

Massachusetts Literacy Intervention Selection Tool



High-Leverage Problem

The Massachusetts 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Grade 4 reading results showed that nearly one quarter of students scored below the *basic* level. Only 45% of students attained a score of *proficient* or higher on the reading assessment. Moreover, the 2019 scores represent a decline in the percentages of students reading at the *basic*, *proficient*, or higher levels. These reading assessment scores, coupled with demonstrable and consistent gaps in academic achievement for students from low-income households, students of color, and other historically disadvantaged student groups, have led the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to prioritize improvement of early literacy proficiency as the foundational element for success in students' later education.

DESE identified a lack of guidance and resources on how to identify high-quality literacy interventions based on the intervention's efficacy and alignment with evidence-based practices (EBPs). In the absence of this support, district leaders are turning to internet searches as a primary method for finding literacy interventions. As a result, students may be receiving literacy interventions that are not well aligned with EBPs, thus contributing to the current decline in reading rates and persistent literacy achievement gaps.



R1CC Approach

The Region 1 Comprehensive Center (R1CC) project team is developing a tool, the **Literacy Intervention Selection Tool (LIST)**, to support district leaders in selecting high-quality reading interventions. The tool is modeled after and draws upon the work of EBP clearinghouses such as the National Center on Intensive Intervention's Academic Intervention Tools Chart, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), and Evidence for ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). The LIST gives district leaders the information they need to compare and select evidence-based literacy interventions, including implementation information (grade level, administration group size, technology requirements), WWC's ratings of effectiveness, and how well the intervention aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9*.

The project team was able to source most of this information through publicly available records; however, determining alignment with best practices in secondary reading required the development of an alignment rubric based on the recommendations and action steps in the practice guide. The rubric was developed with input from DESE, the Region 9 Comprehensive Center, and the National Center on Improving Literacy.

● — ⊙ — ⊙ → Key Milestones

- Determined requirements for the tool (e.g., format, design look and feel, intervention inclusion criteria, filter categories)
- Developed a website wireframe and created a tool mockup
- Cataloged literacy interventions and relevant information to populate the tool
- Developed a rubric to analyze intervention programs against the criteria of implementing the four recommendations and accompanying action steps presented in the IES practice guide [*Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9*](#)

Outputs

- LIST requirements for development and maintenance
- Wireframe and mockup of LIST
- Practice guide alignment rubric

Outcomes

- DESE staff provided qualitative feedback on the R1CC staff’s depth of knowledge of evidence-based interventions and how this knowledge has helped DESE understand the complexities of summarizing evidence that supports literacy interventions and the ways in which educators access and consume that evidence. *“I’ve learned a lot through the process of making this [tool].”*
- Upon seeing the mockup of the tool, DESE staff said,
“I love how conducive the visuals are to a quick identification of potential products.”
“This looks so good. I’m so pumped!”
“What a great product!”



“I think the products that were delivered to us are very good, and the folks that we work with—primarily the project leads—are very supportive and collaborative, and deliver exactly what we agreed upon.”

“Region 1 really helped me and my colleague understand the IES practice guide and engage with it. It was an additional piece of capacity building and learning that was supported for us. That was very valuable.”