I ensuring students have the appropriate balance of reading practice in both fictional and informational texts?** *PP* *I*

C-6. **Am I knowledgeable about text complexity and using appropriate levels of texts with students?** *PP*

C-7. **Am I accessing and applying the most current research on literacy, i.e., the "science of reading"? Am I aware of and using key resources available to me?** *PP* *I* *PR*

C-8. **Am I knowledgeable regarding the importance of handwriting and spelling in writing?** *PP* *I* *PR*

INSTRUCTION TEACHER LEVEL ELA 3-5

I-1. **Am I providing all students with whole group instruction based on grade level PA Core Standards and scaffolding instruction for students who need additional support to provide them with opportunities to access and benefit from the ELA core curriculum?** *PP* *I*

I-2. **Am I clear with students on each lesson's learning target(s)?** *I*

  a. Are lesson objectives/essential questions posted and communicated?

  b. Do lesson plans clearly delineate the lesson objectives/essential questions/learning intentions?

  c. Are students able to articulate the learning target for the lesson?

I-3. **Am I using the allocated reading block time effectively and efficiently?** *CE* *I*

  a. Are there smooth transitions between whole group and small group instruction?

  b. Is my pace of explicit instruction brisk yet responsive to students' needs?

  c. Am I prepared for each small group so I can maximize allocated small group time?

  d. Are independent learning tasks/stations aligned to specific learning targets? Are they meaningful and differentiated for the various small groups?

I-4.   Am I using the allocated writing block time effectively and efficiently? For example, am I appropriately balancing instructional time between micro and macro skills? *CE* *I*

   a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

   b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.)

I-5.   Am I knowledgeable about Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), and therefore providing tasks and questions at levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 for all students? *PP* *CE* *I*

I-6.   Am I ensuring students have the appropriate balance of reading practice in both fictional and informational texts? *PP* *I*

I-7.   Am I knowledgeable and skilled in teaching advanced phonics skills for decoding multi-syllabic words (e.g., affixes, root words, and r-controlled vowels)? *PP* *I*

I-8.   Are all students receiving sufficient practice in oral reading? Are there certain groups of students who may need more guided practice? *CE* *I*

I-9.   Do I model fluent reading for my students? *I*

I-10. Do I use exemplar/mentor texts in writing instruction? *I*

I-11. Have I clarified to students that fluency is not about just reading faster? Do I — and my students — clearly understand the automaticity of decoding skills versus fluency, and do I know how to teach each using evidence-based strategies (e.g., timed lists, fluency boxes, repeated readings)? *I*

I-12. Am I explicitly teaching vocabulary using evidence-based strategies? *I*

   a. Am I aware of the difference between academic vocabulary and content-specific vocabulary, and am I addressing both?

   b. Am I knowledgeable about morphology (meaningful units in words), and am I providing instruction in morphology?

I-13. Am I knowledgeable about the critical importance of background knowledge as it impacts comprehension, providing necessary background knowledge as needed as a pre-reading strategy, and providing access to texts to develop my students' background knowledge? *I*

I-14. Am I providing explicit instruction in comprehension, such as determining the main idea, locating, and providing supporting details, identifying cause and effect, making predictions, retelling, identifying text features, etc.? *I*

I-15. Am I providing explicit instruction in micro and macro skills of writing? *I*

   a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

   b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

I-16. Am I teaching spelling as a reciprocal process to reading/decoding, and is it differentiated and aligned? *I*

I-17. Am I teaching spelling with an awareness of its impact on writing fluency? *I*

I-18. Am I engaging all students through active participation techniques – and the use of age-appropriate content of interest? *CE* *I*

I-19. Am I providing timely feedback to all students? *CE* *I*

I-20. Is the independent work that I am providing clearly targeting skills that facilitate reading growth? *PP* *I*

I-21. Am I promoting independent reading? How do I ensure accountability for what the students read independently? *CE* *I*

I-22. Am I providing instruction and practice in authentic writing, on-demand writing in response to text, and classroom writing? *I*

I-23. Am I motivating students through goal setting, monitoring, and/or graphing their progress? *CE* *I*

