



Reading to Achieve:

A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy



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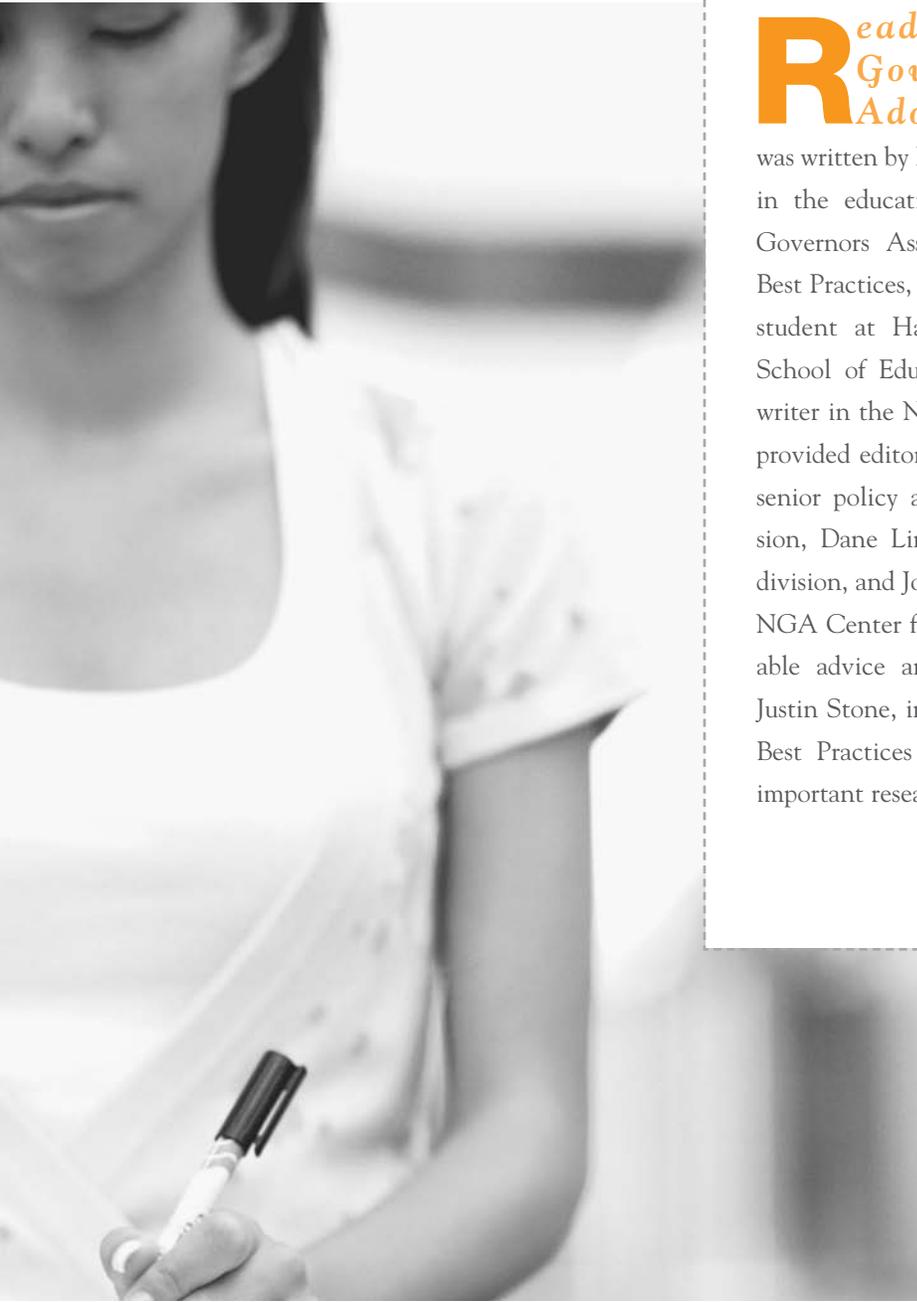
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R *eading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy*

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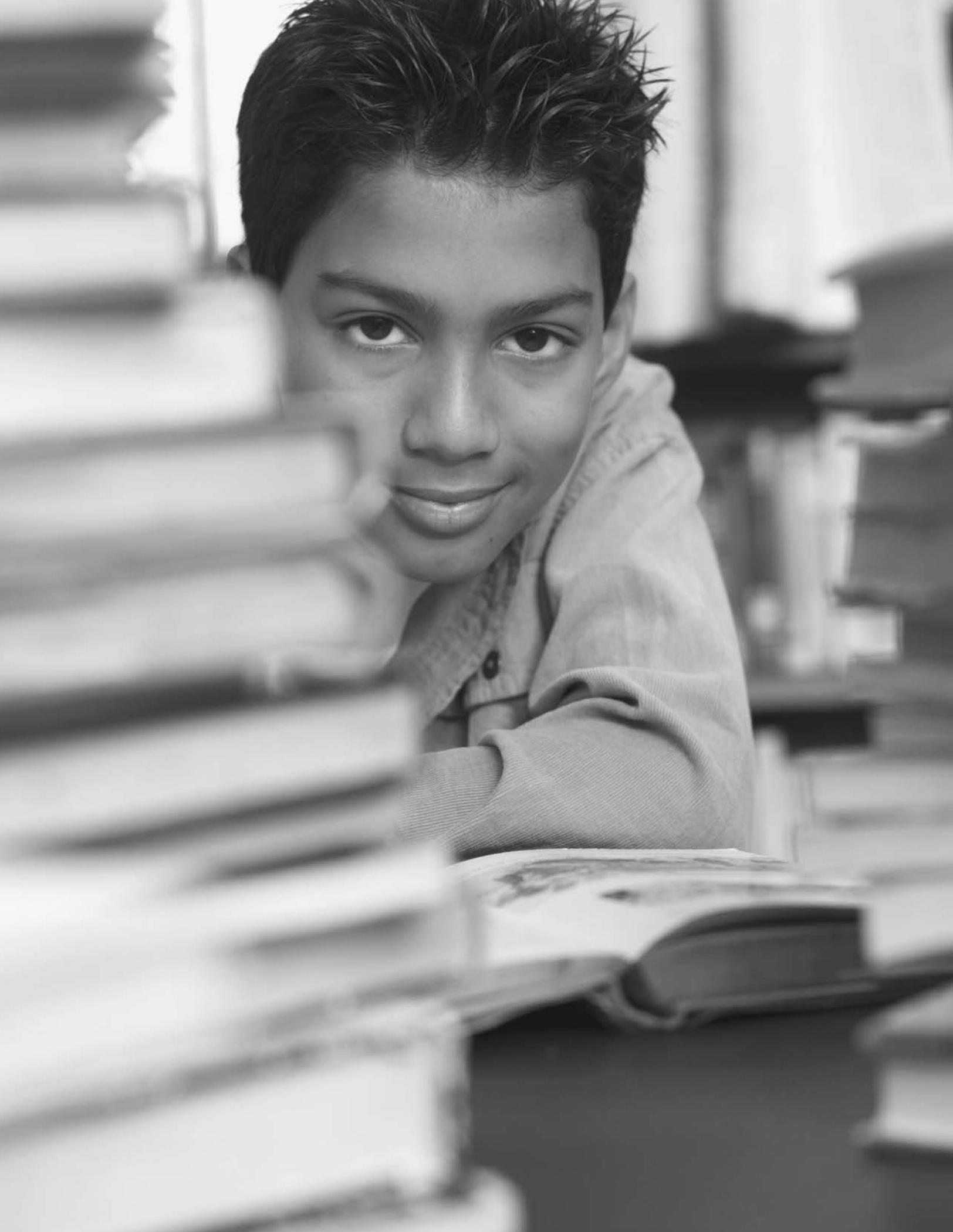
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To compete in the global information economy, young people today need literacy skills far more advanced than have been required of any previous generation. Strong reading, writing, and thinking skills are essential not only for success in school and the workplace, but also for participation in civic life. Yet many youth lack the requisite literacy skills. Only three out of 10 U.S. eighth-graders are proficient readers.¹

Poor readers in elementary and middle school are likely to struggle in high school and are most at risk of dropping out before graduation. Even many high school graduates are unprepared to meet the literacy expectations of their professors or employers. Opportunities for economic success will increasingly require that young people possess strong literacy skills. Nearly two-thirds of new jobs in this decade will require some postsecondary education, and the fastest-growing jobs make the highest literacy and education demands.²

Unfortunately, for too many students, literacy instruction ends in third grade. The nation's eight million struggling readers who are adolescents³ — defined in this guide as students in grades four through 12 — also need extra support. A state commitment to providing literacy instruction to students from kindergarten through 12th grade is necessary for governors to meet adequate yearly progress targets, raise high school graduation rates, increase the value of the high school diploma, and close the achievement gap.

Research and best practices identified by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices' Adolescent Literacy Advisory Panel suggest governors pursue five strategies to improve adolescent literacy achievement.

1. Build support for a state focus on adolescent literacy.

A strategic plan to address the literacy needs of the state's middle and high school students requires literacy performance data for students, schools, and districts. Such data can be shared through a state literacy report card to raise the issue's profile and garner momentum for improving adolescent literacy achievement. Other steps governors and states can take are leading a statewide adolescent literacy campaign, designating a state office or coordinator for adolescent literacy, and establishing an adolescent literacy advisory panel.

2. Raise literacy expectations across grades and curricula.

To prepare students for success in a rigorous high school curriculum, states must make literacy expectations explicit across grade levels and content areas. This will require assessing real-world literacy demands and strengthening state standards, accordingly. Policymakers can help ensure the standards are met by aligning them with curricula, assessments, and professional development activities. The support of teachers, principals, and district administrators will also be needed for students to meet the new literacy expectations. Educators must understand the importance of promoting literacy rooted in academic disciplines.

3. Encourage and support school and district literacy plans.

States should encourage schools and districts to develop best-practices-based literacy plans to ensure students receive effective adolescent literacy instruction. To support this effort, governors and state education departments can guide schools and districts on what to include in the literacy plan and provide resources to help them implement it. At a minimum, states should require that struggling readers be identified and provided interventions tailored to their needs.

4. Build educators' capacity to provide adolescent literacy instruction.

Governors and states can use several approaches to build educators' capacity to provide effective adolescent literacy instruction. They can strengthen teacher licensure and preparation requirements. They can also offer specialized certification or endorsements in adolescent literacy for content-area teachers, schoolwide professional development in literacy instruction, and induction or mentoring programs with a literacy component. Principals, too, can be offered incentives to become successful adolescent literacy leaders in their schools.

5. Measure progress in adolescent literacy at the school, district, and state levels.

Governors will want to measure the effectiveness of their adolescent literacy initiatives to make modifications, disseminate promising practices, and convey positive results. They, along with other policymakers and educators, will need better data sources and tools, including assessments and data systems that provide real-time and longitudinal student literacy performance information.

