



Kentucky Literacy Link

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Special points of interest:

- Learn How to Build a School-wide Literacy Plan
- KDE Offers Webinars to Support Your Literacy Plan
- Ideas for Black History Month
- Peek into a Monroe County Classroom

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The Importance of a School-wide Literacy Plan

Literacy is the “foundation upon which academic learning and successful student performance depends” (Meltzer & Ziemba, 2006). We are striving to produce truly literate students — students who use reading, writing, listening and viewing, speaking and presenting, and critical thinking skills to learn and communicate. In order for schools to develop literate students, improvement must be a continuous goal led by the principal and a literacy leadership team.

To further this goal, in April 2007 Kentucky joined a 10-state Adolescent Literacy Network and received a grant from the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) to support the development of plans for a statewide adolescent literacy plan.

In 2010, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) re-

ceived funds from the U.S. Department of Education to create a state literacy team and develop a comprehensive birth through graduation literacy plan.

Kentucky’s [plan](#) includes guidance for districts and schools to develop literacy plans and is aligned to the *Literacy Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools (PERKS)*. Senate Bill 1’s emphasis on literacy creates a perfect opportunity for schools in Kentucky to develop school-wide literacy plans (one component of which would be the school-wide writing plan.)

Standard Nine in *Literacy PERKS* is the school literacy plan- Comprehensive and Effective Planning. It says, “The school/district develops, implements, and evaluates a comprehensive school improvement plan that communicates a clear purpose, direction, and action plan focused

on teaching and learning. Indicators in this standard relate to allocation of school resources that support literacy, input and implementation by stakeholders and use of data to name a few.”

When we focus on systemic development of literacy, all aspects of school are affected by the shift in thinking. When teachers and staff commit and buy in to the focus on literacy, the curriculum, instruction, assessment, policies and structures, resource allocation, teacher professional development, and school culture are all influenced. Although no one administrator can know or do all that is required in this area, a literacy team can and should. In this issue we offer resources for developing your literacy leadership team and your school-wide literacy plan.

Click [here](#) for a literacy plan template.

The Literacy Leadership Team

According to KDE’s *Literacy Plan for Kentucky: A Guide for Communities, Districts and Schools*, “the success of any school initiative is dependent on the buy-in and commitment of the teachers; therefore it is important that key representatives from the faculty be members of the literacy team.” *Literacy PERKS* suggests membership be comprised

of 6-8 members such as the library media specialist, a writing leader, literacy coach, a student (when age-appropriate), a school-based decision making (SBDM) member, a parent, representatives from various grades and/or content areas, early education and care providers (for elementary teams), and the principal. Together, this team

identifies the school’s strengths and areas of growth, establishes priorities and suggests resources and strategies to incite change.

The *Literacy Plan for Kentucky* lists four components of a working system: common goals, understanding literacy,

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Literacy Webinars

KDE periodically offers webinars to support literacy education in Kentucky. If you have never attended a webinar, it is an interactive presentation you can access from your computer or even your iPad. Think of it as attending a conference from the comfort of your own desk.

Previous webinars have covered everything from text complexity (May 2011) to effective feedback (January 2012). View past webinars and download necessary software to attend

future webinars by clicking [here](#).

In March we will be hosting a set of webinars to support district and school literacy planning and to introduce the scheduled release of the *Literacy Central* website. They are as follows:

Webinar I—Literacy Planning for School Improvement
March 8 & 13 3:30-4:30 p.m. ET

Webinar II—Literacy Planning for School Improvement Part 2 (Instruction & Intervention)
March 26 (3-4 p.m. ET) & 29 (3:30-4:30 p.m. ET)

Contact Cindy Parker at cindy.parker@education.ky.gov for more information on this set of webinars.



Literacy Central and Literacy PERKS

Literacy Central is an interactive website produced by KET and “housed” on KET [Teachers’ Domain](#). It is a user-friendly, engaging and easily accessible collection of literacy resources that include pdf files, documents, video segments, PowerPoints, links to courses, modules and other resources including the KDE main literacy page. The resources and tools in this collection are designed to assist literacy teams and educators in developing and

implementing effective literacy instruction through comprehensive planning and professional learning.

