



**Northgate School District**  
**Comprehensive Local**  
**Literacy Plan**

# Pennsylvania District Comprehensive Local Literacy Plan (CLLP)

Northgate School District  
591 Union Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Literacy Plan provided our local writers with a research based framework to expand our understanding of literacy, guide the development of our local plan and prioritize our action steps necessary to improve literacy, birth through grade 12. Working with educators from early childhood through high school to develop this plan, provided all members with a much broader perspective and appreciation of everyone's role and responsibility in improving literacy and how immensely significant early language development is to literacy development for all children. We also acknowledge and thank those teachers, administrators, and community leaders for their time, insight, and significant contributions to the writing of this plan. Lastly, we appreciate the partnerships that have been established that go beyond the walls of our classrooms and reach out to our community and parents, as we all must work diligently together to ensure all of our children become literate and contributing adults.

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## **Section I: Literacy Plan Team**

### Membership

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ Brenda Crosby     | Early Childhood 3-5        |
| ➤ Beverly Mannion   | Early Childhood Birth to 3 |
| ➤ Susan Emery       | K-5                        |
| ➤ Carol Protch      | K-5                        |
| ➤ Dawn Egger        | 6-8                        |
| ➤ Ruth Smith        | 6-8                        |
| ➤ Elizabeth Wells   | 9-12                       |
| ➤ Ruth Strasser     | K-12                       |
| ➤ Barbara Gusew     | Parent                     |
| ➤ Richard McMonagle | Community Representative   |
| ➤ Rania Sullivan    | Community Representative   |

## Keystones to Opportunity

### Timeline

#### **Process and Timeline for Developing Northgate's Comprehensive Local Literacy Plan**

##### **September 27, 2012**

- **Review template**
- **Assign authors**
- **Compose literacy mission statement, vision statement, and narrative**
- **Develop narratives for Guiding Principles 1,2, and 3**
- **Distribute KtO Needs Assessment**

##### **October 18, 2012**

- **Develop narratives for Guiding Principles 4 and 5**
- **Using KtO Needs Assessment, draw conclusions, and complete chart for Standards and Curriculum and Assessment**

##### **November 15, 2012**

- **Using KtO Needs Assessment, draw conclusions and complete chart for the following areas: Instruction; Professional Learning and Practice; Literacy Leadership, Goals and Sustainability**

##### **January 3, 2013**

- **Using KtO Needs Assessment, draw conclusions and complete chart for the following areas:  
Transitions and partnerships**

##### **February 14, 2013**

- **Setting and Prioritizing Goals**

##### **March 21**

- **Dissemination of Plan and Assessing and Reporting Progress**

## **Section II: Mission and Vision Statements**

### **Northgate School District's Vision Statement**

The Northgate School District's vision statement is to provide exemplary educational opportunities to its students in the pursuit of excellence.

### **Northgate School District's Mission Statement**

The mission of the Northgate School District is to provide each student with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to the maximum of his or her potential through a challenging comprehensive program administered in a safe, caring environment so that each person will succeed and contribute as an ethical, responsible citizen in a rapidly changing global society.

### **Northgate's Literacy Vision Statement**

All children in the Northgate School District community, from birth through Grade 12, will become well-educated, literate citizens. Each will gain the ability to locate, evaluate, and communicate using a wide range of resources that prepares them for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and enables them to achieve their personal and professional goals.

### **Northgate's Literacy Mission Statement**

The Northgate School District recognizes that literacy is the responsibility of all school personnel including administrators, teachers of all disciplines, parents, caretakers, community members, public librarians, etc. Northgate's Comprehensive Literacy Plan will guide and support the implementation of an integrated, aligned, and comprehensive set of literacy experiences for children and students. The plan will initiate and sustain the essential evidence

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based practices of literacy and the processes by which all those responsible for children's literacy will facilitate that learning in a coherent and consistent manner.

### **Points of Consideration**

- Why do we need a literacy plan?
- Are our mission and vision statements congruent with those in the PaCLP?
- How do our mission and vision statements connect?
- What is the connection of other district initiatives and our plan?
- How will we recognize when other initiatives are supportive or contentious, and how will we handle it?



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We believe that Northgate's Comprehensive Literacy Plan's vision and mission statements closely align with that of the Commonwealth's Comprehensive Literacy Plan as well as with the district's vision and mission statements. We recognize that our efforts for improving literacy for all children has not achieved the level of success we desire, and we believe that a well designed literacy plan will provide all stakeholders with the skills, tools, and knowledge to accomplish our literacy goals. District initiatives such as RTII, Differentiated Instruction, Relevance, Rigor and Relationships, School Wide Positive Behavior Supports, and Classrooms for the Future correlate well with this Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The goal of all of these initiatives is to maximize student achievement and create environments that ensure learning. When other initiatives are introduced, district administrators and other literacy leaders within the district will review the district's literacy vision and mission statements to ascertain if they support or deter the efforts put forth in this plan to improve literacy for all Northgate children. The literacy development of all children must be prioritized at the highest level to prepare children to live, work, and prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and literacy leaders must advocate strongly to keep it there.