Governors have an unprecedented opportunity to draw attention to the adolescent literacy crisis. Knowledge about what works for struggling adolescent readers is increasing, and new funding sources for adolescent literacy initiatives are beginning to emerge. By pursuing strategies to improve literacy achievement, governors can set the stage for a revitalized education system that prepares students for the increasing literacy demands of work, education, and civic participation in the 21st century. ■■



why focus on
adolescent literacy

Neglecting students' literacy has serious economic consequences for individuals and states. Today, almost 40 percent of high school graduates lack the reading and writing skills that employers seek, and almost a third of high school graduates who enroll in college require remediation.⁴ Deficits in basic skills cost the nation's businesses, universities, and under-prepared high school graduates as much as \$16 billion annually in lost productivity and remedial costs.⁵

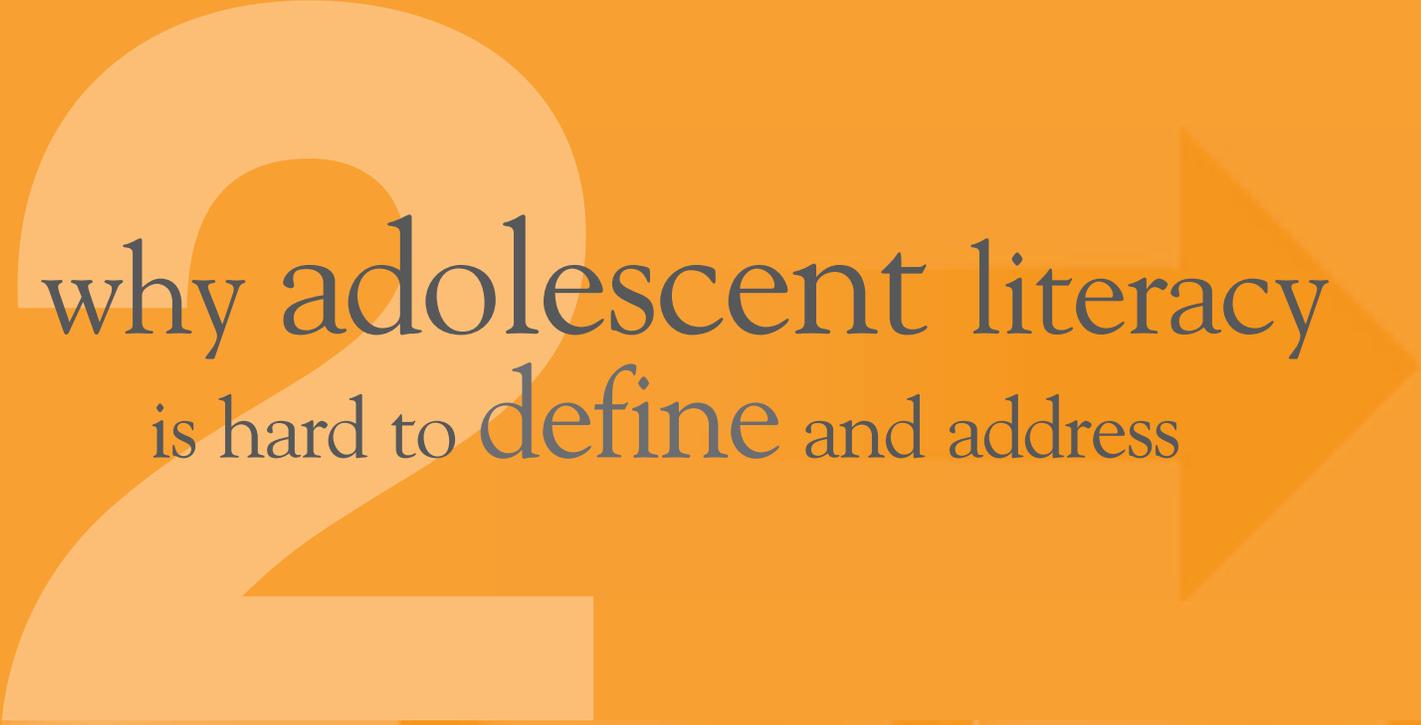
Literacy is a gateway to achievement and opportunity. On average, college graduates earn 70 percent more than their high school graduate counterparts, while high school dropouts are four times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed.⁶ In addition, regardless of educational attainment, higher levels of literacy translate into higher earnings.⁷ Yet only three out of 10 eighth-graders in the United States today meet current standards for reading proficiency.⁸ Poor readers in elementary and middle school are not on track for success in school and for high school graduation. Failure to achieve certain levels of reading, writing, and critical-thinking skills in high school narrows employment prospects and limits preparedness for civic participation.

Governors must focus on raising adolescent literacy achievement to afford individuals opportunities to achieve and to maintain the economic competitiveness of their state. In the recent past, basic literacy skills were sufficient to earn a living wage. Nearly two-thirds of new jobs in this decade will require some postsecondary education, and the fastest-growing jobs make the highest literacy and education demands.⁹ Preparing more students to be successful in higher education will yield benefits for states. Students with strong literacy skills as adolescents can be expected to become self-sufficient adults who augment rather than drain state coffers.

The state focus on literacy cannot end in third grade. To meet the requirements of colleges and employers in the 21st century, students must receive explicit literacy instruction throughout their adolescent years, defined in this guide as beginning in the fourth grade and continuing through the end of 12th grade. Governors have already acknowledged the importance of literacy as a strong foundation for learning. Many states provide effective literacy programs to their youngest students. States must now build on the successes of these initiatives in the early years with literacy programs for middle and high school students.

To meet the proficiency requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* Act, improve the quality of high schools, and close the achievement gap, governors must help struggling readers catch up, which is the aim of the federal Striving Readers Initiative. They must also help all students reach the higher literacy expectations.

Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy begins with a brief discussion of adolescent literacy challenges and responses, based on available research and best practices identified by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices' Adolescent Literacy Advisory Panel. It also includes five strategies the panel recommends that governors and states pursue to improve adolescent literacy. Finally, appendices to the guide, describe resources for adolescent literacy initiatives, contain examples of promising state and local adolescent literacy practices, list contacts for more information on promising practices, and identify potential funding sources for adolescent literacy. ■



why adolescent literacy
is hard to define and address

“Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early grades is needed.”¹⁰

— International Reading Association

What Is Adolescent Literacy?

In this guide, the term “adolescent literacy” refers to the set of skills and abilities that students need in grades four through 12 to read, write, and think about the text materials they encounter. Becoming literate is a developmental and lifelong process, which in the 21st century includes becoming literate with electronic and multimedia texts as well as conventional written material. Grade four is when students experience a shift in emphasis from learning how to read to learning from reading text. America’s adolescents need to be literate not only to succeed in school, but also to succeed in life.

Who Are the Struggling Adolescent Readers?

By the time they enter fourth grade, students can struggle with reading for different reasons — poor vocabulary, insufficient background knowledge, poor reading strategies, a lack of motivation to read, etc. (see “Barriers to Adolescent Reading Success”). The largest group of struggling adolescent readers experiences some problems with fluency and comprehension. These students can read everyday texts such as newspapers or simple instruction manuals, but they frequently cannot understand specialized or more advanced texts. Although many in this group meet state literacy proficiency standards, some are unprepared to meet the higher literacy demands of today’s colleges and workplaces.

A second group of struggling adolescent readers has more difficulty with fluency and comprehension. These students experience consistent problems no matter what they read. They drop out or graduate from high school with limited literacy skills; for example, they can read a simple news article but cannot comprehend a novel or technical manual. Many of these readers cannot meet state literacy proficiency standards and lack the skills required to participate in civic life and secure many jobs.

The smallest group of struggling adolescent readers, no more than ten percent of all students, has the most dire reading deficiencies and cannot decode or read the words on a page.¹¹ These students’ problems usually result from serious learning disabilities, insufficient decoding instruction in earlier grades, or a recent and abrupt transition to reading in English.

Among struggling adolescent readers, English Language Learners (ELLs) and economically disadvantaged students face additional challenges.¹² Increasingly, middle and high school classrooms are filled with ELLs.¹³ “Rapid growth at the upper grade levels has meant that foreign-born immigrant children now represent a substantially larger share of the total high school population (5.7 percent) than they do of the primary school population (3.5 percent).”¹⁴ For ELLs, reading instruction is even more challenging, because such students are learning the language in which the instruction is being provided. Not all ELLs have the same needs, however. The extent of an ELL student’s English vocabulary and oral language skills as well as the student’s ability to read and write in a first language will determine the degree to which learning English is an additional challenge.

High-poverty schools often have the lowest achievement levels and tend to be staffed by teachers who are less experienced, less qualified, and more likely to leave.¹⁵ These characteristics make it much more likely that students will receive inadequate instruction throughout their school careers. Moreover, economically disadvantaged students often lack exposure both in and out of school to the varied experiences and enhanced vocabulary that are thought to foster better reading comprehension and writing skills.

The achievement data are particularly troubling for minority students. Barely half of black and Hispanic ninth-graders complete high school in four years.¹⁶ In addition, the lowest high school graduation rates are concentrated in “majority minority” and urban districts.¹⁷ Across the nation, black and Hispanic students pass state reading assessments and meet National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) proficiency standards at rates between 10 percentage points and 65 percentage points below those of white students.¹⁸

Weak adolescent literacy skills are not just a problem of minorities and the urban poor. The average percentage of *all* students meeting fourth- and eighth-grade NAEP reading proficiency standards is *less than 50 percent in every state*.¹⁹ Moreover, nationwide, more than 8 million students in grades four through 12 are struggling readers.²⁰

The adolescent literacy research base, though not as robust as the early literacy research base, is substantial and growing (see Appendix A). Researchers have identified the most pressing challenges for struggling adolescent readers and have begun collecting evidence about approaches that improve middle and high school literacy achievement.²¹ Moreover, federal funding for adolescent literacy is becoming more available (see Appendix D).

What Are the Challenges to Improving Adolescent Literacy?

Addressing the nation’s adolescent literacy crisis is no easy task. What the research reveals about who struggles to read and write after third grade and what programs and supports can help them is that there is no quick fix and no one-size-fits-all solution. Few state education systems require explicit literacy instruction across content areas or offer extra literacy supports to students who are struggling the most. Preparing students for the increasing reading, writing, and thinking demands of the 21st century will require an unprecedented state focus on adolescent literacy.

The Diversity of Adolescent Readers Belies a Single Response

Although many states have made strides in raising early literacy achievement, all the literacy skills that students will need cannot be learned by the end of third grade. Excellent instruction in the early grades is necessary, but not sufficient, to prevent later literacy problems. State policymakers need to understand that a focus on adolescent literacy need not detract from early literacy efforts. Reforms such as Reading First have helped states improve their younger students’ achievement, and the strategies this guide suggests can help build on this initial state investment.

Students need instruction beyond third grade to learn, for example, how to employ reading strategies to comprehend complex texts about specialized subject matter. All students need such instruction, not just those who are struggling readers and writers. Yet struggling students do require extra help, and it is not necessarily a reiteration of early literacy instruction that they need. As students get older, the more potential exists for their falling even further behind and becoming disengaged from learning. Struggling adolescent readers who do not identify themselves as readers are most likely to be the lowest performing.²²

Barriers to Adolescent Reading Success

Characteristics of Poor Readers

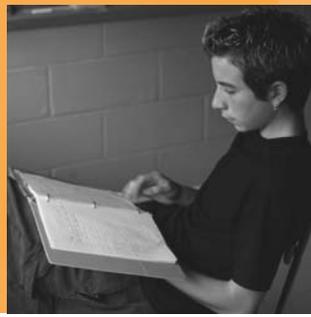
- Limited oral language proficiency
- Poor decoding skills (i.e., how to decipher a written word based on knowledge that letters represent sounds)
- Poor fluency (i.e., the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with appropriate expression)
- Limited vocabulary
- Limited background knowledge
- Limited content-area knowledge
- Poor comprehension strategy knowledge and use

Some Causes of Reading Problems in kindergarten through grade three

- Poor decoding instruction
- Inadequate opportunities to develop vocabulary, background, and content knowledge
- Lack of pleasurable and meaningful reading and writing experiences
- Lack of access to comprehension instruction
- Little access to informational texts

Some Causes of Reading Problems in grades four through 12

- Decreased motivation to read
- Inadequate opportunities to develop vocabulary, background, and content knowledge
- Lack of access to comprehension instruction
- Increasing reading and writing demands across the curriculum
- Reading and writing instruction disconnected from content-area literacy demands
- Reading and writing instruction not seen as province of middle and high school instruction
- Lack of widespread support for adolescent literacy



State Standards Lack Explicit and Rigorous Literacy Expectations

Neither existing standards nor current practices ensure that adolescents have the literacy tools they need. Poor high school graduation rates and high college remediation rates attest to the fact that even students who are meeting current standards are often ill-prepared for the literacy demands of the information economy. Colleges and employers demand sophisticated reading, writing, and thinking skills. Many of these skills cannot be learned by fourth grade or even ninth grade, but most current state standards and their corresponding curricula do not specify or even address these higher level expectations.

Teachers and Principals Receive Limited Training in Adolescent Literacy Instruction

Often middle and high school teachers view themselves as content-area specialists.²⁴ They sometimes ignore the problems of their struggling readers or compensate for them by giving students notes from a reading assignment or reading a text aloud instead of helping students learn to extract information from a text themselves.²⁵ These teachers do not have the training or knowledge to do more, and they are often frustrated that remediation services are less available and less effective for their struggling adolescent students than they are for struggling younger readers.²⁶ Historically, reading intervention programs in middle and high school have been contained in special education programs.²⁷

Teaching and integrating literacy skills in content-area classes requires middle and high school teachers to take on a new and often unfamiliar role. They need to know how to provide quality reading and writing instruction to meet literacy expectations for their content area. These teachers also need instructional strategies to assist struggling adolescent readers.