I-24. Am I using flexible skills grouping to provide explicit instruction to students based on their targeted skill needs, and do I monitor student progress and adjust groups as needed? *CE* *I*

I-25. Am I identifying students who need additional support and providing that differentiation in the regular classroom, and am I using organizational frames to scaffold writing instruction? *CE* *I*

I-26. Are the materials and texts I'm using appropriate to the instructional levels of varying groups of students? *PP* *I*

I-27. Am I using effective questioning techniques, including but not limited to wait time, student name placement in questioning, random and strategic calling on students, and high-level questioning mixed with the appropriate lower-level questioning? *I*

I-28. Am I explicitly teaching the critical features of each of the modes of writing (narrative, informational, opinion)? *I*

ASSESSMENT TEACHER LEVEL   ELA 3-5

A-1. Am I assessing students with the agreed upon common assessments (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative) as per the LEA/district assessment plan? *I*

A-2. Am I considering all available student achievement and growth assessment data as I plan and deliver instruction? *PP* *I*

Examples: PVAAS teacher-specific reporting, PVAAS value-added and diagnostic growth data, PVAAS student projection data, PSSA, aimswebPlus, Acadience®/ DIBELS® Next, DAZE, Firefly, CDT, CBM, PSSA, GRADE, etc.

A-3. Am I using the established school-level universal screening process to inform instruction and grouping, including identifying students in need of supplemental supports? *PP* *I*

  a. Am I using the PVAAS projection score for individual students in my classroom to assist in grouping decisions and the degree/frequency for needed progress monitoring?

  b. Am I using PVAAS student projections to assist in determining needs for tiered interventions?

  c. Am I using the screening data on writing to plan for individual students?

A-4. Am I monitoring the progress of all students through evidence-based assessments and practices? *PP* *I* *PR*

A-5. Am I monitoring the progress of all students through benchmark assessments to determine which students need additional support? *PP* *I*

A-6. Can I interpret the results of benchmark assessments (e.g., Acadience®, aimswebPlus™, DIBELS® Next, Firefly from PDE)? Am I monitoring the progress of all students through benchmark assessments to determine who is at risk and the level of risk and then providing related instruction? *I*

A-7. Am I using the established school-level universal screening process to provide selected students with supplemental support (Tiers 2 and 3) proactively? *PP* *I*

A-8. Am I identifying students who need additional support and providing that differentiation in the regular classroom? *I*

    a. Am I using flexible grouping?

    b. Am I providing additional time allocated to guided/independent practice?

A-9. Can I use diagnostic assessments to determine individual students' needs (e.g., Core Phonics Survey, CDTs)? *PP* *I*

A-10. Do I know which students have a decoding problem, which students have a comprehension problem, and/or which students have both? *PP* *I*

A-11. Am I able to assess micro-skills, as well as macro skills, to determine individual students' needs? *PP* *I* *PR*

    a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

    b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

ORGANIZATION TEACHER LEVEL ELA 3-5

O-1. Do I have the appropriate time for ELA instruction (including reading, writing, speaking, and listening)? *PP* *CE* *I*

    a. Are there smooth transitions between whole group and small group instruction?

    b. Am I prepared for each small group to maximize allocated small group time?

    c. Are procedures smooth and efficient to maximize the time available?

O-2. Am I monitoring how I incorporate the essential components of literacy within my daily instruction? *PP* *I*

    a. Am I providing the appropriate amount of instruction in decoding and comprehension?

    b. Am I monitoring how many minutes my students are reading daily?

O-3. Am I knowledgeable about evidence-based practices in the teaching of writing? *PP* *PR* *I*

O-4. Am I using flexible grouping to provide explicit instruction to students based on their targeted skill needs, and do I monitor student progress and change groups as needed? *PP* *CE* *I*

O-5. Do I collaborate with other teachers to analyze data and integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening across all subjects? *PP* *PR*

O-6. Am I using PVAAS student projection reports to assist in organizing groups and identifying students needing supplemental support (MTSS)? *PP* *I* *PR*

O-7. Am I using my PVAAS growth reports to examine past patterns of academic growth and then using that information to inform my instruction for my current groups of students? *PP* *I* *PR*

O-8. Am I communicating with the intervention teacher(s) to coordinate instruction, providing purposeful and consistent instruction that reinforces skills taught in the general education classroom? *I* *PR*

Teacher-Level Questions
(Classroom)

THINK ABOUT: How might my practices and knowledge level related to Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to my students' achievement and growth results?

