

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Handbook for Literacy Coaches

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State Operated Programs

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## Let's Get Started!

A few tips to help you begin your adventure as a Literacy Coach in State Operated Programs...

1. Contact Sandra McLaughlin to receive a STAR account. (804-732-3803 ext. 115 or [smclaughlin@pgs.k12.va.us](mailto:smclaughlin@pgs.k12.va.us))
2. Contact Laurie Cooper to discuss individual training on using STAR. (540-604-3935 or [laurie.cooper@charlottesvilleschools.org](mailto:laurie.cooper@charlottesvilleschools.org))
3. Create a daily schedule.
  - a. Include meeting with teachers, one-on-one training, time for testing and preparation of professional development opportunities. Also make sure to set aside time to do research for reading and teaching initiatives.
4. Contact your mentor.
  - a. Set up meetings and plan to visit their center for an introduction.
5. Meet with your principal and create a literacy plan.
  - a. See Page 7 for Literacy Plan Guidelines and Purpose.
6. Visit classrooms to become familiar with your program. Also make time to build positive relationships with students and teachers.
7. Read the book, "*Meeting the Challenge of Adolescent Literacy: Practical Ideas for Literacy Leaders* by Judith Irvin, Julie Meltzer, Marth Jan Mickler, Melvina Phillips, and Nancy Dean.

# **State Operated Programs Literacy Handbook**

## **Role of a Literacy Coach**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide Literacy Coaches with a working document that will guide practice in the many roles they assume while working to improve literacy in State Operated Programs (SOP). Because differences exist between facilities, individual Literacy Coaches will implement these guidelines differently. Your role may include other duties as assigned by your local administration. It is our hope that you will adapt this handbook as needed for use in your center.

Additional resources can be found on the SOP website:  
[www.stateoperatedprograms.org](http://www.stateoperatedprograms.org).

# **Job Description - Literacy Coach/Reading Specialist**

**TITLE:**

Literacy Coach/Reading Specialist, Juvenile Detention Home

**LEVEL:**

Teacher Salary Scale

**POSITION DESCRIPTION:**

To work with the principal and faculty to determine the school's strengths and challenges in the area of literacy in order to improve students' reading, writing, and communication skills and content area achievement; work with teachers individually or in a collaborative team to provide a full range of reading, writing, and communication strategies; observe and provide feedback to teachers on instruction related to literacy development; remain current with scientific based reading research (SBRR); provide professional development to teachers in order to enhance students' reading, writing, and communication skills; model integration of literacy strategies and best practices; administer standardized assessments in reading and mathematics.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Master's Degree in Education
- VA teaching endorsement as a Reading Specialist, Special Education, or related field.
- History of successful teaching (especially in area of reading) with at-risk learners.
- Effective organization and administrative management skills, including use of technology.
- Experience and/or enthusiasm about peer leadership opportunities and professional development.

## **PRIMARY DUTIES INCLUDE:**

- To stay current with educational research as it relates to literacy development.
- To summarize and disseminate the key concepts from this research to the faculty at regular intervals.
- To incorporate SBBR best-practices into the instructional model.
- To administer pre- and post-tests in the areas of reading and mathematics to all enrolled students.
- To distribute assessment data to the teaching staff in a usable, organized, and electronic format.
- To deliver Professional Development (PD) to teachers at regular intervals and attending PD as appropriate.
- To model integration of literacy strategies and best practices.
- To foster a school-wide climate of literacy and learning.
- To provide support for teachers as they work to enhance the reading writing, and communication skills of students.
- To provide targeted and aggressive remediation to students in the greatest need
- To encourage and support opportunities for the independent literacy development of students outside school hours.
- To model lessons, team-teach, find resources, promote reading strategies and literacy initiatives.
- To support and enhance, not supplant, classroom instruction.

# Literacy Plan

Literacy Coaches will develop a yearly school level literacy plan outlining goals and objectives that will meet the needs of students, teachers, and administrators during the upcoming school year.

## Definition of a Literacy Plan:

A literacy plan sets up a blueprint at a specific school for improving student motivation, engagement, and achievement in the area of literacy. The literacy plan includes goals that are set by SOP for all facilities and coaches as well as more tailored goals set by a coach, principal, and/or literacy team at the school level. It takes into account the school personnel, student population, current data, scheduling, available resources, needs for remediation, areas of strength, and areas of weakness. The plan is most effective when written at the local school level because it takes into account all of the details that make each facility unique. It will be written by a team because many of these areas extend beyond the scope of what a Literacy Coach can or should accomplish alone. The Literacy Coach refers to the literacy plan to ensure he/she is accomplishing tasks that align with the school's goals.