Professional development for teachers and principals in adolescent literacy can take many forms. The research concludes the most effective professional development includes training on:

- analyzing student performance data to identify gaps and set school performance goals;
- matching instruction to student needs based on student assessment data;
- promoting collaboration among educators; and
- assigning school personnel roles to support literacy improvement.

Effective training of middle and high school content-area teachers in literacy instruction must be systemic and sustained and must be more than a one-time workshop. In addition, middle and high school teachers are seen as content specialists, so they often receive limited preservice education on how to teach reading and writing. ■■

Given the different reasons that students struggle with reading after third grade, interventions must be equally diverse and developmentally appropriate. Recent research has identified factors key to success (see “Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs”). In addition, a review of programmatic approaches suggests that schools use one or more of the following to improve literacy development for middle and high school students:

- extra-help reading courses for students who can decode moderately well but have weak fluency and difficulties with comprehension;
- a reading course or a series of reading courses designed to provide direct instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding, and word attack skills for more severely disabled students;
- instructional practices infused into content instruction to enhance literacy development for all students within a school; and
- a comprehensive school reform model with a strong literacy component.²³

Educators and Policymakers Do Not Have Good Data on Student Literacy Performance

To select the best approach for improving student literacy, teachers and school leaders need data on their struggling readers, the reasons these students are struggling, and what approaches can be effective to address their problems. Many state assessments simply identify performance trends across the state or whether or not students are “good” or “poor” readers. Few states have assessment requirements that enable teachers and administrators to quickly determine why a student may not have met a state reading proficiency benchmark. Even fewer have systems that enable them to quickly access and interpret student data.

Data are needed to ensure accountability, evaluate progress, and develop instructional approaches. Accurate and timely data can help:

- identify the most at-risk populations at the state, district, and school levels;
- profile students with reading difficulties;
- pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of individual students performing below proficiency;
- provide teachers with continuous feedback to guide their instructional approaches; and
- inform school, district, and state decisions on curricula, interventions, school structure, and professional development.

Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs

A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Alliance for Excellent Education's *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* identifies elements associated with improving adolescent literacy based on the most current research. A comprehensive literacy program targeted to older readers would include many of the following elements.

1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction: Instruction makes reading comprehension strategies explicit to students through modeling and explanation and gives students ample opportunities for practice.

2. Effective instructional principles embedded in content: Instruction is embedded and reinforced across content areas, with attention paid to content-specific texts and tasks.

3. Motivation and self-directed learning: Instruction promotes engagement and self-regulated learning for the development of motivated and flexible literacy skills.

4. Text-based collaborative learning: Instruction enables students to engage in guided interactions with texts in groups in order to foster learning of new knowledge.

5. Strategic tutoring: Individualized instruction is more intense for struggling readers and focuses on instilling independence.

6. Diverse texts: Students have access to, and experience with, texts at a variety of difficulty levels that vary in the styles, genres, topics, and content areas they cover.

7. Intensive writing: Instruction should integrate writing as a vehicle for learning and as a measure of comprehension and learning across content areas.

8. A technology component: Technology is used to leverage instructional time to provide additional support and practice for students as well as prepare students for the ways different technology alters the reading and writing experience.

9. Ongoing formative assessment of students: Instruction should be determined by the use of ongoing assessment of students that helps teachers target instruction.

10. Extended time for literacy: Reading and writing instruction takes place for longer than a single language arts period and is extended through integration and emphasis across curricula. Extended time may also include additional time devoted to literacy instruction, especially for learners more than two grade levels behind.

11. Professional development: Teachers participate in professional development experiences that are systematic, frequent, long-term, and ongoing to improve their ability to teach reading and writing across the curriculum.

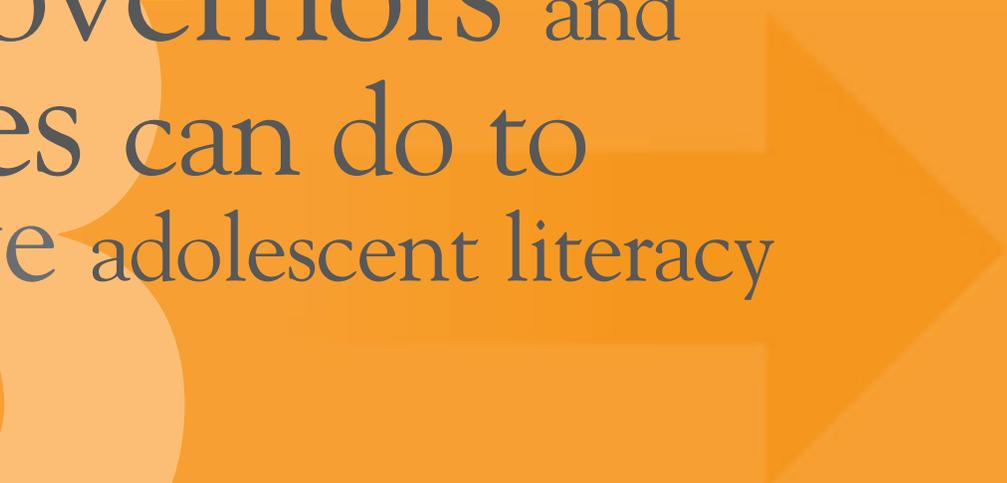
12. Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs: Student progress is monitored and tracked over the long term.

13. Teacher teams: Infrastructure supports teachers working in small, interdisciplinary teams to allow for collaboration and more consistent and coordinated instruction and professional development.

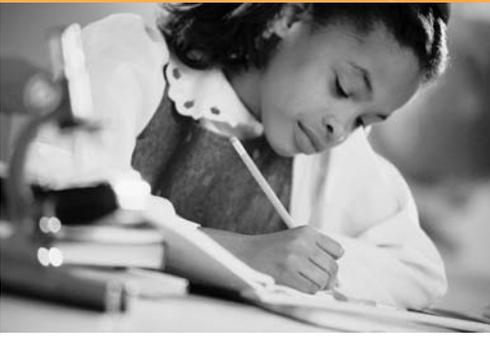
14. Leadership: Principals and administrators participate in professional development and foster teachers taking leadership roles.

15. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program: Instruction encompasses all aspects of literacy in ways that allow all facets of the program to complement one another and is consistent with professional development as well as the chosen materials and approaches for learning.





what governors and
states can do to
improve adolescent literacy



Few states have developed comprehensive statewide plans for adolescent literacy. Attention to struggling adolescent readers has been paid at the district and school levels, and some of these local adolescent literacy efforts have raised student achievement. State leaders would be wise to develop policies and programs that build on the lessons learned from these promising local efforts, including those that will be supported through the federal Striving Readers Initiative. (See Appendix B.)

States are beginning to pay attention to middle and high school literacy both to build on the momentum of their success in raising early literacy achievement and to support their goal of increasing high school graduation rates. According to an analysis of state reading assessment results, 20 out of 28 states show fourth-graders improving slightly, but only 16 states show improvement among middle school students and 11 states among high school students.²⁸ In addition, long-term national trend data shows average reading scores among nine-year-olds improved but little or no change in average reading scores for older students.²⁹ Primarily through Title I and the Reading First program, states and the federal government have invested heavily in raising early literacy performance. Yet these investments are tempered by the weak literacy instruction students encounter in middle and high schools.

In 2001, **Florida** Governor Jeb Bush made reading a fundamental part of his state education agenda. Literacy rates in the state have risen ever since. The most recent data show that the percentage of third-grade students reading at grade level or better increased from 57 percent in 2001 to 67 percent in 2005. To build on this momentum, in 2004 Governor Bush proposed — and the Florida legislature approved — making reading funds a permanent part of the public school funding formula in order to extend reading support services to middle and high schools.

In recent years, states have begun considering the role adolescent literacy plays in their efforts to raise graduation rates and redesign high schools. **Rhode Island**, for example, identified literacy as one of three priority areas during its two high school summits in 2000. Stakeholders, including parents, educators, policymakers, and business leaders, concluded that improving the state's high schools would require high school restructuring and personalization and a focus on literacy proficiency, and graduation. Rhode Island Governor Don Carcieri and the state's department of elementary and secondary education have since provided a framework for schools and districts to create middle and high school literacy programs and services that incorporate state assessment, intervention, and progress-monitoring requirements.

These and other recent state efforts to improve adolescent literacy achievement suggest five policy strategies that governors and states can pursue:

- build support for a state focus on adolescent literacy;
- raise literacy expectations across grades and curricula;
- encourage and support school and district literacy plans;
- increase educators' capacity to provide adolescent literacy instruction; and
- measure progress in adolescent literacy at the school, district, and state levels.

Strategy 1: Build Support for a State Focus on Adolescent Literacy

Governors will need to build support for a state focus on adolescent literacy. Their actions should be geared toward collecting and sharing information about the problem and ways to address it. Governors can take steps to increase adolescent literacy achievement by creating a state literacy report card, leading a statewide adolescent literacy campaign, designating a state office or coordinator for adolescent literacy, and establishing an adolescent literacy advisory panel.

Create a State Literacy Report Card

To develop a clear vision and strategic plan for addressing adolescent literacy, states first need to collect and analyze data on literacy-related indicators. The information can be used to determine the status of district, school, and student literacy performance.

To determine literacy performance, governors can call for a state literacy report card for kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12). A state literacy report card could be a part of or an extension of the state's existing report card. It should include multiple indicators (e.g., high school graduation rates and results from state, NAEP, AP, SAT, ACT, and other assessments) with performance tracked over time, whenever possible, and data disaggregated by district, school, and student demographics (see "Information Governors Need In a State Literacy Report Card"). A literacy report card can not only inform adolescent literacy efforts, but also middle and high school reform efforts.

Chief among the indicators that should be included in the literacy report card are current levels of reading achievement, evidence of adequate yearly progress, high school graduation rates, and postsecondary remediation rates. Students' reading and writing abilities may be measured by high school exit exams, state assessments, and end-of-course tests. In addition, because a strong relationship exists between literacy achievement and course taking, the report card should note the percentage and performance of students taking college-preparatory classes and college entrance exams.

It is important not to rely on a single performance indicator. Looking solely at reading achievement on state tests, for example, may obscure problems if test results do not correlate well with success in high school and beyond. At the same time, looking only at graduation rates will not reveal the extent to which a state's students have been prepared for the challenges of reading and writing after high school. Postsecondary institutions should be required to report the number of entering students enrolled in remedial courses, how many drop out after their first year of college, and how many ultimately complete their degree. If available, data on state employers' satisfaction with high school graduates' preparation can be included in the report card.

By listing literacy indicators by district, school, and student demographics, these report cards will enable states to determine achievement gaps and identify schools and/or populations that need direct immediate and intensive aid. States such as **Florida**, **New Jersey**, and **Ohio** have used such data to target initial assistance to their lowest-performing schools or most at-risk populations. Many states, including **Arkansas**, **Delaware**, **Indiana**, **Mississippi**, **New Mexico**, and **South Carolina**, require that students who perform poorly on the state assessments receive individual remediation plans that include tailored literacy intervention.

Rhode Island officials have monitored school and district implementation of a regulation requiring schools to provide interventions for students reading below grade level. Schools and districts must report to the state the number of students performing below grade level, the types of interventions employed, the progress of schoolwide literacy programs, and the number of students with personal literacy plans. To the extent possible, such information should be tracked longitudinally so annual changes in adolescent literacy status can be determined.

Information Governors Need In a State Literacy Report Card

State literacy report cards should include literacy proficiency measures, such as state assessments and results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and secondary and postsecondary graduation, dropout, and remediation rates. The report card should enable state and local leaders to answer these questions.

How does state literacy performance compare with:

- state performance on NAEP;
- national averages on NAEP and state assessments; and
- neighboring or comparable states' individual NAEP and state assessment performance?