The literacy planning information is organized by the evidenced-based Elements of *Literacy Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools (Literacy PERKS)*. The elements are:

- Literacy Team and Plan
- Aligned Curriculum

- Instruction & Interventions
- Multiple Assessments
- Professional Learning
- Literate Environment
- Partnerships

“I really had a lot of dreams when I was a kid, and I think a great deal of that grew out of the fact that I had a chance to read a lot.”

-Bill Gates

Books for Babies

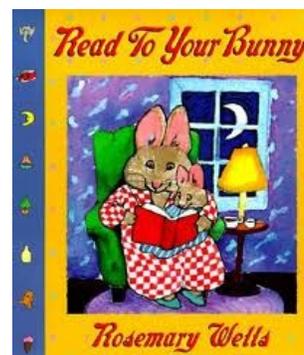
Babies’ brains grow rapidly. Reading to babies right from birth stimulates their minds, develops language skills and lays a foundation for later reading success. Babies grow into children who love to read when they experience the warmth and pleasure of cuddling with parents and listening to nursery rhymes and stories. Reading early and often to babies helps develop skills that lead to a lifetime of reading enjoyment. Babies and books belong to-

gether.

The Books for Babies project began through the Hardin County school system on January 1, 2002. Every baby born at Hardin Memorial Hospital receives a copy of *Read to Your Bunny* by Rosemary Wells. It is a small paperback book that tells parents of the importance of reading to their child for 20 minutes a day. The purpose of this initiative is to educate new parents of the importance of

language development and early literacy beginning at birth. The success of this initiative is two fold. First, based on the feedback the hospital receives from families, the book is well received, usable and appreciated. Second, the initiative has not only educated the families of the importance of literacy, it also has educated parents to the fact that reading early in a child’s life helps develop skills that

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The Literacy Leadership Team

co-learning and professional growth.

Common Goals

The literacy team must establish common goals before addressing issues that need change. It needs to set forth a vision that everyone can support. What would a successful literacy initiative look like? What would learners be doing? What would teachers, staff, parents and community members be doing to promote literacy? What would literate environments look like in and out of school?

Understanding Literacy

Team members must understand literacy and the key components of an effective program. Everyone must recognize literacy as the essential foundational skill for learning in all content areas and establish literacy instruction as the priority. Teachers need to see how literacy is central to their interests or goals as teachers and they need to feel comfortable

enough to try new strategies to support the literacy plan. The commitment of the literacy team to the vision is key in providing the necessary support to colleagues on the team and in the greater school community.

Co-learning

Teams must be willing to learn and grow together to accomplish a common goal. When they understand schools as a place where both teachers and students learn, they empower the entire school community to be energized and focused. In *Literacy Plans for Kentucky Schools: A KDE and KRA Position Statement*, the literacy team members are called “lead learners” and are expected to participate in professional development alongside teachers and then provide follow-up sessions to direct the implementation and integration of new ideas into the building. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) need to be established to support the co-learning component.

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Professional Growth

To support the co-learning, team members need to participate in appropriate professional development. The literacy plan should include a multi-year approach to professional learning to avoid the potential for isolated or short-term initiatives that comes with single-year professional development. To assist literacy teams with this process, KDE has a set of professional learning modules in each element of *Literacy PERKS* (available [here](#).)

Taken from a PowerPoint prepared by Cindy Parker and Saundra Hamon. For more information, plan to attend the webinars discussed on page 2, see the resource section of this newsletter or contact [Cindy Parker](#) or [Saundra Hamon](#).



**“To read is to fly:
it is to soar to a
point of vantage
which gives a
view over wide
terrains of
history, human
variety, ideas,
shared
experience and
the fruits of
many inquiries.”
- A C Grayling,
*Financial Times***

Books for Babies

support school and life success. Hardin County AM Rotary Club and the Cecilian Bank sponsor the project. Approximately 1,650 books are given away every year to new families. Reading just 20 minutes per day to children will put them on the road to success.

Carlena A. Sheeran,
Director of Early Childhood

Books for Babies is a collaborative project with Hardin County Schools Early Childhood Program.

Editor’s Note:

The *Books for Babies* program is a prime example of what literacy should look like from birth to age 5 as described by *Literacy PERKS*. It recognizes the necessity of parental involvement in their child’s literacy development, teaching parent’s how important it is to engage children in high-quality interactions that promote engagement and conversation through songs, rhymes and stories and to provide opportunities to explore literacy materials.

