# PRINCIPALS LEAD THE WAY
## Top Ten Things Every Literacy Leader Needs to Know

**KY READS TO SUCCEED**

## 1 Science of Reading

The Science of Reading confirms that reading is not hard-wired and must be developed through explicit, systematic instruction that builds the brain's neuropathways (Lexia, 2022). Literacy At a Glance identifies six critical components—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and building knowledge—aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards.

## 2 Science of Reading Models

The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) and Scarborough's Reading Rope (Hollis Scarborough, 2001) illustrate how reading proficiency depends on both word recognition and language comprehension. These models clarify that skilled reading requires multiple interrelated components developed through intentional instruction.

## 3 The Need to Shift to Structured Literacy

Structured literacy emphasizes explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction in essential literacy components. Decodable text and frequent practice support application of learned phonetic patterns. Key resources include Key Actions for Meeting the Needs of All K–3 Readers and Writers, Typical Literacy Practices vs. Structured Literacy Practices, and Why the Three-Cueing Model Hinders Reading Proficiency.

## 4 Knowledge-Building Instruction

Knowledge-building instruction begins with high-quality, complex texts, using standards in service of comprehension rather than as the starting point. Instruction is organized around related topics so students build vocabulary and understanding over time through intentionally sequenced lessons, discussions, and activities that deepen meaning.

## 5 Tier 1 Core Comprehensive High-Quality Instructional Resource (HQIR)

Tier 1 HQIRs provide the foundation for equitable access to grade-level learning. Leaders should adopt KDE-approved HQIRs and focus on implementation of key actions: explicit foundational skills instruction, engagement with complex texts, purposeful small-group instruction, and sufficient instructional time aligned to HQIR requirements.

## 6 Professional Learning Communities

PLCs build coherence by supporting shared understanding of HQIR design and instructional expectations. Effective PLCs use Intellectual Preparation and Unit/Lesson Internalization Protocols, align professional learning to the Reading/Writing vision, and monitor progress using the Curriculum-Based Professional Learning PLC Observation Tool.

## 7 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): Tier 1 Instruction

Tier 1 instruction within Kentucky's MTSS Framework provides high-quality, evidence-based learning for all students. Leaders should ensure universal Tier 1 instruction through the adopted HQIR, leverage embedded differentiation and scaffolds, use the KyMTSS Self-Assessment Tool, and align Tier 2 interventions to Tier 1 instruction.

## 8 Learning Acceleration and Intervention

Learning acceleration prioritizes access to grade-level content by integrating missing skills through a just-in-time approach grounded in strong Tier 1 instruction. PLCs support this work through intellectual preparation, lesson internalization, and curriculum-embedded assessments, while systems focus on closing gaps without remediation.

## 9 Assessments

Assessment supports data-based decision-making through universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring. Leaders use schoolwide and curriculum-based data to evaluate Tier 1 effectiveness and guide targeted instruction through PLC student-work analysis.

## 10 Effective Feedback

Effective feedback strengthens instruction and supports implementation integrity. Leaders use the Instructional Practice Guides for Foundational Skills and Comprehension, the Curriculum Implementation Monitoring Toolkit, and the Six Stages of Effective Feedback to guide focused observation, coaching, and instructional conversations.