## Section III: Guiding Principles

- 1. Literacy is a critical foundation for all learning and serves as a “keystone” for opportunity and success. The Standards for literacy must promote high level learning for all students to ensure that they are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Because literacy is an important skill in itself and serves as a tool for learning, it is essential at all levels (Birth-Grades 12). Moreover, to enhance literacy learning of students, there must be shared responsibility of educators, parents and caretakers, and the broader community.**

To meet the ever increasing literacy demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, high school graduates must be able to read and comprehend challenging content and apply their reading to problem solve to be college and career ready. Literacy instruction must be consistent, aligned and shared by all (PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan, January 2012). The implication for Northgate School District and wider community is that literacy is the responsibility of **everyone**, not only for schools and those who teach language arts. We recognize that our current curriculum, as written and implemented, is more content driven at the higher grade levels and needs a stronger focus addressing literacy skills across all disciplines. Literacy is present at all levels, but mastery of literacy skills needs to be shifted to the forefront of all learning and to be sustained across all areas as indicated by the PA Common Core. Students need to use literacy in the service of understanding each discipline. This will occur by giving students the opportunity to read, reason, investigate, speak, and write about the overarching concepts within the discipline. Content area teachers can most effectively model content specific literacy skills as they are the ones most familiar with the methods of their discipline. English language arts teachers will need to shift from a primarily fiction based focus to a minimum equal focus on informational texts (i.e. newspapers, biographies, essays, news reports, etc.). The foundations of disciplinary literacy need to be developed early on in children’s lives, even before formal education begins. Best practices used and promoted in the district such as building background knowledge, vocabulary development, and active participation align with this guiding principle. The district will need to continue to reach out to community agencies to share the knowledge in promoting literacy to those they serve.

**Implications for the District:**

- Literacy instruction needs to occur **across all disciplines** with added emphasis on content areas of English, reading, mathematics, science and social studies.
- Disciplinary literacy needs to be developed early on, even before formal education begins.
- Language arts teachers need to shift from a primarily fiction based focus to a minimum equal focus on informational texts.
- Current curriculum needs to correlate with the PA Common Core to align and articulate these shifts from a content based focus to a skills based approach.
- Best practices to promote greater literacy development need to be daily practice of all teachers.

- 2. Student learning, motivation, and access to educational opportunities are increased when linguistic, cultural, and personal experiences are valued, understood, represented in the curriculum and classroom practice, and used to help students make connections between what they know and what they are learning. Multiple perspectives and experiences provide opportunities for students to learn about their own as well as the culture of others.**

As oral language is the foundation for literacy development, speaking and listening are the tools of communication that become the basis for the written word. Research informs us that vocabulary use at age 3 is predictive of measures of language skills at ages 9-10, as well as with reading comprehension scores in the third grade (Hart & Risley, 2003). To meet the needs of Northgate children, an Early Literacy Preschool Classroom opened its doors to 15 preschool aged children to ensure a strong focus on vocabulary and attainment of strong background knowledge is possible.

Northgate is a multicultural district and has experienced a sharp increase in the number of English Language Learners in the last several years. Many of our students come from low income families with limited resources, enrichment, and education. These differences pose many challenges to our teachers. Students need learning and experiences that connect to their personal cultures, languages, and ways of speaking. Teachers and administrators need to be made aware of students' cultural differences and be respectful of those differences. Students throughout the district benefit from exposure to a variety of cultures as a first step in preparation of global awareness. Educators must foster the attainment of new knowledge while validating students' home knowledge. Building linguistic skills in all students needs to occur in an atmosphere that values cultural and personal experiences. Regular education teachers will continue to collaborate with ELL teachers to increase awareness of children's cultural differences and incorporate cultural activities across the curriculum. Community members, parents, and educators need to foster resilient students by providing supporting relationships, helping students to set high expectations, and providing them with meaningful involvement and responsibility within the community. We are striving to gain a greater comfort level and greater accessibility incorporating technology as a means to provide our students with global awareness. Teachers must be respectful of students' linguistic differences, while providing direct

## Keystones to Opportunity

instruction and reinforcement of Standard English language as preparation of success in a competitive global environment.

### **Implications for the District:**

- Administrators and teachers need to be culturally competent and respectful of language variation and language development of English Language Learners.
- While appreciating and understanding language variation is necessary, it is also necessary to teach students “standard” or “academic” English (Gay, 2010, p.84).
- English Language Learners must have access to meaningful language and concepts (Lau v.Nichols, 1974; Krashen, 2004).
- Teachers of students for whom English is a second language need more specialized knowledge regarding language transfer issues and not to confuse them with learning disabilities.
- Early childhood programs need to educate parents on ways to enhance their children’s language development.
- As language deficits lead to increasing problems with reading comprehension (Tannenbaum, Torgeson, &Wagner, 2006), educators need to bridge the gap between children with advanced language skills and restricted language skills as early as possible with direct and evidence based and robust vocabulary instruction.
- Educators need to review the Common Core State Standards (2010) for instructional implications in literacy.
- Reading motivation predicts both the amount of reading and reading comprehension (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox, 1999). Routman (1991) notes that when students are read to, they gain an appreciation for reading and develop an intrinsic motivation to read. Read alouds should be included in literacy and learning goals (Allen, 2000).
- Educators need to foster students’ academic resiliency or their ability to persist, even in the face of multiple academic difficulties (McTigue, Washburn, & Liew, 2009). Families and communities need to assist students in fostering resiliency, and schools can assist by fostering supportive relationships, helping students set high expectations, and providing students with meaningful involvement and responsibility within the school (Bernard, 1995).

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- Educators need to access and incorporate the knowledge and expertise students bring from their home environments into the classroom to validate students and foster motivation. Students' engagement with reading is tied to cultural practices and values and is essential to helping students of diverse backgrounds remain engaged.
- Schools use technology to foster academic resiliency and engagement for all students, especially at the secondary level.
- Teachers need to be aware of the factors that motivate reading and learning (See PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan Essential Element #4).
- Students need access to high quality and large quantities of literature in a variety of formats.