The document directs practices in three key areas: leadership and school structure, strengthening literacy development across the content areas, and setting up literacy interventions for struggling readers and writers. The ultimate goal of all these is to create a school wide literacy vision that inspires faculty and motivates students into becoming competent readers, writers, thinkers, and speakers.

## Steps to Creating a Literacy Plan:

1. **Examine Current Culture of Literacy.** Complete a literacy assessment such as a literacy capacity survey or conduct informal literacy walkthroughs. (Examples can be found in the Appendices of *Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle School Principals* and *Meeting the Challenge of Adolescent Literacy: Practical Ideas for Literacy Leaders*).
2. **Create a Literacy Team.** Assemble and meet with a literacy leadership team. At a minimum, this will include the principal and the Literacy Coach. Depending on the size of your facility, this could also include the English teacher and any other teachers who are highly motivated to create change. Establishing a team approach toward literacy from the beginning helps open the doors to communication and accountability about literacy goals. The team is responsible for reviewing data, applying the latest research, and creating an action plan.
3. **Write a Literacy Plan.** As a team, use the information gathered in Step 1 to set goals and write your school's literacy plan. The team can use a set of questions to help

structure the plan. Examples of questions can be found below or in Appendix 3 of the book *Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle School and High School Principals*.

4. **Continue to Meet as a Literacy Team.** The plan should include a schedule of regular meeting times to monitor progress through data and observations.

## Questions for the Literacy Committee

As the literacy team begins to create the literacy plan, here are some questions to guide discussion.

- Leadership and School Structure:
  - Who will be on the literacy team and what will be the role of each person?
  - What specific needs does the facility have in relation to literacy?
  - What are the school's literacy goals? How do these goals align with the school's goals?
  - How will the staff be encouraged to support the school-wide literacy initiative?
  - How does the school schedule support literacy and how could it be improved?
    - Does the school schedule allow for collaborative conversations between teachers about literacy?
    - Does the school schedule allow time for reading remediation?
  - How does the entire facility support literacy beyond the school day? (Library, reading at night, clubs, etc.)
    - What could be improved?
- Strengthening Literacy Development Across the Content Areas:
  - What are the needs of the staff in relation to reading in the content areas?
  - What professional development is needed to support teachers?
  - How will the Literacy Coach ensure follow up and implementation of new strategies throughout the year?
  - What are some of the unique features of the facility that make developing reading across the content areas more difficult or easier? How will these items be addressed? For example, teachers who are new, teach more than one subject, or are only part time will affect professional development.
- Setting Up Literacy Interventions for Struggling Readers and Writers:
  - How will students be identified as struggling in reading and writing? (This should include the STAR, but could have additional measurement items added.)
  - How will remediation be provided for these students?

## Literacy Plan Resources:

1. *Meeting the Challenge of Adolescent Literacy: Practical Ideas for Literacy Leaders* by Judith Irvin, Julie Meltzer, Marth Jan Mickler, Melvina Phillips, and Nancy Dean.
2. *The Literacy Coaching Challenge: Models and Methods for Grades K-8* by Michael C McKenna and Sharon Walpole
3. *Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals* by the National Association of Secondary School Principals
4. *Taking Action on Adolescent Literacy* by Judith L. Irvin, Julie Meltzer and Melinda S. Dukes
5. *Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals.*  
[http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/Culture\\_of\\_Literacy.pdf](http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/Culture_of_Literacy.pdf)

# Assessment

## Purpose for Testing

- To provide pre and post testing data to the State of Virginia and United States Departments of Education for accountability and compliance with the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Title I, Part D, Subpart I, Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk.
- To provide data for Literacy Coaches, principals, and teachers in each facility to drive instruction and lesson planning.
- To provide data for parents, students, and LEAs (Local Education Agency).

## Required Information for STAR Test

- First Name
- Last Name
- User Name (STAR will generate upon registration)
- Password
- Input SIS Number as ID
- Gender
- Grade
- Date of Birth

NOTE: Be sure to click “Extended Time” located in “Preferences” for all students. You must check this twice; once under STAR Enterprise Math and once under STAR Enterprise Reading.

