



Professional Development Training Programs for Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Guidance

Pennsylvania Act 135 of 2024 (Act 135) specifies that to ensure that school personnel have the knowledge and skill to teach all students to read, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will develop and maintain a list of structured literacy professional development that meets the following requirements:

- Evidence-based intervention practices in structured literacy
- Explicit and systematic instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness
- Includes the alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding, fluency, and vocabulary
- Includes reading comprehension and building content knowledge

What is evidence-based reading instruction?

Evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) is a program of structured literacy aligned with the Science of Reading, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and building content knowledge. EBRI MAY NOT include three-cueing, which is a model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure, syntax, and visual cues (MSV).

Intended Use

This guidance document is designed to assist local education agencies (LEAs) in making informed decisions about professional development training programs that best align with their differentiated needs and instructional priorities.

Considerations for Choosing a Professional Development Training Program

When thinking about the need for professional development training programs, LEAs may wish to consider one or more of the following to determine the need for professional development training programs: performance insights; capacity and resources; cost, accessibility, and sustainability; inclusivity and differentiation; structure and format; and application and impact.

Table 1. Performance Insights

Consideration	Guiding Questions	Notes
Educator knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there gaps in educator knowledge or skills identified through observations or evaluations?Have educators and staff been surveyed or consulted to identify their professional learning needs?	
Student performance and data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What does student performance and assessment data reveal about areas needing improvement?	

Table 2. Capacity and Resources

Consideration	Guiding Questions	Notes
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Does the LEA have the capacity to support the implementation of professional development initiatives?	
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there existing internal resources or expertise that can address the identified needs?	

Table 3. Cost, Accessibility, and Sustainability

Consideration	Guiding Questions	Notes
Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How much does the professional development cost?	
Delivery options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Does the professional development include online options?What are the technology requirements of the program?Are there in-person, hybrid, or asynchronous options?	
Sustained implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Does the program include strategies for sustained implementation and continuous improvement?	

Table 4. Inclusivity and Differentiation

Consideration	Guiding Questions	Notes
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the professional development inclusive of the needs of all learners, including multilingual learners and other culturally and linguistically diverse children? 	
Differentiated pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the program offer differentiated pathways based on educator experience or roles, such as separate tracks for new teachers or new administrators? Does the professional development require educators to have certain basic knowledge or skills prior to participation? 	

Table 5. Structure and Format

Consideration	Guiding Questions	Notes
Session design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the professional development a single session or a series of sessions? How many sessions are included? Does it include follow-up coaching support or opportunities for peer collaboration? Does the professional development have stand-alone sessions that can be offered at various times, or must it be completed as one comprehensive training? 	
Interactive design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the professional development designed for educator engagement and active involvement? Does it incorporate interactive components such as discussions, case studies, or hands-on activities? 	

Table 6. Application and Impact

Consideration	Guiding Questions	Notes
Classroom application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the professional development include examples of practical classroom applications? 	
Skill acquisition and mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the professional development include mastery checks or other methods to evaluate participants' understanding and skill acquisition? 	
Impact measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there metrics or tools provided to measure the impact of the training on student outcomes or instructional practices? 	

Pennsylvania-Specific Professional Development Training Programs

The Professional Development Training Programs List shows Pennsylvania-specific literacy professional development training programs developed by the PDE and valued partners.

Pennsylvania-Specific Professional Development Trainings

The Pennsylvania-specific literacy professional development trainings are designed specifically for educators and administrators in Pennsylvania. These professional development trainings vary in length and focus. The courses are offered by the following:



Pennsylvania Department of Education

- PDE Structured Literacy Course
 - 10 hours
 - Free
 - Online
 - The purpose of this course is to introduce the key features and content of the structured literacy approach. The goals are to understand the underpinnings of the structured literacy approach, to deepen literacy instruction knowledge, and to examine/align current instructional practices to structured literacy.

Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

- OCDEL Overview of Structured Literacy for the Pre-Kindergarten Educator
 - 2 hours
 - Free
 - Online
 - The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of structured literacy and Chapter 49 requirements for certified teachers. The goals are to define structured literacy, understand the rationale behind it and its importance, and identify and describe six key features, as well as the elements of structured literacy.

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Center (PaTTAN)

- [PaTTAN Science of Reading: Knowledge Course](#)
 - 10 hours
 - Free
 - Online
 - The purpose of this course is to support those eager to understand more about the Science of Reading and what it should look like in our Pennsylvania schools. The course is intended to address kindergarten through 2nd grade; however, the information is applicable to all beginning and struggling readers. The goals are to define the Science of Reading and structured literacy, understand what research says about the reading brain and what that means for instruction, identify structured literacy components, and synthesize course content into a personal plan.
- [PaTTAN Structured Literacy Leadership: What Administrators Need to Know](#)
 - In person
 - The purpose of this course is to ensure that leaders deepen their understanding of Act 55, Chapter 49 legislation regarding the Science of Reading and structured literacy. The goals are to list the legislative requirements of Act 55 related to the Science of Reading and structured literacy, state the Pennsylvania code definition for structured literacy, explain language related to structured literacy, identify areas of strength and growth, and use a structured literacy framework to support student achievement. In addition, goals include providing structured literacy professional development to staff, explaining the impact of a core reading program based on the scientific underpinnings of literacy instruction, comparing current practices to the Science of Reading, and identifying resources and system supports. Finally, course goals around assessment include selecting appropriate assessments, identifying assessment purposes from a structured literacy perspective, analyzing district data to determine need, analyzing multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) implementation around structured literacy, and applying the implementation framework to determine next steps.

Additional Act 135 Resources

[Reading Universal Screeners](#)

[Core Curriculum Materials](#)

[Reading Intervention and Supplementary Curriculum Materials](#)