- 3. There must be high expectations for all learners and a belief that all are capable of gaining literacy skills that enable them to be successful as adults. Instruction must address the full range of learners, must be differentiated to meet each child's needs, and requires a well-integrated system connecting general, compensatory, gifted, and special education.**

Northgate's mission statement reflects that all children can and must learn. To accomplish this task, all children will have access to high quality literacy instruction in all disciplines that is both evidence based and aligned to the progression of the PA Common Core Standards. All teachers will need to realign curriculum and instruction in order to meet a set of well articulated, coherent goals that span across the grades. Teachers will need complex skills to reach the spectrum of needs for all students. The teachers are knowledgeable concerning differentiated instruction, and the curriculum supports it. The diverse population of Northgate will necessitate intense interventions to address the differentiated needs of our students in order to meet the high expectations of all shareholders. A coordinated system of care and support will require ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators. Literacy coaches will model and support literacy skills across all areas. Alignment comes from communication. Having continued team meetings, collaborations, classroom observations, and a common progression of Standards allows for congruence among the various programs. Multiple data is housed on a readily accessible data management system which can be accessed by administration and classroom teachers. Data are available longitudinally. Select teachers have received extensive and ongoing training on data analysis. Regularly scheduled data team meetings allow for review of standardized test scores, student behaviors, and attendance among other factors to inform instruction, select appropriate interventions, and start immediate intervention and monitoring.

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### **Implications for the District:**

- The district's curriculum needs to be realigned to support the PA Common Core Standards.
- Teachers should assess before, during, and after instruction to provide feedback and adjust teaching and learning to improve student achievement.
- Assessment data should be used to improve curriculum and instructional practices.



**4. Evidence-based decision-making must be at the heart of all instructional decisions related to literacy development.**

Assessment needs to lead instruction across all disciplines. Northgate School District uses multiple assessments district wide that encompass benchmark, formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments. Assessment is ongoing both formally and informally. Select teachers have received extensive training on data analysis and meet regularly to review student data. Students' needs are identified, and instructional practices and interventions are selected to address students' needs. Teachers in the district have received extensive training on research based instructional methods over many years including differentiated instruction, rigor, relevance, and relationships and literacy based practices from Anita Archer. Instructional teams base their instructional decisions and select interventions and strategies based on data. The district's assessment plan is comprehensive at the elementary level including all content area teachers and every grade level. Literacy is front and center of most instructional team meetings. At the secondary level, English, reading and mathematics teachers meet regularly, to review data, however, not all content area teachers are included. This appears to be a gap in the district's Comprehensive Literacy plan. The initiatives going forward as a result of the KtO grant, such as literacy coaches, will serve us well in closing the gap.

**Implications for the District**

- Content area teachers need access to student literacy data to support and scaffold instruction as needed across all disciplines.
- Content area teachers need to use data to share the responsibility for improving literacy for all students.

**5. Educators must be prepared to teach effectively in the schools of the 21st century and be provided with continuing professional development support that enables them to be lifelong learners.**

Teaching is one of the few professions where new teachers are expected to have the same competence as veteran teachers. Northgate School District recognizes that novice teachers are not finished products and teaching is a developmental process. The district uses an induction program and assigns all new teachers with mentors for the first year. The early childhood programs operated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit utilize educational advisors to support new teachers as well as observe and coach seasoned teachers. The district welcomes pre-service teachers into the district to help aspiring teachers practice their skills with feedback and reflection with a skilled veteran teacher. The district has a comprehensive interview process to find and hire competent, highly qualified teachers. Professional development is selected based on teacher surveys, student achievement data, and research from successful schools. Teachers have been encouraged to participate in professional development, not only within the parameters of the district, but also outside of the district, such as the intermediate unit and PATTAN. These professional development activities have included the Math-Science partnership, College Board Workshops, ASSET science, Reading Achievement Center, and many others. Teachers work together at instructional team meetings to hone instructional practices, and collaboration meetings occur regularly. At the middle/high school level, literacy coaches are being trained to work with content area teachers in a collaborative venture to improve literacy instruction. The literacy coaches are receiving one-on-one, ongoing instruction to acquire these skills. Building administrators continue to receive training in instructional leadership to ensure implementation of evidenced based instructional practices as well as fill the role of building managers. Teachers who have attended out of district professional development opportunities have been encouraged and supported to share their learning with colleagues.

**Implications for the District**

- Professional development in the district needs to be ongoing, strategically selected, and appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all teachers.
- Teachers need to be encouraged to open their classrooms and share their teaching with colleagues for non-evaluative feedback.
- Highly trained and skilled literacy coaches will continue to support literacy in all content areas for middle and high school teachers.

## Section IV: Needs Assessment Review

### Standards and Curriculum

#### Points of Consideration

- *Does our curriculum align with the state standards?*
- *Does our curriculum articulate what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level.*
- *Does our curriculum show evidence of horizontal and vertical articulation of skill sets?*
- *Does our curriculum address the needs of all students?*

#### **Strengths:**

- Our early childhood programs' written curriculum is aligned to Pennsylvania Early Learning standards.
- The written curriculum addresses all students.
- The district (birth through grade 12) uses a common framework to instruct and assess literacy ensuring a consistent approach across subject areas and age/grade levels.

#### **Areas of Need:**

- Reading, writing, speaking and listening are not always systematically integrated throughout the day in all subject areas.
- The district needs a common framework and rubrics to instruct and assess writing ensuring a consistent approach across subject areas and grade levels.
- The district needs to implement, with fidelity, a research-based core literacy curriculum to ensure students meet the PA Common Core Standards.
- Students need to be provided with exemplary writing samples, assessment rubrics, real world writing tasks, writing in response to reading and oral and written feedback.
- All students need access to a rigorous, standards aligned curriculum (incorporating Common Core Standards).

## Keystones to Opportunity

Teachers are in the process of developing a written curriculum that aligns with state standards, incorporating the Common Core. Our current curriculum articulates what students need to know and are able to do at each grade level, but needs to be expanded upon and revisited to incorporate the Common Core and needs further development to ensure vertical as well as horizontal alignment, especially at the middle/high school level. The curriculum is being developed to meet the needs of all students.

