



## KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

### BLUEPRINT FOR LITERACY

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kansas economy has consistently shown signs of growth over the past five years and is expected to add 54,000 new jobs by 2030, 80% of which require a bachelors, masters, or doctoral degrees. At the same time, significant headwinds exist. Key among the headwinds is the persistent trend that 33% of students have limited reading ability (Level 1, see performance trends chart).

#### All Student 3 Year Performance Trends

K.S.A. 72-5178 Accountability Report 2023/2024 Kansas State Department of Education

LEVEL	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Level 1	33.94	32.89	32.77
Level 2	33.95	33.91	33.67
Level 3	24.52	24.99	25.28
Level 4	7.57	8.18	8.27
% Level 2 or above	66.04	67.08	67.22

Level 1 Limited ability to demonstrate knowledge and skills fo grade standards

Level 2 Basic ability

Level 3 Proficient ability

Level 4 Advanced ability

Research and investigative reporting point directly to the so-called reading wars of the past two decades as a significant contributor to our literacy crisis in Kansas and across the nation. The debates spanning the past 25 years about how to teach reading have resulted in wide variation in educator preparation, leaving many educators without the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach all children to read.

The persistent reading wars are finally coming to an end but not without costs felt in every family, every community, and every state in our nation. The good news is the Science of Reading is now clear; direct, explicit, systematic, and cumulative. The associated instruction, known as Structured Literacy, is necessary to ensure all children learn to read. States across the nation are responding by recognizing literacy as an economic imperative. Ohio, Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Indiana, New York, and countless others have targeted investment and strategic action to advance educator skills in the application of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy with the goal to ensure all children learn to read.

Kansas responded as well, first by establishing the Dyslexia Task Force and implementing a series of recommendations for schools and school districts, then by elevating literacy as a priority in school improvement, accreditation, and licensure. Most recently Senate Bill 438, signed into law in April 2024, established the Blueprint for Literacy, making literacy education an economic priority for the state.

SB 438 is unique as the law outlines a series of approaches the Kansas Board of Regents and higher education system must take to improve educator preparation and educator workforce development. The state legislature appropriated \$10 million to support Blueprint implementation.

Progress: By April 2025, Science of Reading I and II application courses were developed and implemented across all public university educator preparation programs; professional learning and graduate courses are being designed; a Foundations in the Science of Reading: Understanding and Applying Structured Literacy Principles I and II was developed for in-service educators and available across the public universities and independent colleges by fall 2025, with most universities offering the course beginning in June 2025. Full Blueprint implementation is well underway and can be described as moving with strategic urgency to ensure educators have the support needed for success in the classroom.

However, recent months have illuminated significant challenges. Challenges with any new initiative are expected; what could not be anticipated is the significant pull back in state financial investment after only nine months of implementation. The KBOR and Blueprint Advisory Committee remains fully committed to equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach every child to read. The strategic plan is critical to communicating what is necessary to ensure all children learn to read well. Evidence of impact the Blueprint strategies are beginning to demonstrate will be important to help inform policy makers and leaders why investing in literacy education is beneficial to all and critical to Kansas families.

The challenge of funding is an opportunity to reset. The Advisory Committee recommends to set aside the plan to establish Centers of Excellence in Literacy, focusing strategic actions on two imperatives. Imperative 1: Invest in literacy as an economic and social imperative; Imperative 2: Empower educators with high-impact preparation and professional learning.

The strategies and actions outlined in the Blueprint for Literacy Strategic Plan are a set of practical actions to advance educators' knowledge and skills in the application of Structured Literacy. Investing literacy as an economic imperative in an investment in educators leading to every child learning to read. There is no stronger or more important return on investment than opening the door to literacy for every Kansan.