What is the literacy achievement performance — and are there gaps — in the state for:

- Students of different racial/ethnic groups;
- English language learners;
- students with learning disabilities;
- recent immigrant students;
- migrant students;
- male and female students;
- students receiving free or reduced-price lunches; and
- students enrolled in alternative education or vocational/technical education?

Do literacy achievement gaps and overall literacy achievement differ by:

- geographic area;
- district;
- grade level; and/or
- school level?

Are students making progress annually in their literacy achievement?

What are the longitudinal trends in students' literacy performance for:

- different cohorts of students; and
- single cohorts of students?

Lead a Statewide Adolescent Literacy Campaign

To communicate to the public the importance of focusing on adolescent literacy, governors can lead a statewide adolescent literacy campaign. Campaign messages should affirm that all students need high levels of literacy achievement in the 21st century and that the state stands ready to help them reach this goal. Governors will want to engage teachers, principals, and district administrators in the campaign. By partnering with businesses, foundations, state agencies, and postsecondary institutions, governors can raise public awareness of literacy achievement gaps revealed by the state's data collection systems. Together, these partners can provide much needed resources and technical assistance.

The **Alabama** State Department of Education, business community, and governor have played major roles in the development of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) to address students' chronic reading difficulties, raising funds to support communications and assistance efforts and securing state funding to extend ARI. The A+ Education Foundation, founded as a nonprofit organization by private-sector business and community leaders in 1991 to promote excellence in K-12 education, has been instrumental in establishing and promoting ARI throughout Alabama (see Appendix B, "1. One State's Statewide K-12 Reading Initiative").

Designate a State Office or Coordinator for Adolescent Literacy

A designated adolescent literacy office or point person in the state education agency can coordinate assistance and programs, advocate for the issue, provide information to educators and policymakers, and share information on progress with the governor's office. For example, the **Ohio** Reading Improvement office, housed in the state department of education, facilitates communication with other agency divisions to ensure alignment across the state's literacy and teacher training activities. The office also offers professional development training, provides an online adolescent literacy journal, and runs a grant competition to fund research-based literacy programs in low-performing secondary schools.

Establish an Adolescent Literacy Advisory Panel

Governors can establish an advisory panel to inform the development of their statewide adolescent literacy initiatives. **Florida** Governor Jeb Bush's statewide reading office — *Just Read, Florida!* — coordinates the state's K-12 literacy-related initiatives. The office invited nationally recognized researchers and practitioners to help develop the state's plan for adolescent literacy improvement.

New Jersey's commissioner of education formed a Task Force on Middle Grades Literacy Education to raise the profile of the literacy crisis in grades four through eight. Based on state and national data, the task force's recommendations included establishing an office of middle grades literacy and creating academic councils to review test result data. Members also suggested instituting professional development activities for teachers, providing literacy coaches to middle schools, and requiring that half of the 100 hours of mandated professional development be devoted to literacy.

Governors will want the membership of this advisory panel to reflect a wide range of stakeholders. Members could include teachers and principals who have demonstrated success in raising literacy achievement as well as representatives from business, community groups, professional organizations, philanthropic organizations, higher education institutions, and the state department of education. As it frames its recommendations, the panel can call on practitioners and researchers with expertise in professional development, literacy interventions, literacy assessments, content-area literacy, student literacy achievement, and the needs of English language learners.

Governors may choose to form subcommittees on adolescent literacy within existing school improvement task forces in order to prevent redundancies among advisory groups examining related issues. **Tennessee**, for example, included a strand on adolescent literacy in the Tennessee High School Summit. The strand built on recommendations of the Tennessee Reading Panel, a collaboration of school districts, higher education institutions, and the Tennessee Department of Education that was convened under the leadership of Governor Phil Bredesen.

Strategy 2: Raise Literacy Expectations Across Grades and Curricula

Governors can help accomplish the goal of preparing students to meet the literacy expectations of employers and postsecondary institutions by assessing real-world demands and raising state standards, accordingly, and by revising state standards to include explicit expectations for literacy instruction across grade levels and content areas. They will also want to secure the support of teachers, principals, and district administrators for such initiatives.

Assess Real-World Literacy Demands and Raise State Standards

Before revising the state standards, policymakers need to review the contributions of several organizations that are working to define literacy demands for the next generation. The new National Assessment of Educational Progress, which will be administered in 2009, will ask students to demonstrate comprehension skills on items that require thinking about more than one text at a time, place a heavier emphasis on vocabulary, and include a greater percentage of informational text. Moreover, the 12th Grade NAEP Commission has recommended changes to increase the rigor of the NAEP high school standards so they reflect readiness for postsecondary education, employment training, and entrance into the military.³⁰

The American Diploma Project (ADP) has also been outlining how the high school curriculum can be changed to help students meet the increased literacy expectations. As part of this work, ADP surveyed many colleges and businesses to identify real-world demands. The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges conducted a similar survey with a focus on the writing skills that employers and postsecondary educators expect of high school graduates. These surveys found that both business leaders and college presidents expect high school graduates to possess sophisticated literacy skills, such as being able to choose words well, alter their writing style and voice appropriately, and gather and synthesize relevant information from multiple sources.

The Southern Regional Education Board has produced a series of guides designed to improve middle school education, and it is developing a similar series, in collaboration with ACT, about college-readiness indicators for high school students.³¹ The middle school guides for science, algebra, and English language arts focus on what students need to know to be ready for honors and college-preparatory courses in high school. The English language arts guide, for example, details "readiness indicators" for writing, language, reading comprehension, speaking, and listening in addition to providing benchmarks aligned to NAEP to help teachers determine whether their students demonstrate literacy skills at basic, proficient (grade-level), or advanced levels.

Although national efforts have yielded useful information on the increased literacy demands of employers and postsecondary institutions, governors may want to conduct some fact-finding of their own to understand the unique demands that will be required of their state's high school graduates. Governors can consider sending out surveys or holding roundtables with the state's top employers, industries, military recruiters, and higher education institutions to determine what literacy skills they look for in potential students or employees.

In Hamilton County Public Schools in Tennessee, for example, the district superintendent led an effort to raise curricular requirements. The Public Education Fund (PEF) in Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce strongly supported the initiative. To make the case for more rigorous standards, district leaders, PEF, and the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce conducted surveys of local employment requirements. The surveys uncovered the shrinking pool of local jobs requiring only a high school diploma and substantiated the need to increase student achievement.

Real-world literacy demands can be embedded in student performance expectations. The state board of education in **Oregon** established new graduation requirements for the class of 2007 that require students to apply and demonstrate knowledge and skills related to career and academic expectations. For example, students will have to develop an education plan and profile linked to their personal and career goals, demonstrate career-related knowledge and skills (e.g., teamwork, communication, and problem solving), and participate in community-connected learning experiences. These requirements place an emphasis on student performance, reinforcing and helping students develop critical literacy skills.

Revise State Standards to Make Literacy Expectations Explicit Across Grades and Curricula

In addition to calling for higher standards across content areas to meet real-world demands, policymakers should ensure the literacy expectations within each content area are made explicit. They should require state departments of education to reevaluate their core content area standards and assessments for explicit literacy knowledge and skills. This type of articulation will enable teachers to incorporate literacy more effectively into their daily instruction.

More than just English language arts standards will need to be evaluated. Each content area has its own reading and writing knowledge and skills. For example, states may want to develop research and communication strands in their science standards that demonstrate the reading, writing, analysis, and speaking skills that students need for success in a biology course. Achieve, Inc., is identifying literacy skills such as logic and research that could be effectively taught in courses representing different disciplines.³²

Secure the Support of Teachers, Principals, and District Administrators for Adolescent Literacy Initiatives

To ensure the success of their adolescent literacy work, governors should involve teachers, principals, and district administrators early on in the process. Middle and high school content-area teachers often resist “literacy across the curriculum” efforts, primarily because they typically do not view literacy as their curricular concern and because approaches tend to emphasize generic reading strategies.³³ It is critical for governors to send the message that they are promoting literacy rooted in academic disciplines and that the new literacy expectations will be based on demands inherent in the disciplines themselves.

To build support and understanding of making literacy demands explicit across content areas, governors may want to convene educators for adolescent literacy summits. Summits can convey a clear message to educators about the need to focus on adolescent literacy and connect teachers and administrators to ongoing professional development and research-based resources. These summits could include activities designed to help teachers and principals make the connection between disciplinary literacy and their own curriculum.

Strategy 3: Encourage and Support School and District Literacy Plans

To ensure schools can provide the instruction necessary to help students master the reading, writing, and thinking demands of rigorous standards, governors can encourage and provide support for schools and districts to develop their own literacy plans. For these plans to be coordinated and effective, they must be tied to literacy performance data, linked to state standards, and aligned with curricula, assessments, and professional development activities. These plans could also be an extension of schoolwide improvement plans, so long as an explicit focus on literacy is incorporated. J.E.B. Stuart High School in Virginia is proving that with strong leadership and a solid and comprehensive literacy plan, schools can propel their students to high levels of literacy (see Appendix B, “2. One High School’s Successful Literacy Plan”).

Literacy plans should not only address how to support students so they can meet the revised standards, but also how to help students who find the new standards especially challenging. The literacy plan should be based on real-time school data and draw on research-based promising practices for teaching reading and writing skills. It should delineate both instructional approaches (e.g., curricula, pedagogy, and materials) as well as structural approaches (e.g., use of time, use of facilities, and assignment of teachers). Furthermore, it should detail how to identify and reach struggling students.

States can provide guidance on what needs to be included in the plan, for example, by distributing a literacy plan template as **Kentucky** has done. Schools and districts may also need training on how to develop a literacy plan. **Massachusetts** is one state that is providing such training to schools (see Appendix B, “3. States Encouraging the Development of District and School Literacy Plans”). At a minimum, even if schools and districts are not required to have a literacy plan, states can require that students who perform below proficiency on state reading assessments be targeted for diagnostic reading screening and, if necessary, be provided interventions tailored to their needs.



Call for Literacy Plans Based on Effective Adolescent Literacy Instructional Practices

In developing their literacy plans, schools and districts should draw from research about what methods work well with adolescents and how to foster those methods in teachers' practices in the long term. *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*, the Alliance for Excellent Education's report to Carnegie Corporation of New York, identified 15 elements of effective adolescent literacy programs supported by research and practice (see Chapter 2).³⁴ An excellent starting point for developing a school literacy plan is to provide all students with reading comprehension instruction and embed literacy instruction in content-area classes. Students who take an advanced English curriculum and other content-area courses with a heavy emphasis on reading and writing have higher achievement than those who do not.³⁵

The most successful schools will have a flexible, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to teaching their adolescent students how to read and write. English language arts teachers, as well as other content-area teachers, must receive explicit professional development training that acknowledges their content expertise and helps them support adolescent literacy. Teachers in schools that "beat the odds" connect real-world contexts and the skills, ideas, and knowledge students learn across classes and grades.³⁶

Critical to the development of a literacy plan is the capacity to analyze performance data and to use that data to inform planning, practice, and professional development. States may need to assist teachers, principals, and district administrators with these tasks through training and other technical assistance resources.

Require Schools and Districts to Provide Interventions for Struggling Readers

Even if schools and districts are not required to have a literacy plan, states can require that students who perform below proficiency on state reading assessments be targeted for diagnostic reading screening. State assessments now routinely discriminate between students scoring above or below designated benchmark scores. Yet these tests do not reveal *why* some students are struggling. By requiring the screening of failing students, states equip educators with tools to help them determine why each student struggles and select the most appropriate intervention.

States such as Florida, Maine, and Rhode Island have set requirements to ensure that struggling adolescent readers are identified and provided intense, targeted intervention. Florida's Middle Grades Reform Act requires that all middle school reading and language arts programs must be proven effective through research by 2008-09 and that middle schools with 25 percent or more students reading below grade level must develop specific plans to improve reading among same-grade cohorts.

To receive Comprehensive School Reform funds, Maine secondary schools are required to provide remediation and acceleration based on assessment data and a student's personal learning plan. Multiple partners, including universities, the regional education laboratory, and the state department of education, provide technical assistance to these schools to implement the school reform provisions and literacy supports. Rhode Island's regulations require that elementary and secondary school students reading below grade level be identified, that interventions be developed for individual students based on diagnostic assessment data, and that the progress of each student receiving intervention services be monitored.