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Comprehensive literacy planning in schools should connect to birth to age 5 programs like this to ensure children are school-ready. Kudos to Hardin County!



Black History Month

Celebrate Black History Month by taking part in the National African American Read-In. Sponsored by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and NCTE and endorsed by the International Reading Association, the goal is to document readers making the celebration of African-American literacy a traditional part of Black History Month activities.

The national director has extended the African American Read-In for the entire month of February, beginning on Wednesday, February 1 and ending on Wednesday, February 29.

Schools, churches, libraries, bookstores, community and professional organizations, and interested citizens can make literacy a significant part of

Black History Month by hosting and coordinating community Read-Ins.

Hosting a Read-In can be as simple as bringing together family and friends to share a book or as elaborate as arranging public readings and media presentations that feature professional African-American writers.

To be counted as a participant, simply:

- Select books authored by African Americans.
- Conduct your Read-In(s) on the days designated.
- Report your results by submitting the African American Read-In Host Report Card at <http://www.ncte.org/action/aari/report>.

Suggested activities:

- storytelling
- poetry readings
- dramatic presentations
- translation of works by African-American writers
- discussions of student-selected works
- audiotapes and videotapes or literary works
- readings by parents, neighbors and community members



Information courtesy of <http://www.readwritethink.org/>.

Effective Practices for Teachers of English Learners

The Kentucky System of Interventions (KSI) establishes a system that focuses on three tiers of interventions, beginning with Tier 1 and core instruction for all students, then progressing through more strategic, targeted interventions based on student need in Tier 2, to intensive interventions in Tier 3. English learners must be included in the KSI, and assessing and monitoring the progress of English learners to ensure that they receive the level of intervention identified through ongoing assessment is essential. But what is often missing from this discussion is an awareness of what effective Tier 1 core instruction for English learners looks like. What are the most effective

teacher practices for teachers of English learners? In the article *Response to Intervention and English Learners* (Echevarria & Hasbrouck, 2009), the authors identify six strategies that are essential for effective instruction of English learners. In this brief article, I want to focus on just one of those practices, vocabulary development.

Systematic Language Development for English Learners

Vocabulary development is necessary for English learners in all four domains: reading, writing, listening and speaking. It is important to understand, however, that for English learners, vocabulary can be separated into several distinct groups or levels. Level 1 vocabulary

words are those concrete words that English learners know in their first language and simply must learn the translation of in English. Examples are the words *butterfly* or *uncle*. Level 1 words include simple, easily demonstrable words such as *march* and simpler idioms such as “take a seat.”

Providing brief explanations, or a bilingual dictionary for older English learners who are literate in their first language, is an easy way to assist English learners with Level 1 vocabulary.

Level 2 vocabulary words are those words that are more complex and abstract. These



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Classroom Spotlight: Monroe County Middle School

Standards Addressed:

- RL.2, 3, 4, 6, 10
- W.3, 4, 5, 6
- L.1, 3, 4, 6

Other Connections:

- 4Cs of 21st-century learning (collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking)

At Monroe County Middle School, 7th-grade teachers Joni Turner and Katresa Collins collaborated recently on an Edgar Allan Poe project. In Turner's reading class, students read *The Telltale Heart*, *Annabel Lee*, *The Black Cat* and *The Raven*. In Collins' English class, the students completed a Poe webquest. The webquest gave them three choices of projects to complete:

- Create a brochure in which they included Poe facts, a story summary, and located literary elements

in the story and gave those examples along with which literary element it was.

- Create a radio show (podcast) in which they turned one of the stories read in class into a dramatic presentation. They had to write a script and then present it in the form of old-time radio show. (Radio shows were listened to prior to beginning the project.)
- Create their own story. It had to be Poe-like (i.e., with murder, mayhem), and they had to present it as a photo story using Microsoft PhotoStory3. They downloaded pictures and music from the Internet to make their stories more interesting.

The students loved completing the projects. They were very

excited to work on the computers and use different technologies for their projects. (i.e. podcasting and PhotoStory3.) Collins said, "They were excited when it was complete and I shared some with the class. They really enjoyed the fact that it was okay to make noise in class (sound effects) for their projects."

While many students worked together, some students chose to complete an individual project with the brochure. According to Collins, the grades were good overall — much better than simply writing an assignment. Boys really excelled at this project. Many who struggled with other writings received high grades in this assignment. Several students asked if they could save it to a flash drive to take it home and show their parents.



