



DCPS Literacy News

What Families Need to Know

What is the Virginia Literacy Act?*	The Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) is a new law starting in the 2024-2025 school year. It helps school divisions improve the teaching of reading and writing. The VLA provides teachers, families, and students the tools to guide teaching and support learning.
How does the VLA improve teaching literacy?*	One of the most important parts of the VLA is about how reading is taught. This year, every student in kindergarten through grade 8 will be taught using the methods and materials that years of research tell us are the best ways to teach reading. Teachers of grades K-8 are receiving additional training on these methods, including our Special Education, English Language Learning, and Resource teachers – even our principals have been trained. Importantly, the VLA builds from what teachers and schools are doing and ensures they have access to these materials and training opportunities throughout the year.
What is the Science of Reading?*	For more than 50 years, scientists have studied how our brains learn. The Science of Reading is research that helps identify the best methods and strategies for teaching children how to read.
What core reading curriculum is used in DCPS?	Through the VLA, school divisions have seven options of core reading instructional programs for students in grades K-5. Dinwiddie County Public Schools (DCPS) uses Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Reading Virginia.
What are the components of HMH Into Reading?*	HMH Into Reading lessons focus on five different ways students learn reading and writing. These lessons include writing practice, building foundational skills, reading authentic literature, learning and practicing vocabulary, and flexible skill-based groups.

HMH: Reading and Vocabulary*	Students read books that capture their attention and teach them about the world. Students have their own workbooks where they can read, respond to reading, and write down their ideas and make connections. Teachers help students learn how to make meaning of words they don't know. Expanding vocabulary increases reading comprehension across all content areas.
HMH: Knowledge Building*	Each HMH Into Reading module is based on a different science or a social studies concept. This helps students learn more about topics that interest them and helps them connect to learning they are doing in other subjects.
HMH: Structured Literacy, Foundational Skills, and Writing*	Students learn letter sounds, how to put sounds together to read words and how to break sounds apart to spell words. Students learn how to spell words that have regular or unusual spelling patterns. Students in upper grades learn where words come from and how adding beginnings or endings to words can change their meaning. Teachers lead students through a step-by-step writing process. Daily practice and feedback helps students become better writers.
What are flexible skill-based groups?	Teachers, reading specialists, or reading interventionists provide students with one-on-one or small group teaching. These small skill-based groups may change daily or weekly depending on the needs of the students.
What is Lexia?	All students in grades K-5 have access to Lexia Core 5, a program built on the Science of Reading. This is a research-proven program that accelerates the development of literacy skills for students of all abilities, helping them make the critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Students can access Lexia through their Clever Portal.
How do I know which skills my child is learning at school?	Visit the DCPS Parent Curriculum Site. Click on your child's grade level, then English. The 2024 VDOE English Standards of Learning can also be found on this site. Visit our DCPS Literacy page for more resources.

*Information adapted from the Virginia Department of Education and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt / Check your email to access links on this flyer.