Once students' struggles are better understood, schools can choose from instructional approaches that best meet the needs of different groups of struggling readers. Governors should call for screening students who fail to meet state reading test benchmarks for the most typical sources of reading problems — word reading, vocabulary, background knowledge, and English language knowledge. A full disability diagnostic testing session is neither required nor is it recommended for all struggling students. However, a brief screening of some key skills and factors can quickly illuminate why a student performed poorly on state assessments. Finally, if governors call for the use of specific screening measures, these data can be collected and aggregated to dramatically improve educators' and policymakers' understanding of adolescent literacy deficits and progress across the state.

A successful school or district literacy plan includes strategies for offering intervention services suited to individual student needs. Several districts have aggressively addressed the need for intervention, and many require school or student literacy plans (see Appendix B, "4. District-Level Approaches to Literacy Instruction and Intervention for Adolescents"). A substantial research base supports various programs that target struggling adolescent readers, and the U.S. Department of Education is funding randomized, experimental research to determine what intervention approaches work for which students.³⁷ In addition,



advances in technology offer more options for individualization of instruction than ever before. The literacy plan should require subsequent intervention with a *different* approach if a student does not respond to the initial intervention. Intervention efforts must not adopt a “one-size-fits-all” approach, or they risk ineffectiveness.

School literacy plans must also acknowledge the role school structures play in the ability to raise literacy achievement. Especially for middle and high school students who are reading at more than two years behind grade level, catching up quickly becomes increasingly important and difficult to accomplish in just a 30- to 45-minute instructional time block. Many of the most effective literacy programs require an extended period for literacy-related instruction, such as through ninth-grade academies or extended reading blocks.³⁸ To ensure students do not fall behind in conceptual development, however, extending reading blocks should be linked to content-area learning.

Governors recognize that in addition to providing school-based supports, involving parents and communities in student learning is critical, especially for adolescents who are highly influenced by their environments. They have also promoted participation in before- and after-school programs to raise academic achievement, increase attendance rates, support students’ transition to college and the workplace, and contribute to community and school connections. High-quality extra learning opportunities can improve students’ engagement and success in school-day learning.³⁹

Strategy 4: Build Educators’ Capacity to Provide Adolescent Literacy Instruction

Governors must work to ensure that current and future educators can provide effective adolescent literacy instruction. This will require states to strengthen teacher licensure and preparation requirements, offer specialized certification in adolescent literacy, and afford teachers professional development opportunities in literacy instruction.

Strengthen Teachers’ Licensure and Preparation Requirements

To build the capacity of educators to teach to literacy-infused standards and provide targeted intervention, states will have to strengthen teacher licensure requirements and preservice training simultaneously. Licensure requirements should guarantee that teachers who meet them are adequately prepared to teach reading and writing in their content area. This will arm educators with knowledge about how students’ diverse literacy needs can be supported in every class and situation.

Currently, the preparation of middle and high school teachers typically focuses on their specific content knowledge and pedagogy. Most teacher preparation programs require only a single course in reading for prospective teachers — a reflection of licensure requirements. Revising requirements to include additional literacy courses is the most obvious way to address adolescent literacy in teacher preparation. Yet creating new courses should not be required at the expense of courses that foster critical content knowledge. Any courses that are added should reflect the most current research-based understanding of the critical elements of adolescent literacy instruction.

Idaho and North Carolina, for example, require educators to earn continuing education credits based on the most current reading research. To be recertified, Idaho Title I, special education, and K-8 teachers and administrators must take a three-credit course called “Idaho Comprehensive Literacy” or pass a reading assessment measure based on the Idaho comprehensive literacy plan. North Carolina state board of education policy requires all K-8 teachers to earn three reading renewal credits every five years.

States can also partner with teacher education programs to encourage better preparation of middle and high school teachers to deliver effective adolescent literacy instruction. Carnegie Corporation of New York has begun a preservice adolescent literacy initiative in schools of education. The initial grants support work at Michigan State University and the University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning (KU-CRL). Michigan State University's teacher preparation program aims to help preservice teachers gain skills for teaching adolescent literacy in content areas, particularly in math and science. KU-CRL will develop and disseminate preservice coursework materials for teachers and administrators based on its staff members' experience in training preservice university faculty and more than 400 preservice teachers since 1987. Additional grantees that will focus on improving preservice training in adolescent literacy include Columbia University's Teachers College, the University of Connecticut, the University of Illinois at Chicago, University of California Santa Cruz, and the University of Michigan.

Offer Teachers Specialized Certification in Adolescent Literacy

To further build educators' capacity, states can offer content-area teachers new certification or endorsement options in adolescent literacy. This will help create a pool of skilled practitioners who understand literacy acquisition and instruction and how it relates to content-area requirements. To ensure the new credentials are attractive to teachers, states can offer pay incentives similar to the incentives given to teachers working in schools with a high concentration of low-performing students. Teachers with these credentials and specialized knowledge are crucial assets in realizing the state's adolescent literacy objectives, especially in middle and high schools with high percentages of struggling readers and writers.

States such as **Florida, North Carolina, and Texas** have created new credentialing options to develop educator capacity in adolescent literacy instruction. Florida's Middle Grades Reform Act builds on the success of literacy coaches in the state's elementary schools. The act offers \$16.7 million in grants to place 282 reading coaches in the lowest-performing middle schools. To qualify as coaches, teachers must have acquired or be working toward a K-12 reading endorsement or K-12 reading certificate. The reading endorsement in Florida is essentially a midpoint in the acquisition of a reading certificate; the reading certificate requires 30 university course credit hours or a master's degree in reading.

North Carolina's Certified Trainers of Writing program places at least one teacher-leader in elementary, middle, and high schools in each district. Each has been trained to offer staff development that emphasizes sound writing instruction, standards, and reading-writing connections. Texas Master Reading Teachers teach reading and serve as mentors to teachers of reading in eligible high-needs campuses for which they receive a year-end bonus of \$5,000. Master teachers are certified to teach K-12 and must complete a master reading teacher preparation program approved by the state board for educator certification.

As many states have sought to develop credentials for literacy coaches, a collaboration of national professional organizations, including the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council for the Social Studies, and the National Science Teachers Association, have responded with standards for middle and high school literacy coaches.⁴⁰ Literacy coaches use their advanced knowledge of literacy acquisition to coach teachers in their schools to improve literacy instruction and to identify and provide struggling students appropriate interventions.

Several models of literacy coaching exist, and governors should consider which model will best serve state and local needs.⁴¹ The models vary in terms of how much of the coach's position is dedicated to administrative, instructional, and professional development duties. Coaches generally are seen as change agents, and literacy coaches focus on improving literacy instruction across the content areas.

Afford Teachers Professional Development Opportunities in Literacy Instruction

Classroom teachers need access to professional development opportunities that will expand their knowledge and ability to address their students' literacy needs. States can support induction and mentoring programs for new teachers, establish demonstration sites, and provide professional development via coaches or in partnership with professional development organizations.

Support Induction and Mentoring Programs with an Adolescent Literacy Component

Nearly half of all teachers leave the classroom within the first five years, and many cite the lack of proper training and support to respond to the varying proficiency levels of their students as the reason for their dissatisfaction.⁴² Infusing adolescent literacy training in precertification programs will help curb but not eliminate the high rates of teacher turnover, particularly in hard-to-staff, low-performing schools.

Governors should encourage the creation of an induction and mentoring program for teachers in their first two years of teaching. This program should include an adolescent literacy component and promote on-site, context-specific assistance for beginning educators. The training should be coupled with training in research-based instructional strategies to help diverse student groups meet rigorous standards (see Appendix B, “7. One University’s Approach to Developing an Adolescent Literacy Mentor-Based Induction Model”).

Establish Demonstration Sites

State-level professional development assistance can be targeted initially to districts with a high concentration of adolescents struggling with literacy. As schools begin to implement practices and realize evidence of success, governors can promote these effective practices across the state. Schools serving target populations or meeting certain goals successfully can act as demonstration sites of research-based literacy models and interventions. Demonstration site schools can serve as exemplars that teachers and administrators could visit as part of their professional development. Furthermore, these schools can serve as sites for apprenticeships and for teacher preparation and specialized certification programs. The **Alabama** Reading Initiative began with literacy demonstration sites that served as models of effective, research-based reading practice (see Appendix B, “1. One State’s Statewide K-12 Reading Initiative”).

Use Specialists, Literacy Coaches, and Master Teachers to Provide Professional Development

New credentialing options would provide a way to deliver professional development and sustained on-site support for schools. Specialists, literacy coaches, and master teachers can act as discipline-specific peer leaders, helping to develop a school literacy plan and foster improved instruction among their colleagues. They can conduct nonevaluative observations and provide immediate, on-site feedback and collegial support to teachers getting used to thinking about the literacy demands of their content areas. In public middle and high schools in Boston, Massachusetts, literacy coaches are the cornerstones of a collaborative professional development model in adolescent literacy for content-area teachers, subsequently raising their state test pass rates by 46 percent (see Appendix B, “5. One District’s Approach to Building Teachers’ Capacity to Improve Adolescent Literacy Across the Curriculum”).

Partner with Regional Professional Development Centers and Organizations to Provide Professional Development

Many state education departments have limited capacity to provide professional development on their own. Governors should look to businesses, universities, national organizations, regional laboratories and centers, and professional and philanthropic organizations to help build educators’ capacity. Many states, such as **Delaware, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Virginia**, contract with external assistance providers, such as regional training centers, or offer educators professional development as part of a school’s adoption of a school improvement model (see Appendix B, “6. State Partnerships to Build Educators’ Capacity in Adolescent Literacy Instruction”).

Support Principal Training in Literacy

Principal leadership is essential for making the structural and instructional changes needed to raise student achievement. State and district leaders must work together to clearly define the role of school principals and create the conditions that enable them to be successful literacy leaders in their buildings. Principals must have the authority to make personnel and budgeting decisions while being held accountable for students’ literacy achievement levels.⁴³

State and local leaders can link principal pay to improved outcomes; however, increased pay alone is unlikely to be effective in stimulating widespread improvement. Aspiring principals also need high-quality, research-based, school-embedded training in adolescent literacy strategies. School principals participating in the **Alabama** Reading Initiative are required to attend three continuous development meetings each academic year and are expected to participate fully in school-based professional development programs (see Appendix B, “1. One State’s Statewide K-12 Reading Initiative”).



In **California** the Long Beach Unified School District’s Leadership for Literacy bimonthly administrator training provides opportunities for school leaders to observe implementation of programs at model school sites. Principals learn how to conduct walkthroughs, promote community learning and collaboration, and work with content-area department

heads to discuss student work as the basis for instructional planning and professional development. Participants also learn how to help classroom teachers raise their students’ reading proficiency levels on standards-based assessments.

Strategy 5: Measure Progress in Adolescent Literacy at the School, District, and State Levels

As state initiatives progress, it will become important to assess and convey the positive impact of these efforts. States must determine whether they have the data sources and tools to accomplish their goals and measure progress toward achieving those goals. In some states, it will be necessary to strengthen state assessments and improve the value and timeliness of literacy performance data.

Review and Strengthen State Assessments

Currently, some state definitions of literacy proficiency are quite low relative to national expectations.⁴⁴ Just like state standards, state assessments should be examined for the extent to which they reflect real-world literacy demands and expectations embedded in respected national tests. Comparing student achievement on state literacy assessments to student achievement on NAEP, in which all states are required to participate under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, can indicate how well a state’s assessments measure up to national benchmarks.

Improve the Value and Timeliness of Literacy Performance Data

States will also need to think about how to make literacy performance data more user friendly and available to educators and policymakers. Technology is rapidly offering better options for assessment and communication of assessment results. States can use technology better to ensure performance data are provided in a timely manner and in an accessible format to guide state, local, and school literacy planning and practice. For example, Boston Public Schools’ Internet-based resource (www.mybps.org) enables certified users to access state assessment and other achievement data for current students. Through this site, teachers and administrators can generate standard and customized reports of students’ recent and past achievement performance.

To measure the progress and long-term impacts of adolescent literacy initiatives, longitudinal data on student achievement is necessary. Many states are now developing data systems with unique student identifiers. States should ensure these systems enable customized queries relative to adolescent literacy indicators, as does **Florida** (see Appendix B, “8. One State’s Approach to Tracking Students Longitudinally”).