### Conclusion:

The curriculum needs to be aligned vertically and horizontally to incorporate the Common Core and ensure that the written curriculum is taught. We need to have a common framework and rubrics to instruct and assess literacy ensuring a consistent approach across all subject areas and grades.

| Standards & Curriculum                   | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist    | Other Professional Development /Resources that would assist |
|--|----------|--------------|---|---|
| Birth – 5yrs.                            | X        |              | Common Core and Literacy Design Collaborative | SAS<br>PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan<br>AIU literacy coach |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                  |          | X            | Common Core and Literacy Design Collaborative | SAS<br>PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan<br>AIU literacy coach |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  |          | X            | Common Core and Literacy Design Collaborative | SAS<br>PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan<br>AIU literacy coach |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade |          | X            | Common Core and Literacy Design Collaborative | SAS<br>PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan<br>AIU literacy coach |

## Assessment

### Points of Consideration

- *Do we have a viable assessment plan listing measures, schedules, procedures, and targeted students at every grade level in every school?*
- *Do teachers and administrators have easy access to the data?*
- *Do teachers and administrators understand what each test is intended to measure?*
- *Do teachers and administrators know how to interpret the data for classroom instruction?*
- *Do we have regularly scheduled data meetings?*
- *Do we use data as a means of determining possible professional development needs?*

### **Strengths (in place and emerging):**

- A “data culture” exists throughout the district (K-12) for mathematics and English/language arts.
- A district-wide literacy assessment plan has been developed that includes purposes, measures to be used, schedules, procedures, and targeted students at each grade level in every school.
- A district level data-base is established, implemented, and maintained to collect and summarize school-level and student level literacy data and to provide immediate and easy access to information.
- The district selects literacy assessment measures that are valid and reliable which provide information on the essential elements of literacy instruction.
- The district has developed the capacity to gather and use data.
- Assessments are administered early and with sufficient frequency to detect lack of progress and thereby avoid loss of valuable instructional time.

### **Areas of Need:**

- At least one individual per school needs to be designated to become the expert on specific reading measures used at that school. Ongoing training and support will be needed for this role.
- Move in students at the middle/high school level need to be assessed shortly after their arrival.

## Keystones to Opportunity

- Formative and summative assessments need to be incorporated at all grade spans.
- Periodic school and district-level data summits are not scheduled for more comprehensive data review and planning purposes.
- Other disciplines need to be trained in data analysis to offer appropriate instruction and remediation.

### Conclusion:

Assessment is a relative strength for the district birth through grade 12. Assessments have not been conducted systematically at all grade levels. This has been remedied as a result of the KtO grant with the introduction of the GRADE assessment. The district needs to identify and train an individual at each school to become the expert on specific reading measures at each school and time needs to be scheduled for comprehensive data review for future planning purposes. These comprehensive data reviews should include teachers from all content areas.

| Assessment                               | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist  | Professional Development that would assist |
|--|----------|--------------|---|--|
| Birth – 5yrs.                            | X        |              | Using Data for Literacy Decision Making; Successful Transition along the Literacy Continuum |  |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                  | X        |              | Using Data for Literacy Decision Making; Successful Transition along the Literacy Continuum |  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  | X        |              | Using Data for Literacy Decision Making; Successful Transition along the Literacy Continuum |  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | X        |              | Using Data for Literacy Decision Making; Successful Transition along the Literacy Continuum |  |

## **Instruction**

### **Points of Consideration**

- *Is small group instruction a regular part of literacy time?*
- *Is there an intervention system in place?*
- *Do we have adequate blocks of literacy time?*
- *Is literacy connected to content specific areas?*
- *Do teachers and administrators know what constitutes effective literacy instruction?*
- *Do we use evidence-based instructional approaches or programs?*
- *Are we using data to assist with instructional planning?*
- *Are we addressing instructional needs across all the language arts: reading, writing, speaking and listening?*

### **Strengths:**

- Literacy instruction is explicitly organized on a grade appropriate basis around the essential elements of literacy including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary comprehension, receptive and expressive language, and writing.
- School administrators are strong instructional leaders, and ongoing support is provided for this role.
- Middle school students receive an extra period of reading instruction daily. Other statutory areas also meet the minimum suggested amount of literacy instruction.
- Tutoring and extended instructional time is offered at all statutory areas with the exception of middle school and high school.
- Intervention and supplemental literacy materials are evidence based and aligned to the instructional program.
- The Pre-K through Grade 5 adopted literacy materials are scientifically-based.
- All federal programs that provide literacy support are aligned with the general education literacy instruction.
- Effective teacher delivery of robust reading instruction is promoted across the district.

### **Areas of Need:**

- Grades 9-12 need more direct literacy skills instruction across the instructional areas.
- High school students with below basic grade level literacy skills need additional time to work on these skills.



## Keystones to Opportunity

- A formal system is needed for adopting evidence based instructional programs.
- Students need to be provided differentiated reading instruction across content areas based upon student assessment data.

