

Greetings, Southampton County Public Schools' Families,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your hard work and support in the first year of Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) Implementation in Grades K-3. It has been a tremendous start to what we know will continue to be a truly beneficial experience in the lives of our children. Being a strong reader opens so many opportunities for our students and this strong beginning of implementation would not have been possible without the amount of support provided by our educators and you, the families of Southampton County!

In this newsletter, you will find current up-to-date information regarding 4-8 VLA Implementation & VALLSS Testing. The first year of 4-8 full implementation will take place during the 25-26 school year. We will provide additional information when students return to school in September.

SCPS Revised Division Literacy Plan

The most recent division literacy plan is posted on the division VLA Implementation Page. This plan will be updated this summer to reflect changes in grades K-8 for the 25-26 school year. You can access this page at <https://www.southampton.k12.va.us/Page/6883>.

In addition to the Division Literacy Plan (DLP), you can also access the following information:



- Virginia Literacy Act (K-3) Information Sheet
- Superintendent's Letter to Families (K-3)
- VLA Parent Presentation for Title I (K-3)
- 2025 2nd Nine Weeks Parent Letter
- Division Literacy Leader Contact Information
- Building Reading Specialist Contact Information
- Key Responsibilities of the Dyslexia Advisor and Reading Specialists



Southampton County Public Schools Revised Literacy Vision K-8

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.(K-2)
2. Targeted practice opportunities with foundational reading skills using a structured phonics approach in the elementary grades (K-5). Students in Grades 6-8 will receive phonics and/or word analysis instruction based on individual student needs through core, supplemental, and intervention programs.
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 new **SCPS Biennial Division Literacy Plan (DLP)** for the 25-26 and 26-27 school year will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education on or before June 30, 2025. 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. The plan will continue carryout of those practices already in place and add 4-8 implementation information.
- ★ A **VLA Kickoff Event** will take place on August 27 (following Open House) at Southampton Middle School for students in grades 6-8. The following resources will be distributed:
 - Communication of SCPS Literacy Vision
 - Information about Literacy Programs
 - VLA Informational Flyer
- ★ **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. Teachers new to SCPS in the 25-26 school year that have not taken the course will be required to complete the course during the upcoming school year.

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

- ★ District VLA Implementation Expectations
- ★ Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt's Into Reading (K-5) & Into Literature (6-8) Core Reading Programs
- ★ Learning A-Z
- ★ SPIRE Intervention Program
- ★ 95% Core Phonics Program
- ★ Lexia Core5 (K-5) & Lexia PowerUp (6-8)
- ★ **VLP Regional Reading Coaches:** VLP/VDOE are providing regional reading coaches to act as a level of support for divisions during implementation. Nathalie Rose & Stephanie Pressley from Virginia Literacy Partnerships have been an integral part of our success in our first year of implementation. Nathalie and Stephanie are scheduled to meet with our Reading Specialist Team this summer to discuss VALLSS data and how we can better use the data to support student growth. We look forward to our continued work with them next school year.
- ★ **Monthly Walkthrough Information:** Walkthrough observations will occur monthly in literacy classrooms in grades K-8 during the 25-26 school year; these observations will begin 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. SCPS teachers administering VALLSS will be required to complete the VALLSS training modules prior to administering the VALLSS assessment.
- ★ **K-3 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.

- ★ **4-8 VALLSS:** SCPS rising 4th through 8th graders that failed their Spring 2025 Grade 3 through Grade 7 Reading SOL are required to be screened using the new VALLSS 4-8 Screener and receive intervention services using Benchmark Phonics Intervention Program (K-5), Benchmark Phonics Intervention Program (K-5 Special Education Students, or Lexia PowerUp (6-8).
- ★ **K-3 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. Parents will be invited to participate in the development of the Student Reading Plan.
- ★ **4-8 Student Reading Plans:** Any student that did not pass their Spring Reading SOL will be required to have a Student Reading Plan in place. Parents will be invited to participate in the development of the Student Reading Plan.
- ★ **2024 English Standards:** In addition to full implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act, Virginia educators implemented the new 2024 English Standards of Learning during the 24-25 school year as mandated by the Virginia Department of Education. A copy of these standards are available by request. All K-5 students will receive a copy of their grade level reading SOL's at your home school's Title I Reading Night as required by Title I Federal Program expectations. You can also find these standards on the VDOE website below:

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/english-reading-literacy/standards-of-learning>

- ★ The following digital programs will be available for students to work in this summer. They can access these programs by logging in through Clever.:
 - Lexia
 - Learning a-z
 - IXL
- ★ K-5 students received summer reading packets courtesy of Title I funding. These books have already been sent home with students. These packets include books (decodable for grades K-2), corresponding activities and parent information. These books are a great way to keep your child reading and engaged over the summer.
- ★ Additional parent resources for students in grades K-5 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.