## When to STAR Test

- Literacy Coach should strive to test students as soon as possible after school enrollment.
- Literacy Coach should strive to have a set time in their daily schedule to administer STAR testing to new students.
- Students should be retested every thirty (30) school days.
- Students should not be administered the STAR test a second time if the initial GE score is 12<sup>th</sup> or above. Students should also not be given the STAR more than five times in one school year.

## Results of STAR Test

- Literacy Coach will debrief with students immediately after testing to review scores and discuss STAR test results.
  - Diagnostic Report, Instructional Planning Student Report, etc.

- Literacy Coach will make available to the faculty the results of the STAR test.
  - Helpful reports: Diagnostic Report, Instructional Planning Student Report, Instructional Planning Class Report, or a self-made spreadsheet
- A. Mail the Diagnostic Report to the parent or guardian (along with parent cover letter).
- B. Place one copy of the student's Diagnostic Report into the student's school file.
- C. Analyze STAR results to determine if reading intervention is needed (See Remediation on Page 13).
  - a. Diagnostic Report, Instructional Planning Student Report, etc.

## **STAR Test Reports**

1. Diagnostic Report – Presents scores and skill information for an individual student. Review this report with the student after initial testing. Place a copy in student's school file and mail a copy home with parent cover letter.
2. Instructional Planning Student Report – Provides list of recommended skills for individualized instruction based on most recent assessment.
3. Instructional Planning Class Report – Provides list of recommended skills for a class or group of students based on the most recent assessment.
4. Annual Progress Report – Graphs student's scores over a period of time. Print this report to review results with students after each retest.
5. Parent Cover Letter – Mail this letter along with the student's diagnostic and instructional planning report to the parent. This cover letter is written by the Literacy Coach (See example below).

**New Literacy Coaches should contact Sandra McLaughlin to obtain a STAR account. (804-732-3803 ext. 115 or smclaughlin@pgs.k12.va.us)**

ALL questions and/or problems with the STAR program should be directed to Ms. McLaughlin.

## **Example of Parent Letter:**

**Bolingbroke Center  
Education Program  
1234 State Road, Central, Virginia 22000  
(804-123-4567)**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

All students living at the \_\_\_\_\_ Juvenile Detention Center attend school so they can continue their education. As part of our effort to promote student progress, the teachers provide extra help in the areas of reading/language arts and math.

When students are enrolled in the Education Program, they are given tests to see how well they are doing in math and reading. Based on the students' scores, they may be given extra help in math and/or reading/language arts either individually or in a small group. These test scores are also used to assist your child's teachers in providing the best possible instruction for your child while s/he is enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ .

Attached you will find a report indicating the results of your child's assessment in math and reading. These scores give information on your child's strengths and challenges in the areas tested. A copy of this testing will be sent to your child's home school as part of his/her re-enrollment package.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the enclosed test results, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Anne Shirley  
Literacy Coach

Gilbert Blythe  
Principal

## Remediation

Once students have taken the STAR Test, the Literacy Coach will identify students who are in need of remediation. This can be done through further assessment by the Literacy Coach. Some tools for further assessing students might include:

- *Word Journeys* by Kathy Ganske
- [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)
- Leveled text sets (created by many different publishers)
- *Words Their Way*
- Qualitative Reading Inventory (or other informal reading inventory)

Remediation of students can take several different forms depending on the level of the student, the facility, and the population of the students.

- Meet with teachers to make sure they have appropriately leveled materials and supplies for the lowest students.
- Coordinate with all teachers and staff to make sure that students struggling with reading in class can achieve success.
- “Push in” to work in content classes with students.
- Pull students out of class to do one-on-one or small group interventions.
- Collaborate with special education teacher to make sure all accommodations and disabilities are understood and acted upon.
- Continue to monitor progress and reassess as needed.

# Professional Development

There are two types of professional development (PD). There is PD that you will deliver as a coach and PD that you will attend. These two types work together in a beautiful circle, because the PD that you attend will create, in some ways, the PD that you deliver.