### Conclusion:

Explicit literacy time needs to be increased in some statutory areas. In the upper levels, literacy instruction needs to reach into all content areas. The district needs to establish a formal policy for the adoption of evidence-based instruction programs which align with and support the PA Common Core and the district's curriculum.

| Instruction                              | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist  | Professional Development that would assist                       |
|--|----------|--------------|---|--|
| Birth – 5yrs.                            | X        |              | Navigating Content with ELL, Supporting Learners with Special Needs, Reading Apprenticeship, Universal Design for Learning and Digital Technology |  |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                  | X        |              | Navigating Content with ELL, Supporting Learners with Special Needs, Reading Apprenticeship, Universal Design for Learning and Digital Technology | On-going Professional Development for the New Reading Curriculum |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  |          | X            | Navigating Content with ELL, Supporting Learners with Special Needs, Reading Apprenticeship, Universal Design for Learning and Digital Technology | Literacy Coach Training  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade |          | X            | Navigating Content with ELL, Supporting Learners with Special Needs, Reading Apprenticeship, Universal Design for Learning and Digital Technology | Literacy Coach Training  |

## **Professional Learning and Practice**

### **Points of Consideration**

- *Are professional learning activities aligned in a cohesive plan to meet the needs of students, teachers, and administrators?*
- *Is professional development based on what we know about effective PD?*
- *Are initiatives understood and supported by administrators?*
- *Do administrators attend and participate in professional development opportunities?*
- *Are initiatives sustained across years?*
- *Is professional development taken back into the classroom?*
- *Are our teachers and administrators knowledgeable about current research for best practice?*
- *Are our teachers given dedicated times to reflect and discuss new learnings and classroom practice with their colleagues?*
- *Are there attempts to build teacher leadership in the school through collaboration and the development of communities of practice?*

### **Strengths:**

- Professional development is aligned to leverage resources and to ensure a cohesive plan for all learners.
- District leaders are provided with professional learning to become literacy instructional leaders.
- Early childhood has strong parent involvement/engagement.
- Instructional assistants have a strong and comprehensive plan for supporting literacy groups.

### **Areas of Need:**

- District professional development time is utilized strategically by focusing on content that will result in meeting district reading goals and by sustaining that focus over time.
- Professional learning programs need improvement to be more collaborative and engaging and interactive. Professional development needs to be on-going rather than “one and done”.
- Elementary, Middle, and High School staff are in need of professional development which address parental involvement/engagement.
- Collaboration time for teaching staff needs to increase.

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- The district needs to commit to integrating literacy skills across all instructional areas at the middle and high school levels.

### Conclusion:

We need to have a much more focused and effective learning community which utilizes the professional development time for on-going and collaborative lessons which increase literacy skills across all instructional areas. Parent involvement/engagement needs to be addressed and increased in 3 out of 4 statutory areas.

| Professional Learning and Practice       | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist   | Professional Development that would assist |
|--|----------|--------------|--|--|
| Birth – 5yrs.                            |          | X            | Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum  |  |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                  |          | X            | Family Engagement and Family Literacy, Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum |  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  |          | X            | Family Engagement and Family Literacy, Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum |  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade |          | X            | Family Engagement and Family Literacy, Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum |  |

## **Literacy Leadership, Goals, and Sustainability**

### **Points of Consideration**

- *Do school leaders seek out ways to support literacy improvement efforts?*
- *Is there a coordination of literacy goals, assessment, instruction, and professional development?*
- *Do we give way to “fads” in literacy instruction?*
- *Is there a dedicated person assigned to “literacy?”*
- *Do we use our local Intermediate Unit and regional PaTTAN consultants to provide professional learning to build internal capacity?*
- *Is our principal’s primary responsibility to be an instructional leader?*
- *Do we inform our parents and community of our literacy achievement and goals?*
- *Do we seek ways to engage parents and community in improving literacy achievement?*

### **Strengths:**

- Leadership and vision are evident at the district level to ensure that all staff actively support district literacy goals and outcome-based literacy improvement practices.
- Policies, personnel, budgets, training, and other operational resources are used as fiscal and administrative strategies to produce improved outcomes at district and school levels.
- Literacy is kept “front and center” as a district priority. Positive results are acknowledged and recognized.
- The district and school analyze data results to determine root cause and success.
- Literacy leadership is evident in administration, teachers, staff, parents, caregivers and students.
- The district has strong literacy leadership at all levels.
- Literacy coaches are being trained to support middle and high school teachers to promote literacy in all content areas.
- The district takes full advantage of professional development opportunities from PATTAN and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to promote literacy for all students.
- Personnel practices are aligned with and support improved literacy outcomes.

## Keystones to Opportunity

### Areas of Need:

- A formal program to recruit, train, and retain future literacy leaders within the district does not exist.
- The district does not provide leadership and regular meeting times for professional learning teams focusing on 1) What do we want students to learn? 2) How will we know when they have learned it? and 3) What will we do when they haven't learned it?
- The district's local literacy plan needs to be developed and shared with all stakeholders on a regular basis.

### Conclusion:

Literacy at all levels in the district is strongly supported by the leadership. The district has recognized and supported the need for administrators' roles to be instructional leaders rather than building managers. Building principals work closely with instructional teams to examine and analyzing literacy data to determine what should be addressed. The district has focused considerable time and energy on providing training for literacy coaches who were recruited from within the district. Although the district does not have a formal program to recruit, train, and retain future literacy leaders within the district, there is also little staff turnover. To accomplish our literacy mission and vision, regular meeting times for professional learning teams should be scheduled to focus on what students need to learn, how will we know when they have learned it, and what will we do when they haven't. The district is developing this Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan based on Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Literacy Plan to provide the direction and actions to produce positive results.

| Literacy, Leadership, Goals, and Sustainability | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist  | Professional Development that would assist |
|---|----------|--------------|---|--|
| Birth – 5yrs.                                   |          | X            | Building Blocks for Literacy  |  |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                         |          | X            | Building Blocks for Literacy  |  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade         |          | X            | Reading Apprenticeship, Universal Design for Learning and Digital Technology, Common Core and Literacy Design Collaborative |  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade        |          | X            | Reading Apprenticeship, Universal Design for Learning and Digital Technology, Common Core and Literacy Design Collaborative |  |

## **Transition**

### **Points of Consideration**

- *Do we have timely, well-kept records documenting retentions, graduation rates, and other measures that influence student success in school?*
- *Do we have tools to monitor and improve the transition process?*
- *Do we provide any professional development to help staff ensure successful transitions for students?*
- *Do our teachers have a dedicated time to meet with teachers of adjacent grades to discuss students? (all levels including pre K/kindergarten, elementary/middle, and middle/high)*

### **Strengths:**

- The district has a transition committee comprised of multiple stakeholders who are best able to meet the needs of this initiative and are currently developing a district –wide comprehensive transition plan across all age and grade levels.
- The district maintains well kept records documenting retentions, graduation rates, and other measures that influence student success in school.
- The district’s early childhood programs are represented on the County Learns teams.