These questions are offered as a vehicle for individual teachers to guide self-reflection purposefully and systematically. Each question/probe should be thoughtfully considered and answered with clear evidence.

Teachers: As you consider each question/probe, ask yourself, *"What is my evidence?"*

This list is not exhaustive, and it is not a checklist. The questions do not need to be discussed in the order in which they are numbered; they are numbered to reference specific items and for ease of use.

The questions help generate thinking as teachers consider their data annually. Teachers are encouraged to use all the available data, for example, PVAAS teacher-specific reports, attendance data, and summative and benchmark data. When considered through the lens of data available through PVAAS and other assessments, these questions are intended to guide the self-reflection process to assist in identifying root causes and developing action plans for the current group of students.

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PP

Planning and Preparation

CE

Classroom Environment

I

Instruction

PR

Professional Responsibilities

CURRICULUM TEACHER LEVEL ELA 6-8

C-1. Am I knowledgeable about the PA Core Standards at my grade level (assessment anchors, eligible content, etc.)? *PP*

    a. Am I familiar with the resources available to me on the PDE SAS Portal (pdesas.org)?

    b. Do I have strong knowledge of the PA Core Standards, assessment anchors, and eligible content, and plan accordingly?

    c. Am I knowledgeable about effective instructional techniques and tools in all areas of literacy (reading, writing, speaking, listening)?

C-2. Am I using the LEA/district written curriculum and following protocols and procedures for ELA instruction? *PP*

C-3. Am I choosing appropriate materials and resources? *PP*

C-4. Am I ensuring students have the appropriate balance of reading practice in both fictional and informational texts? *PP* *I*

C-5. Am I knowledgeable about text complexity and using appropriate levels of texts with students? *PP*

C-6. Am I accessing and applying the most current research on literacy? Am I aware of and using key resources available to me? *PP* *I* *PR*

C-7. Am I knowledgeable regarding the importance of handwriting and spelling in writing? *PP* *I* *PR*

INSTRUCTION TEACHER LEVEL ELA 6-8

I-1. Am I providing all students with whole group instruction based on grade level PA Core Standards, including scaffolding instruction for students who need additional support to provide them with opportunities to access and benefit from the general education curriculum? *PP* *I*

I-2. Am I clear with students on each lesson's learning target(s)? *I*

    a. Are lesson objectives/essential questions posted and communicated?

    b. Do lesson plans clearly delineate the lesson objectives/essential questions/learning intentions?

    c. Are students able to articulate the learning target for the lesson?

I-3. Am I using the allocated ELA period effectively and efficiently? *CE* *I*

    a. Are there smooth transitions between whole group and small group instruction?

    b. Is my pace of explicit instruction brisk yet responsive to students' needs?

    c. Am I prepared for each small group to maximize allocated small group time?

    d. Am I starting on time and using the full period/time allotted to instruction?

    e. Are independent learning tasks/stations aligned to specific learning targets? Are they meaningful and differentiated for the various small groups?

I-4. Am I appropriately using the allocated writing block time effectively and efficiently and balancing instructional time between micro and macro skills? *CE* *I*

    a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

    b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

I-5. Am I ensuring students have the appropriate balance of reading practice in both fictional and informational texts? *PP* *I*

I-6. Are the materials and texts I am using appropriate to the instructional levels of varying groups of students and age-appropriate content of interest? *PP* *CE* *I*

I-7. Am I explicitly teaching vocabulary using evidence-based strategies? *I*

    a. Am I aware of the difference between academic vocabulary and content-specific vocabulary, and am I addressing both?

    b. Am I knowledgeable about morphology (meaningful units in words), and am I providing instruction in morphology?