## **As a Literacy Coach, some key elements of professional development will be to:**

- Provide staff development related to literacy (reading, writing, speaking, research, vocabulary, and listening).
- Implement school-wide strategies to meet literacy goals.
- Work collaboratively with administrators and instructional staff.
- Attend conferences and professional meetings and then present research on best literacy practices.
- Disseminate information from journals, publications, and webinars.
- Lead staff discussion groups to clarify instructional goals and practices.
- Encourage and facilitate the development of professional learning communities (PLCs) and teacher study groups.
- Facilitate outside experts (either paid consultants or district specialists) to present a specific topic to education staff.
- Continue on-going collaboration and support that reinforces new skills learned in one-on-one and small group meetings.
- Provide and maintain documentation from meetings with other teachers.

## **Events that may require specific professional development:**

1. Addition of new staff.
2. Introduction of new program or instructional model.
3. A request from a teacher or group of teachers.

## **Examples for Professional Development:**

1. *Project Criss: Creating Independence through Student-Owned Strategies* by Carol Santa, Lynn Haven and Bonnie Valdes
1. *Creating Literacy-Rich Schools for Adolescents* by Gay Ivey and Douglas Fisher
2. *Power Tools for Adolescent Literacy: Strategies for Learning* by Jan Rozzelle and Carol Scarce
3. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning* by Doug Buehl

# Resources

## Research and Professional Organizations

1. American Library Association (ALA)
  - a. [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)
  - b. Provides a voice for excellence in school libraries by, among other goals, promoting literacy and a love of literature. The ALA offers a variety of resources for libraries and their users and sponsors Teen Read Week and Banned Book Week.
  - c. Divisions include the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa) and the Virginia Association of School Librarians (VAASL) [www.vaasl.org](http://www.vaasl.org)
2. Alliance For Excellent Education
  - a. <http://all4ed.org/>
  - b. National policy, research and advocacy organization. Divisions include the Adolescent Literacy Initiative with current articles, reports, fact sheets and webinars.
3. Center for the Book in the Library of Congress
  - a. [www.read.gov](http://www.read.gov)
  - b. Uses the Library of Congress to promote literacy, libraries, and reading in general, as well as an understanding of the history and heritage of American literature. Projects include the National Book Festival and affiliates in all 50 states.
  - c. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities Center for the Book <http://virginiahumanities.org/bookcenter/>
4. International Reading Association (IRA)
  - a. [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
  - b. Supports literacy professionals with resources, professional development activities and by advancing the quality of literacy instruction and research. Units and lesson plans are provided through IRA Bridges and ReadWriteThink.org.
  - c. The Virginia State Reading Association (VSRA) [www.vsra.org](http://www.vsra.org) seeks to further the mission and goals of the International Reading Association in Virginia; they sponsor a yearly conference.
5. Kansas University Center for Research on Learning ( KUCRL)
  - a. [www.ku-crl.org](http://www.ku-crl.org)
  - b. The KUCRL studies problems in education and works to place solutions that make a difference into the hands of educators, learners (especially focusing

on those who experience barriers to success). Divisions include Advanced Learning Technologies (ALTEC), the Institute for Research on Adolescent Learning, and the Professional Development Research Institute.

6. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
  - a. [www.ncte.org/](http://www.ncte.org/)
  - b. Supports educators in English studies, literacy and language arts. Resources include journal articles, lesson plans, web seminars and the Literacy in Learning Exchange.
  
7. National Education Association (NEA)
  - a. [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)
  - b. Professional educators' organization with affiliate organizations in every state. Lesson plans, teaching strategies and journal articles are accessible without becoming a registered user. Read Across America is a yearly event that uses Dr. Seuss to encourage literacy.
  
8. Reading is Fundamental
  - a. [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)
  - b. **Largest children's literacy nonprofit in the United States.** Although the priority is providing free books to underserved children from birth-8, the website also contains research reports and Leading to Reading- a website with engaging activities and events for students up to 15 years old.
  
9. Neglected and Delinquent
  
10. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

## Book Vendors

1. Delaney Books
  - a. Contact information: Laura Brawley (laurabrawley@msn.com)
2. O'Brien Associates
  - a. Contact information: [www.obrienassociates.com](http://www.obrienassociates.com);  
info@obrienassociates.com; 1-800-340-7312
  - b. This is a Richmond based company that represents many publishers including Benchmark, Developmental Studies Center, Capstone, Rosen, and Rourke. O'Brien has created leveled text collections for social studies, science and math that are correlated to the Standards of Learning. They are also willing to show you samples of any of these books or send you catalogues with books that may work for your facility.
3. First Book
  - a. Contact information: <http://www.firstbook.org/>