



# The Golden State Literacy Plan



**GOVERNOR  
GAVIN NEWSOM**

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## Introduction

I come from a family surrounded by books. My father was devoted to reading, but I was constantly in his shadow. When I was in fifth grade, I found a stack of papers in my mother's office describing my poor academic performance and a word I'd not heard of before: dyslexia. In an instant, I had an answer for why I was forced to stay after school for additional instruction, and why it was so humiliating for me to read aloud in class. It took a long time, but I learned that failures can lead to discovery. As Winston Churchill once said, **we must move "from failure to failure with enthusiasm."** I now read thousands of words a day, for pleasure and knowledge, like my father once did.

Today, I'm proud to present the **Golden State Literacy Plan**, highlighting California's multi-year, step-by-step strategy for improving reading achievement in our schools. California's approach to literacy instruction is grounded in an understanding of research applicable to one of the most diverse and multilingual places on Earth: California.

While California, like all states, experienced setbacks during the pandemic, the state's progress in literacy since the adoption of our new curriculum framework has been noteworthy. Between 2011 and 2022, California's 8th grade reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress improved more than any other state in the nation. California was also one of three states that had the nation's most significant gains in 4th grade reading on NAEP over that decade. Furthermore, California was one of only a few states whose NAEP reading scores did not decline during the pandemic.

There is more work to be done to achieve reading success for all of our kids. Here's how we're doing it.

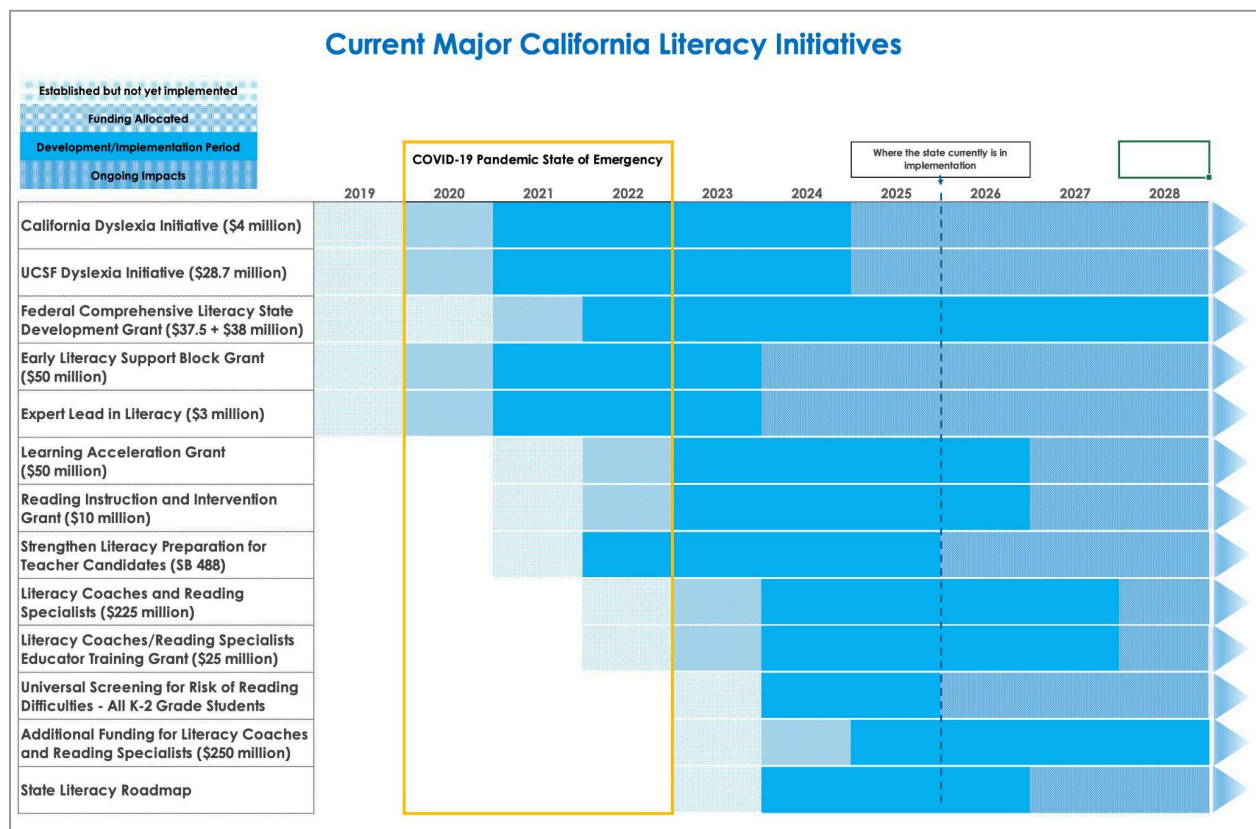
**Keep on reading,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Governor Gavin Newsom**

## California's Foundational Framework

California's research-based **English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework** is the state's evidence-based, foundational document to guide literacy instruction. It emphasizes foundational skills (print concepts/alphabeticity, phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, and reading fluency), oral language, writing, and comprehension, along with the vocabulary development and background knowledge needed to develop literacy for multilingual learners.