I-8. Do I model fluent reading for my students? *I*

I-9. Do I use exemplar/mentor texts in writing instruction? *I*

I-10. Have I clarified to students that fluency is not about just reading faster? Do I — and my students — clearly understand the automaticity of decoding skills versus fluency, and do I know how to teach each using evidence-based strategies (e.g., timed lists, fluency boxes, repeated readings)? *I*

I-11. Am I engaging students in close reading? *I*

I-12. Am I teaching students how to analyze a text for evidence, as well as allowing my students to use multiple sources in an analysis? *I*

I-13. Am I teaching students how to identify and use text features of fictional and informational texts to aid reading comprehension in various subject-level textbooks? *I*

I-14. Am I knowledgeable about Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and providing all students tasks and questions at Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4? *PP* *CE* *I*

    a. Am I using effective questioning techniques, including but not limited to wait time, student name placement in questioning, and random and strategic calling on students?

    b. Do I use high-level questioning mixed with the appropriate lower-level questioning?

I-15. Am I knowledgeable about the critical importance of background knowledge as it impacts comprehension, providing necessary background knowledge as needed as a pre-reading strategy, and providing access to texts to develop my students' background knowledge? *I*

I-16. Am I providing explicit instruction in comprehension, such as determining the main idea, locating, and providing supporting details, identifying cause and effect, making predictions, retelling, summarizing, etc.? *I*

I-17. **Am I providing explicit instruction in micro and macro skills of writing?** *I*

    a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

    b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

    c. Am I explicitly teaching sentence-level writing skills (structure and mechanics)?

I-18. **Am I engaging all students through active participation techniques?** *CE* *I*

I-19. **Am I providing timely feedback to all students, as well as using questioning to provide feedback to guide students in helping them address misconceptions, improve their work, and/or guide their thinking?** *CE* *I*

I-20. **Am I requiring written responses to text regularly?** *I*

I-21. **Is the independent work clearly targeting skills that facilitate reading growth?** *PP* *I*

I-22. **Am I promoting (outside of school) independent reading?** *CE* *I*

I-23. **Am I providing instruction and practice in authentic writing, on-demand writing in response to text, and classroom writing?** *I*

I-24. **Am I motivating students through goal setting, monitoring, and/or graphing their progress?** *CE* *I*

I-25. **Am I using small, flexible grouping within my classroom to differentiate instruction?** *CE* *I*

    a. Do I monitor student progress within flexible groups and change groups as needed?

    b. Am I identifying students who need additional support and providing that differentiation in the regular classroom?

    c. Am I using organizational frames to scaffold writing instruction?

I-26. **Am I explicitly teaching the critical features of each of the modes of writing (narrative, informational, and opinion)?** *I*

ASSESSMENT TEACHER LEVEL ELA 6-8

A-1. **Am I assessing students with the agreed upon common assessments (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative) per the LEA/district assessment plan?** *I*

A-2. **Am I considering all available growth and achievement assessment data on students as I plan and deliver instruction?** *PP* *I*

Examples include but are not limited to PVAAS teacher-specific reporting, PVAAS value-added and diagnostic growth data, PVAAS student projection data, and PSSA, aimswebPLUS™, DIBELS® Next, Acadience®, DAZE, CDTs, CBM, PSSA, GRADE, STAR, etc.

A-3. **Am I identifying students needing additional support and providing that differentiation in the regular classroom?** *I*

    a. Am I using flexible grouping?

    b. Am I providing additional time allocated to guided and independent practice?

A-4. Can I interpret the results of benchmark assessments to inform my instruction (e.g., AimswebPLUS™, DIBELS® Next, Firefly from PDE)? *I*

A-5. Am I monitoring the progress of all students through benchmark assessments to inform instruction, as well as doing this formally and with the appropriate frequency? *PP* *I*

A-6. Am I able to use diagnostic assessments to determine individual students' needs? *PP* *I*

Examples: CBM, phonics surveys, CDTs, etc.

A-7. Am I using the established school-level universal screening process to inform instruction and grouping within my classroom? *PP* *I*

   a. Am I using the PVAAS projection report for individual students in my classroom to assist in grouping decisions and the degree/frequency of progress monitoring needed?

   b. Am I using the screening data on writing to plan for individual students?