### **Areas of Need:**

- The district needs to develop an evaluation process that includes questions and measurements that will assess the effectiveness of evaluating effective classroom environments and a tool to monitor and improve the transition process.

### **Conclusion:**

The district is in the process of developing a comprehensive transition plan across all age and grade levels. This plan should incorporate an evaluation process and measurements that will assess the effectiveness of evaluating classroom environments and a tool to monitor and improve the transition process.

## Keystones to Opportunity

| Transition                               | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist   | Professional Development that would assist |
|--|----------|--------------|--|--|
| Birth – 5yrs.                            | X        |              | Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Supporting Learners with Special Needs; Navigating Content with ELL |  |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                  |          | X            | Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Supporting Learners with Special Needs; Navigating Content with ELL |  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  |          | X            | Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Supporting Learners with Special Needs; Navigating Content with ELL |  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade |          | X            | Successful Transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Supporting Learners with Special Needs; Navigating Content with ELL |  |

## **Partnerships**

### **Points of Consideration**

- *Is our district well represented in community activities and committees to expand awareness of the need for a comprehensive literacy program for children birth – grade 12?*
- *Do we participate in community awareness activities to inform and encourage public support for literacy education – children birth to grade 12?*
- *Do we really treat parents and community members and organizations (libraries, businesses) as partners in our literacy efforts?*
- *What is the public perception of our school?*

### **Strengths:**

- The district coordinates with community educational resources to ensure comprehensive, non-duplicative, and aligned educational services (e.g. AIU, early childhood providers, community programs for ESL children and adults).
- The district has additional non-educational community partners that support families, including libraries, health services, social services, businesses and industry and participates in community awareness activities to inform the public of the need for literacy education for children birth through grade 12.

### **Area of Need:**

- There is no advisory committee that engages educational community partners in planning, implementing, and evaluating the comprehensive and integrated literacy services.

What was learned in this area?

What will we do to accomplish our mission/vision in literacy?



Keystones to Opportunity

**Conclusion:**

The district has a long and solid history of coordinating with community educational resources and values these connections as we know we cannot do this alone. The district needs greater representation in community activities and committees to expand awareness of the need for a comprehensive and integrated literacy program for children, birth-grade 12. The district needs to establish partnerships across the disciplines to ensure that reading, writing, speaking and listening are taught within the contexts of the content specific curricula.

| Partnerships                             | In Place | Not in Place | KtO Content Area Modules that would assist   | Professional Development that would assist |
|--|----------|--------------|--|--|
| Birth – 5yrs.                            | X        |              | Successful transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Family Engagement and Family Literacy |  |
| K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade                  | X        |              | Successful transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Family Engagement and Family Literacy |  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  |          | X            | Successful transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Family Engagement and Family Literacy |  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade |          | X            | Successful transitions along the Literacy Continuum; Family Engagement and Family Literacy |  |

## Section V: Setting and Prioritizing Goals

### Goal Setting

| Title of Section         | Goal  | Rationale  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Standards and Curriculum | Create and write a PA Common Core based and aligned curriculum which shows evidence of horizontal and vertical articulation of skill sets | Since a solid PA Common Core standards-based curriculum does not currently exist, the district needs to invest time, energy, and funds to develop this document. In order to scaffold a streamlined progression of literacy skills needed to be college and career ready, the district needs an accurate curriculum which demands and assesses the rigor and relevance presented in the Common Core. In addition, a new curriculum will provide rubrics and a framework for reading, speaking, writing, and listening for all instructors to follow. The need for a consistent approach to literacy skills across all subject areas and grades will help to ensure the written curriculum is being utilized. |
| Partnerships             | Increase community awareness of the District's Local Comprehensive Literacy Goals   | Strengthen community partnerships to reach out to organizations that can support the district's literacy efforts.  |
|                          |   |  |

## Keystones to Opportunity

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Professional Learning and Practice             | Provide professional development for a greater understanding of the transitioning from the PA Standards to the PA Common Core Standards                                    | Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, students will be assessed with the new Common Core Standards. Therefore professional development needs to address these changes.   |
| Instruction                                    | More direct literacy instruction across the content areas in grades 9 – 12   | Literacy must be included in all content areas in order for higher order thinking to be applied in all content areas.  |
| Literacy Leadership, Goals, and Sustainability | The district needs to support and encourage the increase of literacy skills across all ages and disciplines.   | In order to sustain the application of the literacy skills brought to individual classrooms, support and collaboration from administration, coaches, AIU, and staff is critical.   |
| Assessment                                     | Designate one individual per school to become the expert on specific reading measures used at the school.  | Having a data expert designated at each school on specific measures of reading achievement and development will enhance instructional teams' instructional decision making and strategic selection of intervention strategies. |
| Transition                                     | The district needs to develop a transition plan (birth through grade 12) that includes an evaluation process that will assess the effectiveness of classroom environments. | An effective transition plan will provide teachers with the knowledge and information to meet the needs of their students when they enter the classroom and adjust their learning environments accordingly.                    |

## Keystones to Opportunity

### Prioritizing Goals

#### **Points of Consideration**

- *Which goals will maximize our efforts and resources to advance student achievement?*
- *Which goals build on another or are prerequisites of other goals?*
- *Which goals are actionable for us at this point?*