Katresa Collins is a 7th-grade English teacher at Monroe County Middle School. She has taught English/language arts at the middle school level for the past six years.

Joni Turner is the 7th-grade reading teacher at Monroe County Middle and has been teaching for the past 12 years.

Effective Practices

words have multiple meanings, depending on context and academic content. For example, the words *character*, *setting* and *plot* are content words related to English/language arts, but their meanings shift in other contexts. The word *plot* in the math classroom takes on an entirely different meaning than it does in an English/language arts classroom. Think about how confusing this could be to an English learner. Prepositions, including such words as *among* and *between*, are also examples of Level 2 vocabulary words. Teachers can systematically and intentionally pre-teach Tier 2 words for English learners.

Level 3 vocabulary words comprise content-specific academic

vocabulary that is often unique to a particular discipline. Examples from science include *isotope* and *amoeba*. Examples from social studies include words such as *democracy*, *geopolitical* or *government*. In order for English learners to acquire this Level 3 content vocabulary, teachers can be intentional in teaching these words and then providing meaningful contexts in which students apply these words in writing, reading, speaking and listening. While all students need support to learn vocabulary, "for English learners, vocabulary development should be an intentional goal of every lesson." (Echavarria & Hasbrouck, 2009)

(continued from p. 4)

- Jayne Kraemer, Ph.D.
Title III Consultant, English Learners & Immigrant Students

References:

Echavarria, J. &. (2009). Response to intervention and English learners.
<http://www.cal.org/create/resources/pubs/CREATEBriefResponseToIntervention.pdf>

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/content/vocabulary/>

"I would define, in brief, the poetry of words as the rhythmic creation of Beauty."

-Edgar Allan Poe



Kentucky System of Interventions

The Kentucky System of Intervention (KSI) is a framework for providing systematic, comprehensive services to address academic and behavioral needs for all students, preschool through grade 12. By addressing individual students' academic and behavioral needs we are preparing students to be college- and career-ready.

KSI is a multi-tiered model. In Tier 1, all students receive highly effective, evidence-based, developmentally appropriate academic and behavior instruction within the general education classroom. In addition to the core instruction in Tier 1, students in Tier 2 or beyond receive increasingly intensive academic and/or behavioral instruction matched to their needs based on results of con-

tinuous progress monitoring. Tier 2 or beyond provides targeted interventions for students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum as well as students exceeding the standards. For students exceeding the standards, some form of enhancement in the area of strength is needed to provide further challenges that are appropriately differentiated for pace, content and complexity. It is important to note that differentiated instruction in Tier 1 is just "good teaching" and using best practice strategies. Differentiated instruction is not considered an intervention.

The *Pre-Referral Intervention Manual (Third Edition)* is a resource that provides over 500 pages of intervention strategies

and activities that address specific student responses in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and behavior. Here is the full citation: McCarney, S. B., & Wunderlich, K. C. (2006). *Pre-referral intervention manual*. Columbia: Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc.

For additional information or questions please contact:
kim.willhoite@education.ky.gov or
april.pieper@education.ky.gov.



"The illiterate of the future will not be the person who cannot read. It will be the person who does not know how to learn."

-Alvin Toffler

A New Direction in Digital Learning: Recommendations from the Policy Report

Have you ever wondered how your school could implement some of the innovative practices used at Rocketship Academy, Carpe Diem or the School of One? These schools employ a "blended" model of learning in which students receive instruction both from their teachers and online.

Recently Tom Vander Ark and Brian Setser of Open Ed Solutions released a report that could pave the way for more online and blended learning opportunities for Kentucky students. *Digital Learning 2020: A Policy Report for Kentucky's Digital Future* suggests that KDE should shift its role from providing digital learning services to evaluating courses and providers. It also includes rec-

ommendations for funding, increasing student access to digital learning and the establishment of pilot programs. If the proposals in the report are adopted, schools and educators across Kentucky could receive the support needed to begin their own transformational blended and online instruction.

-Tara Rodriguez
Kentucky Virtual Schools
Office of District 180
Contact Tara at
tara.rodriguez@education.ky.gov.

You can access the report mentioned in this article [here](#).