A-8. Am I using the established school-level universal screening process to provide selected students with supplemental support (Tiers 2 and 3) before they need additional support? *PP* *I*

A-9. Can I analyze a student's reading difficulties and determine priority needs? *I*

Example: Do I know whether a student continues to have decoding difficulties interfering with reading comprehension?

A-10. Am I knowledgeable and skilled in using holistic and analytic rubrics to assess micro and macro writing skills? *PP* *I* *PR*

   a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

   b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

A-11. Can I assess each of the micro-skills and macro-skills in assessing individual students' needs? *PP* *I* *PR*

   a. Micro-skills include handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, oral language/vocabulary, and sentence writing.

   b. Macro-skills are the processes of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising.

ORGANIZATION TEACHER LEVEL   ELA 6-8

O-1. Am I using the allocated time within the period efficiently? *PP* *CE* *I*

   a. Are there smooth transitions between whole group and small group instruction?

   b. Are procedures smooth and efficient to maximize the time allotted?

   c. Am I starting on time and reviewing homework efficiently and effectively?

O-2. Am I using flexible grouping to provide explicit instruction to students based on their targeted skill needs, and am I monitoring student progress and changing groups as needed? *PP* *I*

O-3. Am I using PVAAS projection reports (Custom Student Reports) to assist in organizing groups and identifying those students in need of supplemental supports (MTSS)? *I*

O-4. If applicable, am I using my **PVAAS** growth reports to examine past patterns and then using that information to inform my instruction and supports for my current groups of students? *PP* *I*

O-5. Am I communicating with the intervention teacher(s) to coordinate instruction, providing purposeful and consistent instruction that reinforces skills taught in general education classrooms? *PP* *PR*

O-6. Am I knowledgeable about evidence-based practices in the teaching of writing? *I*

O-7. Do I collaborate with other teachers on my team to analyze data and integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening across all subjects? *PR*

ELA KEYSTONE LITERATURE

Teacher-Level Questions
(Classroom)

THINK ABOUT: How might my practices and knowledge level related to Keystone Literature in Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization contribute to my students' results?

These questions are offered as a vehicle for individual teachers to guide self-reflection purposefully and systematically. Each question should be thoughtfully considered and answered with clear evidence.

Teachers: As you consider each question/probe, ask yourself, *"What is my evidence?"*

This list is not exhaustive, and it is not a checklist. The questions do not need to be discussed in the order in which they are numbered; they are numbered to reference specific items and for ease of use.

The questions help generate thinking as teachers consider their data annually. Teachers are encouraged to use all the available data, for example, PVAAS teacher-specific reports, attendance data, and summative and benchmark data. When considered through the lens of data available through PVAAS and other assessments, these questions are intended to guide the self-reflection process to assist in identifying root causes and developing action plans for the current group of students.

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CURRICULUM   TEACHER LEVEL   ELA   KEYSTONE LITERATURE

C-1. Do I have deep knowledge of the PA Core Standards and the Keystone Literature exam assessment anchors and eligible content? Do I use that knowledge in my planning? *PP*

C-2. Am I using the written curriculum to plan lessons? *PP*

C-3. Am I aware of the terms in the Keystone Exam glossary, and does my lesson planning include explicit, evidence-based instruction on vocabulary? *PP*

C-4. Can I access and use the materials and resources identified in the written curriculum? *PP* *I*

C-5. Do I have the proper balance of literature and informational text in assigned readings, as indicated in the two modules of the Keystone Exam? *PP* *I*

C-6. Are the assigned readings/texts at the appropriate level of text complexity? *PP* *I*

INSTRUCTION TEACHER LEVEL   ELA KEYSTONE LITERATURE

I-1. Am I providing students varied texts/excerpts and materials to address the assessment anchors and eligible content? *PP* *I*

    a. Am I aware of and knowledgeable about the types of genres students are typically less familiar with (e.g., poetry, drama)?

    b. Do I provide explicit instruction on all genres at the appropriate proportional level of emphasis?