**Goal Action Map**

*Standards and Curriculum*

**Goal Statement: Create and write a PA Common Core based and aligned curriculum which shows evidence of horizontal and vertical articulation of skill sets.**

|                                 | Action Step 1   | Action Step 2   | Action Step 3   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>&gt;&gt;Action Step</b>      | <b>All teachers review and learn the PA Common Core Standards</b>   | <b>All teachers create a PA Common Core based curriculum</b>  | <b>Map the curriculum district wide to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment</b>                                 |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>By Spring 2013</b>   | <b>Winter 2014</b>  | <b>Winter 2015</b>  |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>AIU Coach<br/>Literacy Coaches</b>   | <b>AIU Coach<br/>Literacy Coaches</b>   | <b>AIU Coach<br/>Literacy Coaches</b>   |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>Release time for teachers, Literacy Coaches, AIU Coach, funds for substitute teachers, printing supplies</b> | <b>Release time for teachers, Literacy Coaches, AIU Coach, funds for substitute teachers, curriculum technology</b> | <b>Release time for teachers, Literacy Coaches, AIU Coach, funds for substitute teachers, curriculum technology</b> |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Transition from current curriculum to PA Common Core based curriculum</b>                                    | <b>Transition from current curriculum to PA Common Core based curriculum</b>  | <b>Transition from current curriculum to PA Common Core based curriculum</b>  |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>GRADE, HEAT, PSSA's , Keystones, summative assessments</b>   | <b>GRADE, HEAT, PSSA's , Keystones, summative assessments</b>   | <b>GRADE, HEAT, PSSA's , Keystones, summative assessments, Administrative walk - throughs</b>                       |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>Spring 2013</b>  | <b>Winter 2014</b>  | <b>Winter 2015</b>  |

*Partnerships*

**Goal Statement: Increase community awareness of the District’s Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan**

|                                 | <b>Action Step 1</b>   | <b>Action Step 2</b>   | <b>Action Step 3</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>&gt;&gt;Action Step</b>      | <b>Identify community organizations that may support the district’s literacy efforts</b>                     | <b>Provide community organizations with an overview of the local comprehensive literacy plan and arrange face-to-face meetings to discuss ways to support the plan</b> | <b>Meet with community organizations to discuss ways to support the plan</b> |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>By October 2013</b>   | <b>By January 2014</b>   | <b>By July 2014</b>  |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>KtO project director</b>  | <b>KtO project director</b>  | <b>KtO project director</b>  |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>Time to develop summary, printing supplies, access to community organizations throughout the district</b> | <b>Time to contact community organizations</b>   | <b>Time to present to community organizations</b>                            |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Summary of Local Comprehensive Literacy plan with list of literacy activities</b>                         | <b>Calendar of meetings with organizations</b>   | <b>Agendas for meetings</b>  |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>Completion of summary</b>   | <b>Number of invitations received by the district from community organizations, sign in sheets from meeting</b>  | <b>Community organization surveys</b>  |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>September 2013</b>  | <b>Spring 2014</b>   | <b>July 2014</b>   |

*Professional Learning Practices*

**Goal Statement: To provide professional development for a greater understanding of transitioning from the PA Standards to the Common Core Standards.**

|                                 | <b>Action Step 1</b>   | <b>Action Step 2</b>  | <b>Action Step 3</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>»Action Step</b>             | <b>Teachers will be provided professional development on the PA Common Core Standards.</b> | <b>Teachers will review written curriculum to ensure alignment with PA Common Core Standards.</b> | <b>Teachers will examine summative assessment to ensure alignment with PA Common Core Standards.</b>                   |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>By Winter 2014</b>  | <b>Winter 2014</b>  | <b>Winter 2014</b>   |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>Professional Development Coordinator</b>  | <b>Program and building administrators</b>  | <b>Program and building administrators</b>   |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>Time, trainers, and district visitations</b>  | <b>Release time for review of written curriculum</b>  | <b>Release and collaboration time to review summative assessments</b>  |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Transition from the PA Standards to the PA Common Core</b>                              | <b>Ensure that units of instruction and skills taught align with PA Common Core Standards</b>     | <b>Ensure that assessments are uniform district wide and that they accurately align with PA Common Core standards.</b> |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>HEAT, GRADE, Keystones, PSSA's</b>  | <b>Adjustments to written curriculum in regard to skills and instruction are completed.</b>       | <b>Adjustments to written curriculum in regard to summative assessments are completed.</b>                             |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>Winter 2014</b>   | <b>Spring 2014</b>  | <b>Spring 2014</b>   |

**Goal Statement: More direct literacy instruction across the content areas in 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade**

|                                 | <b>Action Step 1</b>   | <b>Action Step 2</b>   | <b>Action Step 3</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>&gt;&gt;Action Step</b>      | <b>Implement and train literacy coaches</b>  | <b>Establish times to coach literacy to instructors in all subject areas</b>         | <b>Teachers independently implement differentiated instructional strategies in all content areas based upon student assessment data</b> |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>Spring 2014</b>   | <b>Spring 2014</b>   | <b>Spring 2015</b>  |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>Dawn Egger and Beth Wells (Literacy Coaches)</b>                                  | <b>Dawn Egger and Beth Wells (Literacy Coaches)</b>                                  | <b>Dawn Egger and Beth Wells (Literacy Coaches)</b>   |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>AIU3</b>  | <b>AIU3</b>  | <b>AIU3<br/>Literacy Coaches</b>  |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Summary of Local Comprehensive Literacy plan with list of literacy activities</b> | <b>Summary of Local Comprehensive Literacy plan with list of literacy activities</b> | <b>Summary of Local Comprehensive Literacy plan with list of literacy activities</b>  |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>Coaches training calendar</b>   | <b>GRADE,<br/>Keystones</b>  | <b>GRADE,<br/>Keystones</b>   |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>Spring 2014</b>   | <b>Spring 2014</b>   | <b>Spring 2015</b>  |



