

Greetings, Southampton County Public Schools' Families,

Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) Full Implementation is well underway in Southampton County Public Schools (SCPS) in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Teachers and staff have been provided extensive training on VLA approved instructional programs, information and resources have been pushed out to families via report cards/the VLA Kickoff Event/Title I Night/Tuesday Talks, and students are adjusting to the new instructional programs and routines put into place. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) initiative comes with significant changes in the classroom and with literacy instruction; provided below is a QR Code to the Division Literacy Plan (DLP), the division's Literacy Vision as well as a summary of the efforts for Implementation.

SCPS Division Literacy Plan



VIRGINIA
LITERACY ACT



Southampton County Public Schools Literacy Vision

Through the combined efforts of key stakeholders*, the students of Southampton County Public Schools will be provided literacy instruction anchored in the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) & rooted in science-based reading research (SBRR). Systematic, explicit instruction will be provided using best practices for evidence-based literacy instruction (EBLI) through:

1. Daily **Phonemic and Phonological Awareness** instruction.
2. Targeted practice opportunities with **foundational reading skills** using a **structured phonics approach** in the primary grades (K-2). Students in Grades 3-5 will also receive foundational reading skills phonics instruction via the core instructional program.
3. Consistent opportunities to build **fluency, comprehension, vocabulary knowledge** and knowledge of the world using authentic text on a wide variety of topics.
4. Using text evidence to make meaning of complex texts in **writing** or through speaking.
5. Targeted intervention provided for students falling in the high risk band on the Virginia Language and Literacy Screener (VALLS).

*Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to students, parents/guardians, teachers/staff, administrators, and community partners.

★ The **SCPS Division Literacy Plan (DLP)** was submitted to the VDOE in July and **fully approved on August 1, 2024**. Additional adjustments were made to the plan and submitted to the state on December 6, 2024. The DLP includes the division's plan for comprehensive communication, use of high-quality instructional materials, evidence-based reading research training, student assessments

and progress monitoring, assessing division level progress, and engaging families, caregivers and the community.

- ★ A **VLA Kickoff Event** took place on August 26 at Southampton High School. The following resources were distributed:



- Communication of SCPS Literacy Vision
- Information about Literacy Programs
- VLA Informational Flyer
- Developmentally Appropriate Decodable Text
- Letter Cards to practice

All of these resources are still available. Please use the QR code to fill out a brief Google Form request to obtain a copy of these resources:

- ★ **Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) and VDOE** have partnered to provide a **Canvas Course** to all grade level content area teachers, special education teachers and EL Specialists in grades K-8. These courses are designed to give teachers background knowledge in the science of reading and to prepare them for successful VLA Implementation. All SCPS teachers that fit the criteria are required to complete the course prior to September 1, 2025.

Additional professional development has been provided in the following areas for classroom teachers, reading specialists and special education teachers:

- ★ District VLA Implementation Expectations
- ★ Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Into Reading Core Reading Program
- ★ Learning A-Z
- ★ SPIRE Intervention Program

- ★ **VLP Regional Reading Coaches:** VLP/VDOE are providing regional reading coaches to act as a level of support for divisions during implementation. We are pleased to welcome Nathalie Rose & Stephanie Pressley from Virginia Literacy Partnerships as our Regional Reading Coaches!
- ★ **Monthly Walkthrough Information:** Walkthrough observations will occur monthly in literacy classrooms; these observations began in September. Teachers are provided a list of “look-fors” prior to their observation.
- ★ **Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS) Certification:** VALLSS replaces Virginia’s Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (formerly PALS) system. All SCPS teachers administering VALLSS were required to complete the VALLSS training modules prior to administering the VALLSS assessment.
- ★ **VALLSS:** SCPS students in grades K-3 are required by the division to be assessed during the Fall and Mid-year Window. Only students in grades K-2 are required to be assessed during the Spring Window. Students in grade 3 that currently have a Student Reading Plan in place will also be assessed during the Spring VALLSS Window.
- ★ **Student Reading Plans:** As required by the VDOE, all students falling in the high-risk band range on the VALLSS assessment are required to have a student reading plan. At this time, all parents of

students requiring a student reading plan have been contacted and reading plans are in place. Student reading plans will be adjusted as needed following the Mid-Year VALLSS assessments.

- ★ **2024 English Standards:** In addition to full implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act, Virginia educators are implementing the new 2024 English Standards of Learning as mandated by the Virginia Department of Education. These standards were provided in the packet that was distributed in October at each elementary school's Title I event. If you did not attend this event, this information was sent home in a folder with your student. Please contact Linda Drake or Lorraine Greene Whitehead at 757-653-2692 if you need an additional copy of this information.
- ★ Additional parent resources are provided to Southampton County Public Schools' parents, guardians, and caregivers via the SCPS Parent Resource Center (Title I Building).
- ★ Fluency of letters and letter sounds is detrimental to the success of your young reader. Please see the following videos demonstrating proper Alphabet Sound Practice:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8QBPBPTOR0>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIN0HzzPWJY>
- ★ A copy of this letter is also located on the division SCPS VLA Implementation Page:
 - <https://www.southampton.k12.va.us/Page/6883>

Please do not hesitate to contact Raechelle Doyle (Curriculum Specialist) or Kelli Gillette (Director of Curriculum & Instruction) at 757-653-2692 with any questions you may have.