Information on the progress of students in specific programs or those receiving particular interventions enables states to better assess the promise of these initiatives. Student mobility, after-school program participation, and other factors can affect student achievement outcomes and should also be tracked.

Governors will want to determine the efficacy and resource requirements of state-led adolescent literacy initiatives. Data systems that link student outcomes and costs for particular programs and interventions will enable state policymakers to evaluate the merit and cost-effectiveness of specific approaches. Such information can guide future planning and investments. ■



4 conclusion



Right now an unprecedented opportunity exists to focus national and state attention on the needs of America's more than 8 million struggling adolescent readers in grades four through 12. Governors are committed to improving and redesigning their middle and high schools to raise high school graduation rates and to prepare more students for success in postsecondary education and the workplace. In addition, states have realized gains and learned lessons from their early literacy initiatives and are eager to build on these successes. Moreover, the knowledge base about effective practice in adolescent literacy continues to grow, and new sources of funding for adolescent literacy have begun to emerge.

Governors are uniquely positioned to raise awareness of the adolescent literacy problem in their state and provide leadership to improve literacy performance. Along with other state leaders, governors can help the public understand the connection between literacy achievement and educational and employment opportunities.

Governors can also make the case that a focus on adolescent literacy is not at odds with an early literacy initiative; a strong education pipeline will provide a continuum of literacy support for K-12. In addition, governors can ensure teachers and principals have the expertise and resources they need to support their students' literacy growth across grade levels and content areas. By pursuing the strategies recommended in this guide, governors can set the stage for a revitalized education system that prepares students for the increasing literacy demands of work, education, and civic participation in the 21st century.

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Appendix A: Resources on Adolescent Literacy

Characteristics and Causes of Poor Readers

Buly, M. R., & Valencia, S. W. (2003). *Meeting the Needs of Failing Readers: Cautions and Considerations for State Policy*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. <http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Reading-MRBSV-04-2003.pdf>

Article reporting the results of a scientific study identifying the specific reading struggles of fourth-grade students who failed their state's reading test. Discusses policy implications.

Leach, J. M., Scarborough, H. S., & Rescorla, L. (2003). "Late-emerging reading difficulties." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(2):211-225. http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/research_digest/late_emerging_reading_disabilities.html

Article reporting results of a scientific study comparing fourth- and fifth-grade children with early-identified and late-identified reading deficits with children who had no history of reading problems. Finds readers fell into three categories. Also finds that children with late-identified deficits appeared to truly have late-emerging problems: the problems were not apparent from performance in earlier grades.

Consequences of Poor Adolescent Readers and Writers

American Diploma Project. (2004). *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc. [http://www.achieve.org/dstore.nsf/Lookup/ADPreport/\\$file/ADPreport.pdf](http://www.achieve.org/dstore.nsf/Lookup/ADPreport/$file/ADPreport.pdf)

Report on how the American high school diploma has lost its value because it no longer "reflects adequate preparation for the intellectual demands of adult life," but rather is considered by employers and postsecondary institutions "as little more than a certificate of attendance." Argues that graduation requirements and assessments must be changed to match real-world standards. Presents a set of benchmarks to help policymakers in this task.

Balfanz, R., & Legters, N. (2004). *Locating the Dropout Crisis: Which High Schools Produce the Nation's Dropouts? Where Are They Located? Who Attends Them?* Baltimore, MD: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University. http://www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs/rsch/Locating_Dropouts.pdf

Report on graduation rates across America with alarming implications about the inequity of education, noting that at nearly 1,000 U.S. high schools the chances of graduating are about half. Moreover, about 40 percent of the freshman class does not graduate at 2000 of the nation's high schools. While only 11 percent of white students attend schools where graduating "is not the norm," nearly 40 percent of Hispanic students and 50 percent of black students attend them.

Barton, P. E. (2000). *What Jobs Require: Literacy, Education, and Training, 1940-2006*. Washington, DC: Educational Testing Service. <http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICJOBS.pdf>

Reviews how the distributions of jobs, required literacy skills, and salaries have changed from 1940 to the present with projections through 2006.

Carnevale, A. P. (2001). *Help Wanted ... College Required*. Washington, DC: Educational Testing Service, Office for Public Leadership.

Reviews how the distributions of jobs, education, and salaries have changed by comparing various statistics from the 1950s to the present.

Carnevale, A. P., & Desrochers, D. M. (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-16 Reform*. Washington, DC: Educational Testing Service.

Tracks the relationship between educational attainment and job requirements since 1959 and examines future work and education requirements through 2020.

Greene, J.P., & Winters, M. (2005) *Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates in the United States*. New York: Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute. http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_o8.htm

Historical look at high school graduation and college readiness rates from 1991-2002.

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2005). *Writing: A Powerful Message from State Government*. New York: The College Board. http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/powerful-message-from-state.pdf

Report delineating the writing skills required for professional state government employees.

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003). *Writing: A Ticket to Work...or a Ticket Out*. New York: The College Board. http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/neglectedr.pdf

Report reviewing the value and expectations of business leaders for writing ability in their employees.

Orfield, G., Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson, C. (2004). *Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth Are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/dropouts/LosingOurFuture.pdf>

Report on the gap in graduation rates between white and minority youth. Discusses how severe the problem actually is, how it has been obscured, and how it can be remedied.

Status of Poor Adolescent Readers and Writers

Education Trust. (2005). *Stalled in Secondary*. Washington, DC: Education Trust. <http://www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/Press+Room/stalled+in+secondary.htm>

Reviews results of three full years of the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act using state testing data and finds that in contrast to fairly consistent progress in elementary grade reading achievement, middle and high school reading achievement shows uneven progress across 29 states.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *The Condition of Education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005094>

Report reviewing statistical indicators of education enrollment, student achievement, student effort and progress among different population groups, and the context of post-secondary education, among several other topics. Includes review of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data.

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003). *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution*. New York: The College Board. http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/neglectedr.pdf

Report detailing how writing has been left behind in curriculum and school reform efforts. Reviews the importance of writing, current writing achievement, and the challenge of writing instruction. Provides suggestions for policymakers on how to launch a 'writing revolution' to help improve writing instruction and achievement.

Sloan McCombs, J., Kirby, S. N., Barney, H., Darilek, H., & Magee, S. (2004). *Achieving State and National Literacy Goals: A Long Uphill Road*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2004/RAND_TR180.pdf

Compares literacy achievement in grades 4 and 8 on the NAEP and state achievement tests. Finds disparity between the two, as well as a persistent achievement gap across measures.

Research-Based Promising Practices

Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C. E. (2004). *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/ReadingNext.pdf>

Report reviewing the adolescent literacy problem and 15 key elements supported by research and practice. Argues no one approach or element or even combination of elements will be effective for all struggling readers because of their diverse needs. Posits that researchers and policymakers, as well as other stakeholders, should collaborate to define and evaluate adolescent literacy interventions to build the knowledge base more quickly while effecting immediate improvements.

Jurich, S., & Estes, S. (2000). *Raising Academic Achievement: A Study of 20 Successful Programs*. Washington DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Identifies 20 U.S. programs that have successfully raised student academic achievement, drawn from a sample of 96 youth initiatives. Includes criteria used to select programs and detailed profiles of each program and the student populations served.

Juvonen, J., Le, V., Kaganoff, T., Augustine, C., & Constant, L. (2004). *Focus on the Wonder Years: Challenges Facing the American Middle School*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Reviews the historical origins of the middle school and its effects on American education. Chapter four reviews middle school academic achievement and notes that between 1970 and 1999, while NAEP scores in math and science rose, reading remained stable.

Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21st Century*. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://ierc.siue.edu/documents/AdolescentsAndLiteracy.pdf>

Report reviewing the literacy demands adolescents face in the 21st century. Discusses the differing needs of struggling adolescent readers, including those of English-language learners. Also reviews research on instructional strategies to improve adolescent literacy and the developmental nature of both reading and content learning.

Langer, J. A. (2001). Beating the odds: Teaching middle and high school students to read and write well. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38, 837-880.

Study of schools that were successful in teaching reading and writing despite challenging school and community conditions.

Langer, J. A. (2002). *Effective Literacy Instruction: Building Successful Reading and Writing Programs*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Describes the common factors found in 25 middle and high schools that “beat the odds” by promoting excellent student literacy achievement. Based on the results of a five-year study.

Strickland, D. S. & Alvermann, D. (2004). *Bridging the Literacy Achievement Gap: Grades 4-12*. New York: Teachers College.

Addresses issues associated with the literacy achievement of preadolescents and adolescents. About half of the book is devoted to describing the populations who are struggling, while the other half describes several promising programs.

Swanson, H. L., & Hoskyn, M. (2001). Instructing adolescents with learning disabilities: A component and composite analysis. *Learning Disabilities: Research & Practice*, 16(2): 109-119.

Meta-analysis of 913 intervention studies. Identifies instructional components found successful for adolescents with learning disabilities.

Tools for Planning Adolescent Literacy Efforts

Achieve, Inc., & National Governors Association. (2005). *An Action Agenda for Improving America's High Schools*. Washington DC: Authors. <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0502actionagenda.pdf>

Report intended for governors and state policymakers outlining five key ideas to help restore value to the American high school diploma.

Celio, M. B., & Harvey, J. (2005). *Buried Treasure: Developing a Management Guide From Mountains of School Data*. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education.

A practical guide to conveying seven essential pieces of information about educational systems in a concise and contextualized manner. The seven indicators help administrators track progress and identify trouble areas. Specific examples and guidelines are given.

International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council for the Social Studies, & National Science Teachers Association. (forthcoming). *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches and Subject Matter Teachers*.

Set of standards produced by a number of national organizations to define the role and requisite skills and knowledge for literacy coaches and teachers of literacy across content areas in secondary schools.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (2005). *Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals*. Reston, VA: Author.

Book for secondary principals on the role of leadership in raising literacy achievement. Chapters on assessment programs, professional development and intervention plans provide a summary of research and offer suggested action steps for each topic.

National Governors Association. (2005). *Getting It Done: Ten Steps to a State Action Agenda, a Guidebook of Promising State and Local Practices*. Washington DC: Author. <http://www.nga.org/cda/efiles/05warnerguide.pdf>

Guide outlining 10 steps to creating an action agenda designed to restore value to the American high school diploma. Provides detailed examples of local and state high school reform.

Appendix B: Examples of Promising Practices

1. One State's Statewide K-12 Reading Initiative

In 1996, the Alabama State Board of Education passed a resolution to appoint a reading panel to develop the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI). ARI is a statewide K-12 initiative whose goal is to achieve grade-level literacy for all Alabama public school students. Of the 537 initial cohorts of ARI schools, 484 of them serve students in at least one of grades four through 12. Of the 211 schools in the newest group participating in training in 2005, 195 of them have students in at least one of grades 4 through 12.

ARI began the initiative by selecting literacy demonstration sites to serve as models of effective, research-based reading practice. Schools that volunteer to participate in ARI must commit to the 100 percent literacy goal; assure commitment among at least 85 percent of the school's faculty and principal leadership; agree to attend and apply extensive training; develop and implement an intervention plan for the school's struggling students; and submit to an evaluation.

ARI sites receive a great deal of technical assistance and professional development. The program requires principal participation in continuous development meetings and provides professional development to content teachers about comprehension strategies within their content areas. Each site must also appoint a full-time reading specialist who works with teachers and struggling readers and is trained by regional reading coaches. Schools also collaborate with higher education faculty partners who serve as mentors.

The Alabama Department of Education, business community, and governor have played important roles in designing a program to address students' chronic reading difficulties, raising funds to support communications and assistance efforts and securing state funding to extend ARI.

The A+ Education Foundation, founded as a nonprofit organization by private sector business and community leaders in 1991 to promote excellence in K-12 education, has been instrumental in establishing and promoting ARI throughout Alabama.

Evaluations have found gains in the numbers of students scoring proficient and a decrease of the population of struggling readers. An analysis of the performance of the first four cohorts of ARI schools shows greater gains in reading proficiency than do non-ARI schools across schools and for each major ethnic group.

