A Guide for Completing the Kansas Birth-Grade 12 Community and District Literacy Needs Assessment

<u>Context</u>

As is the case with other needs assessments, the Kansas literacy needs assessment should focus on components of a system that have the most potential for impacting student achievement. Clearly, those components encompass more than curriculum and instruction, and therefore this exemplar needs assessment covers many factors that are relevant to students' literacy learning, such as teacher professional learning and family engagement.

This needs assessment aligns with components of the *Kansas Guide to Learning: Literacy*, the Standards for English Language Arts, the Kansas Early Learning Standards, and the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation rubrics. It also considers factors highlighted in the Kansas Education Commissioner's 2015 listening tour and subsequent Kansas State Board of Education goals. The Board goals developed from data collected during the tour highlighted the need for greater attention to individual students' needs, partnerships with families and community organizations, as well as the transitions between early childhood, the K-12 system, and postsecondary.

Districts seeking to pinpoint goal areas for work with literacy in their districts and the communities they serve may use this needs assessment as a tool to guide their work.

Suggested Process

Step 1: Build or Gather a Team.

For the purposes of conducting this needs assessment, it will be helpful for the team to include individuals working across the K-12 system, individuals from the larger school community, early learning partners, organizations that serve families in varying capacities, and community literacy organizations such as libraries, educational nonprofits, etc. For some districts, this team may be comprised of a District Leadership Team plus a few additional individuals with greater knowledge about literacy services in the communities served by the district.

Step 2: Plan the Work.

While this exemplar needs assessment *could be* discussed by the team in a closed-door meeting, it is recommended that the team meet, review the assessment together, and discuss initial perceptions as a group. During this initial meeting, it is also recommended that the team discuss and determine what further information may be needed in order to most accurately complete the needs assessment. For example, perhaps a member of the team needs to visit with several local childcare providers to gain a more complete perspective on the district's current work in developing those partnerships. Perhaps the team needs to develop and distribute a survey in order to better understand how well it is implementing a culturally-responsive curriculum.

During Step 2, the team should develop an understanding of what is included on the literacy needs assessment, and develop a plan for how to gain the most accurate snapshot of the state of literacy in their district. This plan should of course include a plan for how to follow up with the team and complete the needs assessment with all relevant voices represented.
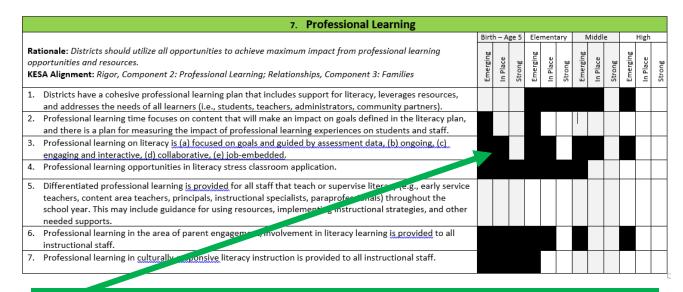
Step 3: Complete the Work.

Once the team develops a plan for completing the needs assessment, it should set to work on following its plan. While it may be tempting to have only one or two individuals working on seeking out information, districts are encouraged to leverage the support of community members, families, students, business partners, and others who seem relevant to literacy learning in the communities they serve. Some partners who may be helpful in either gathering or providing information related to literacy include: Early childhood educators, K-12 teachers and administrators, higher education faculty and administrators, parents, local government officials, health care providers, business leaders, religious institutions, and community organizations.

Step 4: Gather/Enter Data.

Using the *Kansas Birth-Grade 12 Community and District Literacy Needs Assessment* tool, the team should arrive at consensus around a final assessment of the state of birth-grade 12 literacy for their community and district. The tool is constructed so that boxes can be darkened in accordance with a team's assessment, and can provide a quick visual of the gaps in literacy education as found by the team. (See example below.)

7. Professional Learning

	Birth – Age 5			Elementary			Middle			High		
Rationale: *Districts should utilize all opportunities to achieve maximum impact from professional learning opportunities and resources.* KESA Alignment: *Rigor, Component 2: Professional Learning; Relationships, Component 3: Families*	Emerging	In Place	Strong	Emerging	In Place	Strong	Emerging	In Place	Strong	Emerging	In Place	Strong
1. Districts have a cohesive professional learning plan that includes support for literacy, leverages resources, and addresses the needs of all learners (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, community partners).												
2. Professional learning time focuses on content that will make an impact on goals defined in the literacy plan, and there is a plan for measuring the impact of professional learning experiences on students and staff.												
3. Professional learning on literacy is (a) focused on goals and guided by assessment data, (b) ongoing, (c) engaging and interactive, (d) collaborative, (e) job-embedded.												
4. Professional learning opportunities in literacy stress classroom application.												
5. Differentiated professional learning is provided for all staff that teach or supervise literacy (e.g., early service teachers, content area teachers, principals, instructional specialists, paraprofessionals) throughout the school year. This may include guidance for using resources, implementing instructional strategies, and other needed supports.												
6. Professional learning in the area of parent engagement/involvement in literacy learning is provided to all instructional staff.												
7. Professional learning in culturally-responsive literacy instruction is provided to all instructional staff.												

