ELEMENTARY LITERACY CONTENT STANDARDS

Section 20.110 Literacy Standards for Elementary Teachers
Effective for 2015-16 juniors; 2017 program completers

a) The Language and Literacy Curriculum
Effective elementary teachers:
1) understand and use the scientific basis of teaching to plan, evaluate and modify instruction (i.e., use of appropriate research in identifying and implementing effective instructional practices);
2) know the developmental sequence of language and literacy skills, along with age-level or grade-level benchmarks of development;
3) understand the Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix D, State Goals for Learning), their organization, progressions and the interconnections among the skills;
4) understand and evaluate the components of a comprehensive curriculum that develops students' literacy skills and strategies and ensures that instructional goals and objectives are met;
5) understand the role of early, systematic and explicit teaching of the foundational literacy skills;
6) understand and use research-based instructional strategies that have been demonstrated to be particularly successful for supporting struggling readers; and
7) understand a wide range of developmentally appropriate literacy assessments (i.e., standardized assessments, diagnostic measures, universal screening, curriculum-based assessments and progress monitoring), recognizing their purposes, strengths and limitations.

b) Foundational Knowledge

1) Language
Effective elementary teachers understand:
A) the nature and communicative role of various features of language, including semantics, syntax, morphology and pragmatics;
B) major theories and stages of first and second literacy acquisition and the role of native language in learning to read and write in a second language;
C) the theories, principles and practices of emergent literacy, including the development of oral language and its relationship to the developmental process of reading and writing acquisition;
D) language, reading and writing development across the elementary years, using supporting evidence from theory and research;
E) the role of academic language in developing students' understanding of concepts, content, skills and processes; and
F) conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., irregular plural nouns, past tense of irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections, perfect verb tenses).

2) Alphabetic Code
Effective elementary teachers understand:
A) phonological awareness (sound structure of words, including syllables, onsets and rimes, phonemes), its development (from word and syllable separations to phonic segmentation) and relationship to reading and writing proficiency;
B) the orthographic-phonological system, including sound-letter relationships, and common English spelling patterns and their relationship to pronunciation; and
C) structural analysis (i.e., syllabication, affixes, root words) for decoding unknown words.
3) Text
Effective elementary teachers understand:
A) the quantitative, qualitative and individual factors that affect text complexity, including how to estimate text readability;
B) the organizational structures, literary devices, rhetorical features, text features and graphics commonly used in literary and informational texts;
C) the characteristics of various genre or forms of literary and informational text;
D) a variety of textual and programmatic resources for addressing the needs of struggling readers, including resources that are high-interest, low-readability; and
E) the role, perspective and purpose of text in specific disciplines.

c) Using Research-Based Instructional Approaches
1) Decoding and Fluency
Effective elementary teachers:
A) assist students in developing basic print and text concepts (e.g., alphabet, high-frequency words, directionality, book formats, spaces);
B) implement phonological awareness instruction, including the teaching of segmentation and blending;
C) provide explicit and systematic phonics instruction, including the teaching of letter-sound relationships, common spelling patterns, irregular forms and affixes; and
D) use a variety of approaches for teaching students to read text fluently (i.e., with sufficient accuracy, rate and expression).

2) Reading Comprehension
Effective elementary teachers:
A) select high-quality texts that match student needs and educational goals;
B) identify text features that may impede comprehension (e.g., author's assumption of prior knowledge, use of unusual key vocabulary, complexity of sentences, unclear cohesive links, subtlety of relationships among characters or ideas, sophistication of tone, complexity of text structure, use of literary devices or data);
C) scaffold reading to enable students to understand and learn from challenging text (e.g., re-reading, pre-teaching of vocabulary or key information not provided in the text);
D) introduce texts efficiently, providing a clear purpose for reading (and without revealing information the students can learn from reading the text);
E) guide close reading discussions that require students to identify the key ideas and details of a text, to analyze the text’s craft and structure (including the tone and meaning of words), and critically evaluate the text;
F) provide instruction in interpreting graphic features (e.g., tables, charts, illustrations, tables of contents, captions, headings, indexes) and their relationship to text;
G) ask high-level, text-dependent questions;
H) guide the reading of multiple texts to enable students to comparatively analyze and evaluate information and to synthesize information from the texts into a coherent understanding of a topic;
I) teach students to use reading strategies to improve comprehension (e.g., predicting, purpose setting, sequencing, connecting, visualizing, monitoring, questioning, summarizing, synthesizing, making inferences, evaluating);
J) teach students to recognize literary elements and devices across literature genres and forms of informational text;
K) provide instruction in the use of note-taking, previewing, identifying main idea and supporting details, and reviewing strategies to clarify and solidify comprehension;
L) teach students to trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text and to distinguish claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not supported;
M) teach students to analyze the organizational structure of texts (e.g., sequentially, causally, comparatively), and how specific sentences, paragraphs and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole; and
N) teach students to recognize features of text common to individual disciplines.