2. One High School's Successful Literacy Plan

The student body at J.E.B. Stuart High School in Fairfax County, Virginia, numbers approximately 1,500 students. Two-thirds of the students are second-language learners from over 70 countries. There are 398 students in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program. Less than a decade ago, students at Stuart ranked among the lowest performers in Virginia and missed an average of 23 days of school per year. Upon his arrival, Principal Mel Riddile turned to his teaching staff for answers to fix the problem. Teachers emphasized their students' need for better literacy skills in order to succeed in the core curriculum. Together, Riddile and his teaching staff developed a comprehensive literacy plan designed to turn around literacy achievement and ensure students' overall school success.

Screening Students

Riddile and his teachers decided to screen *all* eighth graders slated to enter the school in the fall. Data revealed that over three-quarters of entering students scored one standard deviation below grade level and 24 percent scored three years below grade level. As a follow-up, students scoring below the 40th percentile were further evaluated to better diagnose their struggles using an individually administered reading assessment.

Instructional and Intervention Responses

All entering freshmen who are reading significantly below grade level are required to take a literacy class. Instruction in this class is tailored to students' needs. Students move through the content at their own pace using computerized lessons that reinforce teacher-led lessons. After-school and summer school programs also offer additional supports for students. Teachers are helped in specific content areas by a literacy coach who helps them support their students' reading of textbooks, so that instruction is reinforced throughout the school day.

Professional Development and Teacher Buy-In

Although teachers expressed frustration at the lack of reading skills among their students, Riddile still faced initial teacher reluctance to the idea of a school-wide approach to the problem. By analyzing the data collected from screening entering students, teachers were able to understand the full depth of the problem and the individual needs of their students. Teachers began their professional development by taking an in-house college credit course in standards-based instruction and literacy at the secondary level, and a literacy coach supplemented this with brief planning period development sessions and peer teaching and learning activities. All professional development activities have been job-embedded.

Addressing the Needs of English Language Learners

The ESOL Program at Stuart emphasizes three things with their English Language Learners, the value of their linguistic and cultural background, high expectations for their academic achievement, and the importance of their involvement in the school. ESOL students are expected to meet the same high standards as all students in the school, and the ESOL program has a specific plan for accomplishing this important goal. Students are grouped by level of language proficiency with five proficiency levels to accommodate the differing English language needs of the students. At the lowest levels of English proficiency, students spend more time focused on learning language. As they advance, they move into content classes where teachers use special strategies to make the content accessible. At the upper levels, students are mainstreamed into regular classes, but given extra support to meet grade-level expectations.

3. States Encouraging District and School Literacy Plans

Many states, including **Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Ohio** encourage the development of district and school literacy plans by providing tools and resources to streamline planning.

Kentucky provides districts and middle and high schools with a tool to develop a plan aligned to the curriculum and the state's program effectiveness review indicators. In developing their literacy plans, middle and high school staff identify the school's priority needs and goals based on student performance data and include strategies and activities for literacy instruction across the curriculum. The Kentucky Department of Education also offers student reading lists, technology resources, and professional development materials. *More Reading Strategies in Action* are materials for professional development providers produced in partnership with Kentucky Educational Television that showcase videotaped examples of teachers modeling effective strategies to help students in grades six through 10 improve comprehension of informational texts in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Additional materials, also aligned to the state standards, are available for reading specialists.

The Massachusetts Department of Education awards grants to middle and high schools committed to addressing adolescent literacy in order to reduce special education placements. Schools with large percentages of struggling readers and/or special needs students receive priority for funding. Grant recipients are expected to form a school reading leadership team and develop a school profile of student reading needs and related school action plan. These documents are to be based on results from the school's self-assessment of student reading needs and current content-area and intervention program practices. Reading leadership teams attend Department of Education sponsored network meetings throughout the year to discuss current research on adolescent literacy and receive professional development on a schoolwide approach to improving reading. The Massachusetts Department of Education currently dedicates approximately \$1,000,000 annually to support this secondary reading initiative.

Ohio's High School Transformation Initiative seeks to improve student achievement in the state's most troubled high schools by creating autonomous small schools, which include an instructional focus on literacy. The KnowledgeWorks Foundation, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the

Ohio Department of Education, assists schools in 17 large urban districts across the state by providing professional development opportunities and resources to help schools meet the goals of their literacy action plans. Each school's literacy plan must include steps for identifying and providing support to underperforming students, developing a curriculum that includes literacy in all content-area classes, and providing programs for increasing the literacy in students' families and communities.

4. District-Level Approaches to Literacy Instruction and Intervention for Adolescents

Many districts seek to support the provision of tailored interventions and supports for their most struggling readers. The Austin Independent School District in Texas uses a three-tiered intervention model for three types of struggling middle school readers. It identifies students who are English language learners (ELLs) who have not yet acquired a level of English mastery sufficient for academic success, students who exhibit below grade level comprehension (due to fluency, vocabulary deficits, etc.), and students who have not acquired adequate decoding skills. It provides supplemental reading skills reinforcement in all classrooms; corrective reading for students who are identified as up to a year or two below grade level in reading; and an intensive and comprehensive reading intervention (e.g., Scholastic's READ180) for students who are more than one and a half or two years below grade level in reading. After a year of regular class reading interventions, all 17 middle schools in the district showed gains in reading in both the seventh- and eighth-grade scores on the state standards-based assessment.

Baltimore City, Maryland high schools and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania high schools have adopted the Talent Development High School (TDHS) model for some of their districts' large urban, high-poverty high schools and have seen gains in students' test scores and course pass rates and high school graduation rates, respectively. TDHS is being implemented in 50 high schools in 23 districts and 11 states across the country. The model provides interventions such as "Strategic Reading," an accelerated, intensive double-dose instruction course for ninth graders who are two or more years below grade level. TDHS also incorporates a reading lab for the most challenged readers.

As part of a broader district-wide adolescent literacy initiative, the Boston Public Schools' Transition Program offers students transitioning from eighth grade to ninth grade who are perform-

ing below standards 15 months of intensive, individualized instruction. For high school students needing help with passing the state test required for graduation, the Massachusetts Department of Education provides grants for tutoring in literacy and math. The district also offers a "Summer Review" program for all high school students not passing English courses and "Summer Transition" programs for all middle and high school students not passing state tests or not meeting other required benchmarks. In 1998, 43 percent of 10th-graders in the Boston Public Schools passed the English language arts portion of the state test, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), one of the most rigorous in the United States. Six years later, in 2004, 77 percent of 10th-graders passed this portion of the MCAS. Including the MCAS retests and performance appeal results, 89 percent of active seniors in 2004 have passed the English language arts portion.

Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada, began an adolescent literacy initiative based upon successful implementation of Scholastic's READ180 program with middle school special education students that began in 1999. What started as a small intensive intervention approach for students primarily in special education classrooms grew to a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction in secondary schools for students in the bottom quartile that currently reaches nearly 8,000 at-risk students in grades six through 12.

5. One District's Approach to Building Teachers' Capacity to Improve Adolescent Literacy Across the Curriculum

Boston Public Schools have helped students raise their pass rates on the Massachusetts state test by 42 percent in six years with an intensive focus on coaching teachers to support students' literacy in the content-area classroom.

The Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) model used in Boston has been a crucial factor in this success. A partnership with the Boston Plan for Excellence was key to helping Boston's middle schools and high schools implement the CCL model and the Readers/Writers Workshop approach that teachers learn as a way of supporting students' academic engagement and literacy.

Literacy coaches have regular professional development and reflection sessions to strengthen their own work with teams of teachers. They then work with these teams of middle and high school teachers in intensive eight-week cycles. The CCL model, in which teachers inquire into student performance, has been augmented by Boston's use of the Reading Apprenticeship® instructional framework. With this framework, teachers were encouraged to inquire into their own processes of thinking, reading, and writing in their particular disciplines. By looking closely at the specific ways they read and think to understand different types of science, social studies, or math texts, teachers have made more advanced discipline-specific literacy accessible to their students and students' ability to comprehend academic texts has improved.

6. State Partnerships to Build Educators' Capacity in Adolescent Literacy Instruction

Delaware, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia offer assistance to schools through partnerships that include a variety of stakeholders with training and research expertise.

The Delaware Department of Education developed the Success for Secondary Struggling Readers (SSSR) Institute in consultation with the University of Delaware and with input from reading specialists from across the state. The SSSR training is available to special education, English and content-area teachers of struggling readers in grades four through 12. Teachers who complete the 90 hour program are eligible for a 2 percent pay raise.

Kentucky's Collaborative Center for Literacy Development: Early Childhood Through Adulthood (CCLD) is a partnership among eight state universities, the National Center for Family Literacy, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Adult Education, and others interested in literacy development. This collaborative provides professional development and training to teachers across the state. Similarly, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, in collaboration with the Southern Regional Education Board and LearnNC, offers cross-disciplinary middle and high school teams intensive training in Reading and Writing for Learning.

The South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI) is an intensive staff development effort. Literacy coaches provide classroom-based support to participating teachers and lead monthly study groups for teachers and administrators across the state. Begun originally as a Kindergarten through fifth grade program, South

Carolina has extended the reading initiative to middle grades and plans to launch a high school initiative in the 2005-06 school year. In FY 2005, 27 middle grades literacy coaches served 40 schools in 23 districts, and 24 additional coaches will serve one to two middle schools each, beginning in FY 2006. The initiative, a partnership among the South Carolina State Department of Education, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the University of South Carolina, trains coaches over a four-year period. Over the course of their four-year training, middle grades literacy coaches earn 36 hours of credit in graduate courses in literacy instruction and participate in monthly trainings. Many coaches have continued their graduate study to earn the nine additional credits required for a doctorate in language and literacy. Regional literacy coaches support literacy coaches through monthly study groups and classroom visitation at the school site.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in conjunction with a variety of consortia and universities provides professional development in literacy for teachers in grades four through 12. Currently there is an ongoing literacy initiative for middle school teachers supported by the School University Regional Network at the College of William and Mary and a four-part video seminar on reading comprehension delivered by the Southside Virginia Regional Technology Consortium for teachers in grades four through eight who teach in the south central regions of Virginia. James Madison University and VDOE provide summer Content/Teaching Academies in core areas, including courses for secondary and special education teachers on reading and writing. VDOE in partnership with George Mason University provides an ongoing series of reading courses for teachers of limited English proficiency students.

7. One University's Approach for Developing an Adolescent Literacy Mentor-Based Induction Program

The New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz has developed a mentor-based induction program that provides job-embedded mentoring for secondary teachers in a 26 district consortium. With support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the New Teacher Center will gather and analyze baseline data on the adolescent literacy preparation and skills of 330 beginning teachers. Because many of the mentor teachers vary in their understanding of literacy instruction and are often unprepared to teach reading comprehension skills to students with low literacy skills, the New Teacher Center will also engage members of five to 10 institutions of higher education to develop specialized training to assist middle and high school mentor teachers in their understanding of adolescent literacy. The work will allow

for preliminary planning for a Mentoring for Adolescent Literacy training and provide a model to better align preservice education and induction and mentoring programs in the areas of literacy and pedagogy.

8. One State's Approach to Tracking Students Longitudinally

Florida began tracking students longitudinally three years ago. Students in Florida are required to have a unique student identification number. Districts use these student identification (ID) numbers to report student data to the Florida Department of Education. These unique numbers assigned by the district are then translated to a K-20 unique student ID for storage of this student data in the educational data warehouse. This system of identifying students allows the department to track even the most mobile student over the years. Tracking progress at a student level allows the state to understand how much students improve in literacy achievement over time. This allows educators and policymakers to understand if a student has met the standard for a particular year and if that represents an improvement over past years. In addition, some literacy support services that students receive are also tracked, and policymakers are able to see which services, programs and policies promote progress among students — and eventually if the service has lasting effects. The Florida system has the potential to track a student from the first day of prekindergarten to college graduation day.

Appendix C: Contacts for More Information on Promising Practices

State leaders can develop policies and programs that build on the lessons learned from promising state and local efforts. Below are individuals who can provide more information on the promising practices referenced throughout the guide and in Appendix B.

