Literacy Focus
of the Month
Grades Pre-k-5

“The more ways we teach, the more students we are going to reach.”
– Betty Hollas

Office of Elementary Education and Reading
September Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

Elementary Focus of the Month – Phonological Awareness and Phonics

1. Why is it important to set the purpose and engage students in a lesson opener or anticipatory set before instruction takes place?

2. Why is it beneficial for the teacher to activate students' phonemic awareness knowledge at the beginning of his/her daily phonics routine?

3. What happens if segmenting and blending of words is not modeled for students during the phonics routine?

4. How can the teacher's use of a phoneme-grapheme map improve students' decoding and encoding skills?

October Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

Elementary Focus of the Month – Vocabulary Instruction

1. What are the different ways in which students engage with the new vocabulary words?

2. What types of vocabulary words are chosen for explicit instruction (Tier I, Tier II, Tier III, multiple meanings, etc.)?

3. How are the vocabulary words incorporated into the lesson after explicit instruction?

4. What are possible opportunities for the teacher to reference the vocabulary words throughout the week?
November Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

Elementary Focus of the Month – Oral Reading and Fluency

1. What types of questions could be included to build comprehension with the repeated readings?

2. What are possible opportunities for the teacher to reference this instruction in centers or in the student’s independent work?

3. Discuss the effects of the shape/color/number cards to encourage student engagement and effective oral reading strategies during small group instruction.

December Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

Elementary Focus of the Month – Comprehension

1. What supports may be used for struggling readers during a close read? What procedures can be utilized for advanced readers?

2. How can this strategy be transferred into a small-group learning center?

3. How might the close reading strategy impact writing in response to text?
January Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

Elementary Focus of the Month – Writing Connected to Text

1. What is a benefit of using the Top Hat graphic organizer over the Venn Diagram for young and struggling writers?

2. What is the benefit of teaching or reviewing conjunctions and transitional phrases prior to having students use the Top Hat graphic organizer?

3. How can you apply this strategy to write across different content areas?

4. How can you make this a collaborative writing activity to encourage younger students and struggling writers to write?

February Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

Elementary Focus of the Month – Cooperative Learning

1. How does fostering student discussion through cooperative learning increase student success?

2. What information could the teacher learn about her students during the activity shown in the video?

3. What routines and procedures would a teacher need to establish in the classroom to have a successful cooperative learning environment?

4. In what ways could the activity be scaffolded to meet all students’ needs?
March/April Literacy Focus of the Month
Guiding Questions for Participants

**Elementary Focus of the Month – Before, During, and After Reading (BDA) Strategies**

1. How does utilizing *before reading* strategies increase student interest and comprehension?

2. What information to modify instruction could the teacher learn from using *before reading* strategies?

3. What routines and procedures need to be established prior to utilizing partner or choral reading as part of a *during reading* strategy?

4. What information could the teacher learn about his/her students while utilizing the following strategies?
   a. K, W, L Chart
   b. Partner Reading
   c. Story Map
   d. Exit Slips

5. In what ways could the following strategies be scaffolded to meet all students’ needs?
   a. K, W, L Chart
   b. Partner Reading
   c. Story Map
   d. Exit Slips