CIITS Update

Kentucky's Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) continues to grow and become a more powerful tool for classroom teachers. It connects and supports the Unbridled Learning work in which we are all engaged. CIITS is an integrated system that brings together implementation of new standards, engaging student learning experiences, assessments for learning, data-driven decision-making

and differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs and maximize student learning growth and achievement. This technology platform supports highly-effective teaching and learning for every student, in every classroom throughout Kentucky.

If you haven't delved into CIITS or visited for a while, now's the time. You can access CIITS if you have a valid school e-mail

address in Infinite Campus. Go to the CIITS website at <https://ciits.kyschools.us> and follow the prompts to receive your login credentials. Once you log in, there are self-directed training materials and videos on the left side of the homepage to help you get started. Don't wait any longer. Give CIITS a try today!



Join us for Commissioner Holliday's 2nd Twitter Town Hall

The Kentucky Department of Education invites teachers, administrators, district staff, parents and other education stakeholders to submit questions for Commissioner Terry Holliday's second Twitter Town Hall

Wednesday, Feb. 15 from 4-5 p.m. ET. The Twitter Town Hall topics will be the 2012 General Assembly and KDE's legislative agenda. Questions can be tweeted both before Feb. 15 and during the live event from 4-5 p.m. ET. Use the hash tag **#AskDocH** to send questions.

If you don't have a Twitter account and would like to sign up for one, visit www.twitter.com. It's a free service and also offers apps for smartphones if you'd rather follow along off-PC/MAC.

The Twitter Town Hall also will be webcast live. If you would like to follow the Twitter Town Hall via live webcast, click [here](#). To listen and/or watch, you must have Windows Media Player installed on your workstation. Once Windows Media Player is installed, simply click on the appropriate link to hear audio-only or view the video with audio.

To install Windows Media Player on your device, please click the appropriate link below:

[Download the Windows version of Windows Media Player.](#)

[Download the Macintosh version of Windows Media Player.](#)

Commissioner Holliday looks forward to answering your questions on Feb. 15.

Professional Development Opportunity for Teams of K-12 ESL and Content Teachers

Differentiating Instruction in the Content Classroom Using WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards

- Presented by **WIDA (World Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium)** www.wida.us
- February 28 – Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort
or
- March 27 – Bowling Green Independent Schools Board Room, Bowling Green

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. local time
Sub Reimbursement Available

Just click on the link to register:

http://otl.education.ky.gov/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=WIDA_Workshop_Reg&-loadframes

Questions? Contact jayne.kraemer@education.ky.gov.





Help

Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov to submit. Your submissions may be included in the *Literacy Link* to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past *Literacy Links* on KDE's website:
[Click Here](#)



If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Renee Boss- Academic Core Branch Manager - renee.boss@education.ky.gov
- Cindy Parker - Literacy Coordinator - cindy.parker@education.ky.gov
- Kathy Mansfield- Library Consultant - kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov
- MK Hardaway- Literacy Consultant - kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov
- Jackie Rogers- Literacy Consultant - jackie.rogers@education.ky.gov
- Synthia Shelby- Literacy Consultant - synthia.shelby@education.ky.gov



Follow us on Twitter

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Join in the next KDE Tweetfest on February 28th. Use the #tweetfest hash tag when you tweet.

Feedback from the Field

While we enjoy tooting our own horns, it's certainly more fun when you do it for us. Here is some feedback we've received from the field. Thank you so much for reading and for taking the time to tell us about your experiences with the *Link*.

"You have been doing an outstanding job with this publication. Many of the articles have been useful with our KY Science Leadership Support Networks that we are facilitating as they work to implement the Content Literacy Standards."
- Kim Z.

"Thank you so much for including analysis of non-print sources as literacy. So often this is a forgotten skill of literacy."

-Michelle C.

Your Literacy Links are WONDERFUL! I've shared your links with other schools in our district, and they are so excited. :)

- Leigh Ann S.

Additional Reading and Other Resources

- ⇒ *Literacy Plan for Kentucky: A Guide for Communities, Districts and Schools* available [here](#).
- ⇒ *Literacy Plans for Kentucky Schools: A KDE and KRA Position Statement* available [here](#).
- ⇒ *Literacy PERKS* [information](#)
- ⇒ *Literacy PERKS* professional development available [here](#).
- ⇒ Find resources to evaluate your plan and professional development [here](#).
- ⇒ [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#)
- ⇒ [Program Review](#)