*Initiatives enacted and funded that are currently being implemented.*

## Literacy Initiatives

In recent years, the State has made significant investments in evidence-based literacy and professional learning to support the implementation of the ELA/ELD Framework. **These initiatives include:**



**Literacy Coaches:** To date, the State has invested a total of **\$500 million for Literacy Coaches** in the 2022 and 2023 Budget Acts. As of the current 2024-25 school year, 818 of the state's highest needs schools have been funded to hire and train literacy coaches and reading specialists. Additionally, more than 3,000 educators have participated in a state-funded professional learning series and are now able to apply that training in their classrooms this year. Educators and sites are supported by regional hubs that offer additional professional learning to literacy teams, covering more than 200 local educational agencies.



**Screeners for Reading Difficulties:** Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, California's kindergarten, first, and second grade students will be annually screened with newly approved tools for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, providing early identification and support for 1.2 million students. The 2024 Budget Act provided \$25 million to support educator training in administering literacy screenings. In fall 2024, the \$28.7 million state-funded Multitudes literacy screener developed by the University of California, San Francisco, became widely available for use by schools across the state. Significantly, this state-funded tool is the only **no-cost** option available to screen students in all of three required grades in Spanish as well as English.



**Teacher Education:** Well-prepared educators are essential to delivering high-quality literacy instruction. In addition to investing \$1.3 billion in recent years to recruit and retain quality educators, the State has also made the following strategic investments in strengthening teacher education in literacy instruction:

→ **Teacher Preparation:** In 2015, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing adopted teacher education standards aligned to the ELA/ELD Framework and further updated the literacy program

standards in 2022 to ensure their inclusion of evidence-based literacy instruction. In 2024, the Commission also strengthened the literacy assessment of teacher candidates.

- **Professional Development:** Through the Statewide System of Support, county offices of education offer professional development in literacy, with specializations for different age groups, ranging from PreK to secondary school, as well as for English learners and students with disabilities. Additional state funding has supported the Early Literacy Support Block Grant for low performing elementary schools (\$50 million); the California Subject Matter Projects, including the California Reading & Literature Project and the California Writing Project, which provide research-based, professional learning; and \$50 million Learning Acceleration System Grant, which provides free professional development in ELA, ELD and mathematics to educators throughout the state.



**Instructional Materials and Guidance:** The State has invested in several initiatives to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials and evidence-based literacy instruction, including:

- **Updated Instructional Materials Reflecting the Latest Research on Literacy:** The State Board of Education will adopt an updated list of evidence-based ELA/ELD instructional materials for grades K-8 if the proposed authorization in the Governor's 2025 budget is enacted. This will guide local adoptions and efforts to implement the curriculum framework.
- **Literacy Roadmap and Learning Progressions:** The California Department of Education (CDE) has published a "Professional Learning Pack" with two resources to support educators and education leaders, beginning in the 2025-26 school year, to improve literacy instruction and outcomes throughout the state, particularly for our youngest readers. Grounded in the ELA/ELD Framework, these resources describe evidence-based practices for learners by grade level and according to the continuum of literacy development:
  - ◆ **California Literacy Roadmap's Literacy Content Blocks for Transitional Kindergarten Through Grade Five (TK-5):** The

grade-specific Literacy Roadmap Content Blocks provide instructional recommendations that educators can use to support students as they develop across all areas of literacy. Resources for the upper grades and for multilingual contexts will be published in the 2025-26 school year.

- ◆ **Preschool Through Third Grade (P-3) Learning Progressions for Language and Literacy Development:** The P-3 Learning Progressions clarify important milestones for our youngest learners on their journey to reading by third grade.
- **English Learner Roadmap:** Multilingual learners have distinct literacy needs, including bridging from their home language to English, English vocabulary and comprehension development, and culturally relevant instruction. To ensure that the needs of multilingual learner students are met, the State Board of Education adopted the English Learner Roadmap, which provides guidance to local educational agencies on policy decisions and implementation of the state ELA/Literacy standards, ELD standards, and ELA/ELD Framework.
- **Dyslexia Guidance:** The California Dyslexia Guidelines offer guidance on identifying students with or at risk of dyslexia, as well as delivering evidence-based reading and writing instruction and targeted interventions to students with reading disabilities, including those with dyslexia.
- **Supporting English Learners with Disabilities:** The California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities provides information on identifying, assessing, supporting, and reclassifying multilingual learner students who may qualify for special education services.
- **State Literacy Plan:** Building on the previous federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant, the CDE recently updated the State Literacy Plan to support potential federal subgrants to literacy leads throughout the state.



**Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant:** The State has allocated a total of **\$6.8 billion for the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant (LREBG)** to support local educational agencies in addressing the academic and emotional impacts of the pandemic, including a focus on providing early intervention and literacy programs and increasing instructional learning time, as well as a needs assessments and requiring detail in Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) on the actions LEAs will take over the next three years with remaining LREBG funds to address, among other things, low ELA test scores.



**Early Education:** Research shows achievement gains in both literacy and math for students who have experienced high-quality early education. The State has made significant strides in expanding access to high-quality early education programs, including:

- **Universal Transitional Kindergarten (TK):** Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, California has increased access to TK for tens of thousands of four-year-olds, providing families with a year of free, high-quality pre-kindergarten education. It is anticipated that by fully funding universal access to TK, the state will provide pre-kindergarten to more than 300,000 additional four-year-olds (compared to the 2021-2022 school year).
- **Preschool Learning Foundations:** The California Preschool Learning Foundations have been updated to become the California Preschool/TK Learning Foundations, which detail the learning standards in all domains—including language and literacy—for young children.



**Before School, After School, and Summer School:** The **Expanded Learning Opportunities Program** offers instruction and enrichment for students in grades TK-6, focusing on local educational agencies with the highest concentrations of low-income students, English learners, and youth in foster care. After-school and summer programming include opportunities for high-impact tutoring.



**Accountability:** Beginning in 2024, all LEAs with very low performance in English Language Arts (ELA) at the LEA, school, and student group levels on the California School Dashboard must include specific actions within their Local Control and Accountability Plans that address the work they will undertake to address that low ELA performance.

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## Proposed Investments in Literacy Instruction – Governor’s Budget

The Governor’s Budget builds on the existing literacy initiatives and includes the following additional investments:

- **\$500 million** for **TK-12 Literacy and Mathematics Coaching**, which builds upon and expands the existing Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists Grant Program and includes a new opportunity to support mathematics coaching in addition to literacy coaches. Of these funds, \$250 million would specifically support literacy coaches and their training.
- **\$378.6 million** in additional **Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant** funding for LEAs to use for learning supports to address, among other things, low ELA test scores.
- **\$40 million** to support necessary costs, including purchasing screening materials and administering **literacy screenings** and other professional development to support literacy instruction.
- **\$25 million** to launch **Literacy and Mathematics Networks** within the Statewide System of Support to support implementation of state reading and mathematics initiatives, serve as a clearinghouse for state-developed literacy and mathematics resources, and elevate high-performing districts and best practices.
- Directs the Instructional Quality Commission to initiate an adoption for ELA/ELD **instructional materials**.
- **\$1.7 billion** (cost estimate updated at May Revision) for the Student Support and Discretionary Block Grant, which prioritizes **professional development** for teachers on the ELA/ELD Framework and the Literacy Roadmap.



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- **\$2.1 billion** (inclusive of all prior years' investments; cost estimate updated at May Revision) to support the full implementation of **universal TK**, so that all children who turn four years old by September 1 of the school year can enroll in TK. The Budget also provides an additional \$1.2 billion to support lowering the average student-to-adult ratio from 12:1 to 10:1 in every TK classroom.
  - **\$525.5 million** (cost estimate updated at May Revision) to cover the cost of full implementation of the **Expanded Learning Opportunities Program** and increase minimum grant amounts for small LEAs, increasing the total ongoing funding for before, after school and summer school to \$4.5 billion. This funding will provide students with enrichment and academic opportunities outside the regular school day.
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### **In addition, the Governor's May Revision includes:**

- **\$200 million** one-time Proposition 98 General Fund to support **evidence-based professional learning in literacy** instruction for elementary school teachers, aligned with the ELA/ELD Framework.
- **\$10 million** one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for a county office of education to partner with the University of California, San Francisco Dyslexia Center to **support the expansion of the Multitudes reading difficulties screening tool in additional languages.**
- Authority for the California Department of Education to draw down funding awarded through the **federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant** to leverage and expand existing statewide infrastructure, resources, and expertise to bring coherence to the state's system of literacy supports and improve student outcomes over a period of five years.