3) Writing
Effective elementary teachers:
A) provide opportunities for students to write for authentic purposes in multiple forms and genres to demonstrate the power and importance of writing throughout their lives;
B) engage students in using writing to develop an understanding of content area concepts and skills;
C) provide feedback to written work to guide students' revisions;
D) provide instruction in producing coherent and clear writing with organization, development, substance and style appropriate to the task, purpose and audience;
E) provide instruction in creating a text that introduces an opinion on a topic, supports the opinion with information and reasons based on facts and details, uses appropriate transitional devices and concludes with a statement supporting the opinion;
F) provide instruction in creating an informative and explanatory text that introduces a topic supported by logically ordered facts, definitions, details, examples, quotations and other types of information; uses precise language, academic vocabulary and appropriate transitional devices; and concludes with a statement related to the topic;
G) provide instruction in creating a narrative text based on real or imagined experiences or events that introduces a narrator and/or characters; uses dialogue, description and pacing to develop and organize a sequence of events; uses concrete words, phrases, sensory details and transitional devices; and uses a conclusion that follows from the experiences or events;
H) provide instruction in writing arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence;
I) teach students to conduct research projects using evidence drawn from multiple sources, including how to select and develop topics; gather information from a variety of sources, including the Internet; synthesize information; and paraphrase, summarize and quote/cite sources;
J) provide instruction in the conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., irregular plural nouns, past tense of irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections, perfect verb tenses);
K) provide instruction in the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling;
L) provide instruction in using technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others; and
M) use "conferencing" to motivate and scaffold students' development throughout the writing process.

4) Speaking and Listening
Effective elementary teachers:
A) engage students in a variety of oral language activities, including whole and small group collaborative discussion, asking questions, reporting on a topic and recounting experiences;
B) teach students to listen actively and critically in order to understand, evaluate and respond to a speaker's message;
C) instruct students in presenting ideas and information using facts and relevant details to support main ideas and using presentation software, media and visual displays appropriate to the purpose and audience; and
D) provide instruction in the conventions of standard English grammar and usage.

5) Vocabulary
Effective elementary teachers:
   A) for the instructional focus, select appropriate words central to the meaning of the text and likely to be unknown, academic vocabulary, meaning families and word relationships;
   B) introduce students to forms of language that enhance vocabulary and understanding of language (e.g., idioms, figurative language, poetic devices, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, adages, proverbs);
   C) introduce word-solving strategies for clarifying the meaning of unknown words, including contextual analysis, structural analysis and the use of reference materials;
   D) plan lessons that promote oral and written language development and the use of newly acquired vocabulary across disciplines;
   E) understand and implement the forms and functions of academic language to help students develop and express content understandings;
   F) utilize authentic text to help students develop word consciousness; and
   G) actively engage students in using a wide variety of strategies for developing and expanding vocabularies.

d) Using Materials, Texts and Technology
Effective elementary teachers:
1) use a wide range of high-quality literature and informational texts;
2) select literature and informational texts that address the interests, backgrounds and learning needs of each student;
3) use research-based criteria for selecting and evaluating instructional materials for use in teaching English language arts;
4) estimate the difficulty level of text using readability measures and qualitative factors and make text accessible to students;
5) use culturally responsive texts to promote students' understanding of their lives and society; and
6) use a variety of technology to support literacy instruction (e.g., computers, cameras, interactive websites, blogs, online research).