> Boxes are filled in for each age span and criterion beginning with "Emerging" and continuing up to the level corresponding with current practice. The resulting visual shows the degree of implementation for each of the criteria within each age spans and across the birth-grade 12 spectrum.

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> If nothing is in place for a given criterion, the team should leave the space blank.

> Reminder: Teams should include members with first-hand, relevant knowledge of activity within each age span (e.g., birth-age 5 partners).

Definitions for ratings:

*Emerging-*Teams should mark criteria as "emerging" if a process or practice has begun to take place in a system. Newly-implemented initiatives should be marked as emerging.
*In Place-*Teams should mark criteria as "in place" if a process or practice has been implemented for more than 6 months and is a regular and ongoing process or practice within a system.
*Strong-*Teams should mark criteria as "strong" if a process or practice has been implemented for at least one year, is a regular and ongoing process or practice within a system, is adopted with fidelity by most individuals within a system, and is a monitored part of the system's operations.

Step 5: Analyze/Discuss Findings.
Once the data are gathered and reflected on the tool provided, the team should spend some time reviewing the results and discussing areas of strength and weakness. This discussion is intended to help define goal areas across the birth-grade 12 system, and identify specific action steps associated with selected goals. For example, in the image on the previous page, it seems that differentiated professional learning in the area of literacy is a challenge for this system, and might be an appropriate goal for the team. The group could discuss some appropriate action steps to include in their comprehensive Birth-Grade 12 Literacy Plan and a timeline for implementation of their selected actions.

Step 6: Develop Comprehensive Birth-Grade 12 Literacy Plan.
This needs assessment is intended to help districts develop a Comprehensive Birth-Grade 12 Literacy Plan that is aligned with Kansas Standards, the Kansas State Literacy Plan (*Kansas Guide to Learning: Literacy*), and the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation rubrics. District teams should use the results of this assessment to develop a plan to target areas of weakness as well as build on strengths in the area of literacy.

Outline for District Comprehensive Birth-Grade 12 Literacy Plan

I.   District Context – Clearly and concisely, describe the district and the community or communities it serves. Explain in broad terms the current state of literacy support and services for families and learners the district serves. (*e.g., What services are families currently using that support literacy development for children beginning at birth? What professional learning around literacy practices does the district currently support? What evidence do you have to suggest that learners and families the district serves are in need of additional support in the area of literacy?*)

II.   Needs Assessment – Clearly and concisely, describe the literacy needs assessment and process the district used to inform the creation of this plan. (*e.g., Who was involved in gathering data and determining scores on the assessment? When did meetings occur?)*
  A. Describe findings in the area of *Leadership.*
  B. Describe findings in the area of *Community and Partnerships.*
  C. Describe findings in the area of *Standards-aligned Curriculum.*
  D. Describe findings in the area of *Standards-aligned and Evidence-based Instruction.*
  E. Describe findings in the area of *Transitions.*
  F. Describe findings in the area of *Data-based Decision-making.*
  G. Describe findings in the area of *Professional Learning.*
  H. Describe how goal areas were selected.
  I.   Describe how timelines and budgets were determined.

III. Goal 1 – Clearly and concisely, describe Goal 1.
    A. Explain what data inform Goal 1.
    B. Explain a plan for addressing Goal 1, including:
       1. a thorough description of what will be done and who will be impacted,
       2. a timeline for implementation,
       3. staff who will be responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed,
       4. a plan for monitoring implementation efforts and making needed adjustments, and
       5. a plan for determining impact of actions.

IV. Goal 2 – Clearly and concisely, describe Goal 2.
    A. Explain what data inform Goal 2.
    B. Explain a plan for addressing Goal 2, including:
       1. a thorough description of what will be done and who will be impacted,
       2. timeline(s) for implementation,
       3. names of staff who will be responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed,
       4. a plan for monitoring implementation efforts and making needed adjustments, and
       5. a plan for determining impact of actions on learners.

V. Goal 3 – Clearly and concisely, describe Goal 3.
    A. Explain what data inform Goal 3.
    B. Explain a plan for addressing Goal 3, including:
       1. a thorough description of what will be done and who will be impacted,
       2. timeline(s) for implementation,
       3. names of staff who will be responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed,
       4. a plan for monitoring implementation efforts and making needed adjustments, and
       5. a plan for determining impact of actions on learners.

*Districts are encouraged to select 3-5 literacy goals. The plan should include information as shown above for each selected goal.

VI. Concluding Statement

Step 7: Implement-Monitor-Adjust-Implement-Monitor-Adjust…

Once developed, the district should work toward full implementation in accordance with its proposed literacy plan. The district should also have a plan for monitoring implementation and making needed adjustments throughout the implementation cycle.