**Goal Statement: The district needs to support and encourage the increase of literacy skills across all ages and disciplines.**

|                                 | <b>Action Step 1</b>  | <b>Action Step 2</b>  | <b>Action Step 3</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>&gt;&gt;Action Step</b>      | <b>Collaboration of administration and literacy experts</b> | <b>Facilitate literacy expert and teacher relationships</b>                               | <b>Sustain literacy skills instruction in all classrooms</b>                              |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>Spring 2013</b>  | <b>2013-2014 school year</b>  | <b>2014-2015 school year</b>  |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>Administration, AIU Coach, Literacy Experts</b>          | <b>Administration, AIU Coach, Literacy Experts</b>  | <b>Administration, AIU Coach, Literacy Experts</b>  |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>Time together</b>  | <b>Open schedules for literacy experts</b>  | <b>Time and technology</b>  |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Align district literacy goals</b>                        | <b>Coaches will provide continual professional development to the classroom teachers.</b> | <b>Coaches will provide continual professional development to the classroom teachers.</b> |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>Increased literacy skills in all classes</b>             | <b>Increased literacy skills in all classes</b>   | <b>Increased literacy skills in all classes</b>   |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>Fall 2013</b>  | <b>Spring 2014</b>  | <b>Spring 2015</b>  |

**Goal Statement: Designate one individual per school to become the expert on specific reading measures used at the school.**

|                                 | <b>Action Step 1</b>  | <b>Action Step 2</b>   | <b>Action Step 3</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>&gt;&gt;Action Step</b>      | <b>Identify an individual at each building to support this goal</b>   | <b>Provide appropriate training on data analysis from reading measures</b>                               | <b>Lead instructional teams in using data to inform instruction and interventions</b> |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>May 2013</b>   | <b>Fall 2013</b>   | <b>October 2013</b>   |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>Building administrators</b>  | <b>Building administrators</b>   | <b>Building administrators</b>  |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>None</b>   | <b>Time to access training</b>   | <b>Benchmark data, diagnostic test data, and summative data</b>                       |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Person selected should have background knowledge of data analysis and flexibility to conduct data team meetings.</b> | <b>Data training should be specific to instruments used and directed at interpretation and analysis.</b> | <b>Data analysis will drive instructional decisions.</b>                              |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>Selection of data expert</b>   | <b>Training provided by LADL to building administrators</b>  | <b>Leadership of Instructional team meetings</b>                                      |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>May 2013</b>   | <b>Fall 2013</b>   | <b>Spring 2014</b>  |

**Goal Statement: The district will develop a transition plan (birth through grade 12) that includes an evaluation process that will assess the effectiveness of classroom environments.**

|                                 | <b>Action Step 1</b>  | <b>Action Step 2</b>  | <b>Action Step 3</b>   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>»Action Step</b>             | <b>Develop a birth through 12 transition plan with members of each statutory area</b>   | <b>Disseminate and implement the transition plan</b>  | <b>Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of classroom environments</b>   |
| <b>Time Line</b>                | <b>March 2013</b>   | <b>May 2013</b>   | <b>September 2013</b>  |
| <b>Lead Person/s</b>            | <b>Assistant to the Superintendent, Early Childhood Supervisors</b>   | <b>Assistant to the Superintendent, Early Childhood Supervisors, Building Principals, teachers</b>  | <b>Transition plan committee</b>   |
| <b>Resources Needed</b>         | <b>Professional Development on transition planning; Release time to develop the plan</b>  | <b>Collaboration time among supervisors, administrators and teachers</b>  | <b>Collaboration time among supervisors and administrators</b>   |
| <b>Specifics of information</b> | <b>Selected team members from each statutory area will come together to review the literature on transition and develop a plan for transitioning at every transition stage.</b> | <b>Transition plan needs to be distributed to all teachers and administrators to address questions and specific process for implementation.</b> | <b>Select assessment tools that will accurately reflect the effectiveness of classroom environments in meeting the needs of the students</b> |
| <b>Measure of Success</b>       | <b>A completed transition plan</b>  | <b>Stakeholders have reviewed the plan, and collaboration meetings and transition activities are scheduled.</b>                                 | <b>No less than 80% of assessed classroom environments will score below adequate rating as indicated on assessment tool.</b>                 |
| <b>Review Date</b>              | <b>March 2014</b>   | <b>May 2014</b>   | <b>September 2014</b>  |

## **Section VI: Dissemination of Plan**

**Administrators will review the completed Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan during an administrative council meeting in March 2013. The plan will be presented to members of the school board upon completion (no later than May, 2013). The Coordinator of Special Services and selected team members will provide an overview of the plan and present a copy of the plan for members of the school board to review. The plan will be provided to Allegheny Intermediate Early Childhood supervisors who will review the plan and goals for improvement to their staff. Building administrators will distribute and review the plan with faculty members at faculty meetings no later than May, 2013 lending special focus to the literacy goals for improvement. Building administrators will ask to present the plan to each building's Parent Teacher Organization and provide each president with a copy. The plan will be provided to Avalon and Bellevue Library to be available for public viewing and our local newspaper, The Citizen, and the Bellevue Borough News, an on-line local newspaper, will announce its completion and availability for review. The plan will be available on the district's website.**

## **Section VII: Assessing and Reporting Progress**

Northgate's Comprehensive Literacy Plan's "Goal Action Map" will be distributed to all administrators for implementation. Building administrators will develop building level action plans to address each of the goals, where appropriate. Building administrators will monitor the progress of each goal on a quarterly basis and provide evidence of progress toward each goal to the superintendent. The superintendent will share progress toward goals quarterly with Board of School Directors during designated School Board meetings.