e) Monitoring Student Learning through Assessment
Effective elementary teachers:
1) use a variety of developmentally appropriate literacy assessments, including standardized assessments, diagnostic tools, universal screening, curriculum-based assessments and progress monitoring tools;
2) monitor student progress in meeting developmental benchmarks in literacy;
3) assess students' interest, engagement and response to instruction to guide teaching;
4) use assessment data, student work samples and observations from continuous monitoring of student progress to plan and evaluate literacy instruction;
5) provide feedback to students on their work to help them understand their own progress and how to improve performance;
6) communicate results of assessments appropriately;
7) engage students in self-assessment;
8) recognize how to maintain and use accurate records of students' performance and progress in meeting literacy standards; and
9) interpret and use assessment data to analyze individual, group and classroom literacy performance and progress.
f) Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners
Effective elementary teachers:
1) understand the impact of cultural, linguistic, cognitive, academic, physical, social and emotional differences on language development and literacy;
2) plan and implement targeted literacy instruction that is responsive to the strengths and needs of each student (i.e., English language learners, struggling learners, gifted learners) to ensure high rates of success;
3) seek appropriate assistance and support for struggling readers and writers;
4) collaborate and plan with other professionals to deliver a consistent, sequenced and supportive instructional program for each student;
5) differentiate strategies, materials, pace, levels of text and language complexity to introduce concepts and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of each student;
6) make content accessible in appropriate ways to English language learners;
7) deliver literacy instruction within a multi-tier system of support in order to meet the needs of all students;
8) use data-based decision making to target interventions to the needs of struggling readers; and
9) deliver instruction explicitly to struggling readers (i.e., modeling, prompting, guided practice, response and corrective feedback).

g) Constructing a Supportive Language and Literacy Environment
Effective elementary teachers:
1) understand motivation and engagement and the use of the "gradual release of responsibility" approach to design learning experiences that build student self-direction and ownership of literacy learning;
2) establish classroom routines that promote independence, self-direction, collaboration and responsibility for literacy learning;
3) use a strategic combination of flexible groupings (individual, group and whole class) to meet the learning needs of each student efficiently and effectively;
4) incorporate student choices in determining reading and writing materials and activities; and
5) build collaborative classroom communities that support and engage all students in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and visually representing.
2.1 Reading, Writing, and Oral Language—Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence in use of English language arts and they know, understand, and use concepts from reading, language and child development, to teach reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening, and thinking skills and to help students successfully apply their developing skills to many different situations, materials, and ideas;

Supporting explanation

Candidates are adept at teaching the fundamentals of the English Language Arts. They model effective use of English, including its syntax, lexicon, history, varieties, literature, and oral and written composing processes. Candidates understand how elementary children develop and learn to read, write, speak, view, and listen effectively. They use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and result in their students becoming competent, effective users of language.

They teach students to read competently and encourage students' enjoyment of reading through multiple instructional strategies, technologies, and a variety of language activities. Candidates teach children to read with a balanced instructional program that includes an emphasis on use of letter/sound relationships (phonics), context (semantic and syntactic), and text that has meaning for students. In addition, candidates teach students a variety of strategies to monitor their own reading comprehension. They are also familiar with, able to use, and recommend to students many reading materials based on different topics, themes, and a variety of situations and consisting of different types, including stories, poems, biography, non-fiction, many categories of literature written for children, and texts from various subject areas. As a part of teaching students how to read, candidates encourage elementary students' understanding of their individual responses to what they read and sharing those responses. They help students think critically about what they read.

Candidates provide both instruction in and opportunities for elementary students to develop effective writing and speaking skills so that they can communicate their knowledge, ideas, understanding, insights, feelings, and experiences to other students and to parents, teachers, and other adults. They provide their students with many different writing and speaking experiences in order to teach the skills of writing and speaking. They enable students to explore the uses of different types of writing and speaking with different audiences and in different situations. Candidates help students develop their capacities to listen so that they understand, consider, respond to, and discuss spoken material, including non-fiction, stories, and poems.

Candidates know what preconceptions, error patterns, and misconceptions they may expect to find in students' understanding of how language functions in communication, and they are able to help students correct their misunderstandings of the development and uses of language. Candidates use formative and summative assessment to determine the level of students' competence in their understanding of and use of language. They use the results of such assessment to plan further instruction.