I-2. Do I require my students to use multiple texts to synthesize or critique information about a topic/idea? *PP* *I*

I-3. Am I providing direct and explicit instruction in the craft and structure of text, e.g., literary devices and patterns in literature? *I*

I-4. Does my instruction emphasize the author's purpose in fictional and non-fictional/informational texts? *I*

    a. Do I explicitly emphasize the differences between fictional and non-fictional/informational text?

    b. Do my students understand that the purpose of non-fiction is to evoke action, thought, and discourse?

    c. Do my students understand that theme and purpose are intertwined in fiction?

I-5. Am I modeling and providing guided and independent practice (I do, We do, You do) in close reading and providing explicit instruction on how to find supporting details in text? *I*

I-6. Am I explicitly teaching vocabulary, including morphology, affixes, and word connotations, and using context clues to determine meaning? *I*

    a. Am I choosing vocabulary that is considered both academic vocabulary and vocabulary found in complex texts?

    b. Am I aware of the importance of building background knowledge to aid in meaning and comprehension?

I-7. Do I require my students to write regularly using an academic form? *I*

I-8. Am I differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students in the course yet still ensuring that all students grapple with complex text? *CE* *I*

I-9. Am I providing timely feedback to students daily? *I*

I-10. Am I monitoring and adjusting my pacing of instruction through frequent checks with the pacing guide/written curriculum? *PP* *I*

I-11. Am I using effective questioning techniques, with purposeful planning, to address levels of thinking as defined in Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK)? *I*

    a. Do I know and understand Webb's DOK regarding instructional tasks?

    b. Have I received the professional learning necessary to develop good questions and tasks at DOK levels 2 and 3?

ASSESSMENT   TEACHER LEVEL   ELA   KEYSTONE LITERATURE

A-1. Am I using formative and summative assessments throughout the course ("along the way") to inform my instruction? *I*

    a. Do I have strong assessment literacy?

    b. Are the assessments valid?

    c. Are the assessments aligned to the standards intended to be assessed?

    d. Are the assessment items developed to the rigorous level of the standards?

A-2. Am I using diagnostic data (e.g., CDT) to inform my instruction? *I*

A-3. Am I working with colleagues in teams to analyze common assessment data? *PR*

A-4. Am I using PVAAS projection data available on students in my current course to inform my instruction, including differentiation within the course and/or identifying students at risk at the start of the course? *PP* *I*

A-5. Am I identifying students for supplemental/tiered support before or during enrollment in the Keystone Literature course (before the Keystone exam)? Am I using PVAAS projection data for the Keystone exam, available for students currently enrolled in grade 6? *PP* *I*

A-6. Am I following protocols and accessing team processes to identify students for supplemental/tiered support? *PP* *I*

A-7. Do students' grades/marks in my class accurately reflect their academic achievement and proficiency levels? Am I providing accurate and relevant grades to students to reflect their progress? *I*

ORGANIZATION   TEACHER LEVEL   ELA   KEYSTONE LITERATURE

O-1. Based on assessment data, am I following the established procedures and protocols to identify students for supplemental/tiered support? *PP* *CE* *I*

O-2. Am I taking advantage of available opportunities and/or seeking opportunities to enhance my content knowledge and pedagogical skills? *PR*

O-3. Before and throughout the course, do I work collaboratively with other Keystone Literature course teachers to plan instruction and analyze students' learning outcomes to improve my practice? *PR*

O-4. **Am I using the allocated time for instruction effectively and efficiently?** *PP* *CE* *I*

    a. Am I starting the class on time?

    b. Am I using the full period/time block for instruction?

    c. Am I using efficient procedures to check homework, etc.?

NOTES

Explore these other

DIGGING
DEEPER

Guides & Resources:

Digging Deeper into Content Areas: Mathematics
Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Keystone Algebra I

Digging Deeper into Content Areas: Science
Grades 4 & 8, Keystone Biology

Digging Deeper Resource Guide

**Digging Deeper: Students with a History of
Higher Achievement**

**Digging Deeper: Students with a History of
Lower Achievement**

at **pa.gov/agencies/education >**

DATA TOOLS PENNSYLVANIA