Alabama

Sherrill Parris, Administrator, Alabama Reading Initiative
<http://www.aplusala.org/initiatives/ari/ari.asp>

Austin, Texas

Pat Forgione, Superintendent, Austin Independent School District

Peggy Gordon, Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools, Austin Independent School District
<http://www.austinisd.org/>

Boston Public Schools (Massachusetts)

Tom Payzant, Superintendent, Boston Public Schools
<http://www.bpe.org/schools.aspx>

Carnegie Corporation of New York

Andrés Henríquez, Program Officer, Carnegie Corporation of New York
<http://www.carnegie.org>

Clark County School District (Nevada)

Barbara Mathews, Executive Director, Student Support Services, Clark County School District
<http://www.ccsd.net/>

Delaware

Jo-Ann Malfitano Baca, Education Associate, Secondary Reading/Special Education, Delaware Department of Education
<http://www.doe.state.de.us/reading/>

Florida

Mary Laura Openshaw, Director, Just Read, Florida!
<http://www.justreadflorida.com/about.asp>

J.E.B. Stuart High School (Virginia)

Mel Riddile, Principal
<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/StuartHS/>

Kentucky

Michael Miller, Director of Curriculum Development, Kentucky Department of Education
<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Literacy/More+Reading+Strategies+in+Action.htm>

Long Beach Unified School District

Gwendolyn Mathews, Assistant Superintendent for Middle and K-8 Schools, Long Beach Unified

Debbie DeDen, Literacy Program Specialist for Middle Schools, Long Beach Unified School District
<http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us/index.asp>

Maine

Susan Gendron, Commissioner, Maine Department of Education
<http://www.state.me.us/education/>

Massachusetts

Cheryl Liebling, Director, Office for Reading and Language Arts, Massachusetts Department of Education
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/read/>

New Jersey

New Jersey Task Force on Middle Grade Literacy Education
<http://www.nj.gov/njded/genfo/midliteracy.htm>

North Carolina

Janice Davis, Deputy State Superintendent, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/>

Ohio

Laura Lipsett, Assistant Director and Adolescent Literacy Specialist, Office of Reading Improvement, Ohio Department of Education <http://www.ohioreads.org>

Dionne Blue, Program Officer, KnowledgeWorks Foundation <http://www.kwfdn.org>

Oregon

Julie Anderson, English/Language Arts Curriculum Specialist, Oregon Department of Education

Theresa Levy, School Improvement Specialist, Oregon Department of Education <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results?id=138>

Rhode Island

Todd D. Flaherty, Deputy Commissioner, Rhode Island Department of Education <http://www.ridoe.net>

South Carolina

Suzette Lee, Interim Director of the Office of Curriculum and Standards and Coordinator of the Institute of Reading

Caroline Savage, Middle School Language Arts Coordinator and Liaison to Institute of Reading <http://www.myschools.com/>

Southern Regional Education Board

Renee Murray, School Improvement Consultant, High Schools that Work <http://www.sreb.org/>

Talent Development High Schools

James McPartland, Executive Director, Talent Development High Schools <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs/>

Tennessee

Deborah Boyd, Executive Director, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Tennessee Department of Education http://www.tennessee.gov/sbe/Apro5/IID_TN_Reading_Panel.pdf

Daniel D. Challener, President, Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, Tennessee) <http://www.pefchattanooga.org/www>

Virginia

Linda M. Wallinger, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Virginia Department of Education <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>

Appendix D: Potential Funding Sources for Adolescent Literacy

Although federal monies specifically slated for adolescent literacy are limited, the pervasive links between adolescent literacy and so many aspects of school and education reform mean that a wide variety of federal resources can be tapped. For instance, given the importance of professional development in the strategies outlined here, Title II professional development funds are an obvious resource for financing these efforts.

Federal programs with goals consistent with adolescent literacy efforts are identified in the table below. States may also find potential financial resources for adolescent literacy initiatives in state appropriations, district funding, and through philanthropic grants. States may disburse these funds through competitive grants processes and include match requirements and incentives.

Potential Federal Funding Sources for Adolescent Literacy

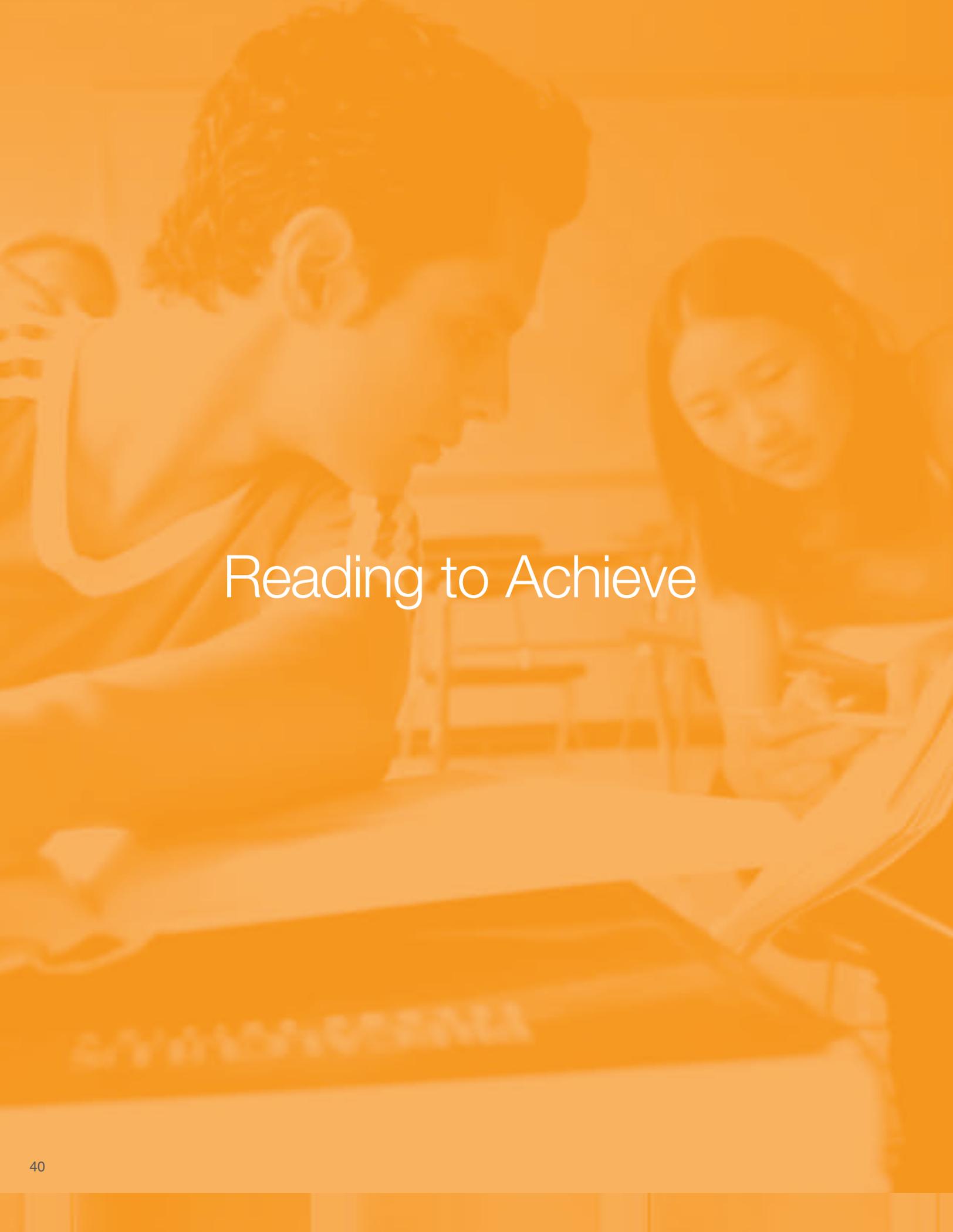
Federal Program	Description	Recipient
TITLE I: Grants to School Districts	Title I funds are provided through state education agencies to local education agencies and to public and private schools to serve children who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet state academic standards. Title I reaches about 12.5 million students from preschool age to high school, but most of the students served (65 percent) are in grades 1 through 6; another 12 percent are in preschool and kindergarten programs. Both schoolwide and targeted assistance programs using Title I funds must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support parental involvement.	Districts

Potential Federal Funding Sources for Adolescent Literacy

Federal Program	Description	Recipient
Striving Readers	Striving Readers is a new discretionary grant program, authorized in December 2004, aimed at improving the reading skills of middle and high school aged students who are reading below grade level. Striving Readers supports the implementation and evaluation of research-based reading interventions for struggling middle and high school readers in Title I eligible schools at risk of not meeting or not meeting adequate yearly progress requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act and/or that have significant percentages or numbers of students reading below grade level.	Districts
TITLE II: Teacher Quality	The purpose of Title II, Part A is to help increase the academic achievement of all students by helping schools and school districts ensure that all teachers are highly qualified to teach. Agencies are given flexibility to design their programs; they may address teacher quality issues by focusing on teacher preparation and qualifications of new teachers, recruitment and hiring, induction, professional development, teacher retention, or the need for more capable principals and assistant principals to serve as effective school leaders.	States
21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)- After School Programs	This program provides expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children who attend low performing schools. Tutorial services and academic enrichment activities are designed to help students meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. In addition, 21st CCLC programs provide youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology education programs, art, music and recreation programs, counseling and character education to enhance the academic component of the program.	States
Smaller Learning Communities	Smaller Learning Communities grants assist large public high schools, which are defined as schools that include grades 11 and 12 and enroll at least 1,000 students in grades nine and above. The grants can be used to cover reorganization costs, extended learning time, professional development, support services for students, building partnerships, and data collection and evaluation activities.	Schools and community organizations

Potential Federal Funding Sources for Adolescent Literacy

Federal Program	Description	Recipient
School Dropout Prevention Program	The School Dropout Prevention Program assists states with annual dropout rates above their state average to implement effective dropout prevention and re-entry efforts. The grant supports activities such as professional development, reduction in student-teacher ratios, counseling and mentoring for at-risk students, and the implementation of comprehensive school reform models.	States
Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Program	The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Perkins III) is the principal source of federal support to states for the improvement of vocational and technical education programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. States determine what share of Perkins III funds should be allocated to the secondary and postsecondary sectors (in 2000, states allocated 62 percent of funds to secondary education). Program performance evaluations are partially based on student academic achievement.	States
TRIO Programs	The Federal TRIO Programs are educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes six outreach and support programs targeted to serve and assist low-income, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects and a dissemination partnership program to encourage the replication of successful practices.	Institutions of higher education, other organizations, and/or agencies
GEAR UP	The GEAR UP program is a discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides five-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. GEAR UP funds are also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.	Schools and community and higher education organizations
Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants	The Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants initiative consists of three separate programs: Partnership Grants for Improving Teacher Preparation, State Grants, and Teacher Recruitment Grants. These grants aim to strengthen teacher education, strengthen teacher certification standards, and to recruit highly qualified teachers. All of these efforts are tailored to preparing and recruiting teachers who are highly qualified to teach in high need areas.	Funds go to teacher preparation colleges and universities working with schools



Reading to Achieve

NGA CENTER DIVISIONS

The Center is organized into five divisions with some collaborative projects across all divisions.

- Education provides information on best practices in early childhood, elementary and secondary, and postsecondary education, including teacher quality, high school redesign, reading, access to and success in postsecondary education, extra learning opportunities, and school readiness.
- Health covers a broad range of health financing, service delivery and policy issues, including containing health-care costs, health insurance trends and innovations, state initiatives in public health, aging and long-term care, disease management and health care information technology, healthcare quality, mental health and substance abuse, and health workforce.
- Homeland Security and Technology informs states of best practices in homeland security policy and implementation including bioterrorism, critical infrastructure protection, energy assurance, information sharing, intelligence and emergency management, and government use of information technology.
- Environment, Energy & Natural Resources conducts analysis of state and federal policies affecting environmental protection, air quality and greenhouse gases, transportation and land use, housing and community design, energy infrastructure, energy efficiency and renewable energy, water and coastal resources, brownfields, military bases, cleanup and stewardship of nuclear weapons sites, and working lands conservation.
- Social, Economic & Workforce Programs focuses on best practices, policy options, and service delivery improvements across a range of current and emerging issues, including economic development, workforce development, employment services, criminal justice, prisoner reentry, and social services for children, youth, low-income families and people with disabilities.



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