



## HLPs in Action: Literacy Legislation meets High Leverage Practices

Virginia lawmakers have worked to address the concerns of parents and advocates of students with dyslexia. Thus, legislation has evolved from acknowledging dyslexia to directing institutions of teacher education to explore evidence-based practices toward improving teacher training. This article begins with a brief review of pertinent legislation outlining how laws have led to the correlation of legislation and instructional practice. It continues with the call and rationale for a shift in reading instruction and resources on evidence-based practices, including [High-Leverage Practices](#) (HLPs).

### A brief review of pertinent legislation in Virginia:

**2016:** [Dyslexia awareness training](#) for initial and renewal for all licensed teachers and the appointment of designated division Dyslexia Advisors was mandated.

**2018:** [Institutions of higher education that prepare reading specialists](#) were required to include

information on identification of and instruction for students with Dyslexia. The focus is on increasing the collective knowledge relative to identification and instruction for students with dyslexia.

**March 2020:** The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SHEV) was directed to [facilitate a coalition of colleges/universities to gather and share information on the latest “Evidence-Based” methods and approaches to educate K-12 students in reading.](#) This will include an exploration into the use of multi-sensory structured language education for students with dyslexia. This information will be used to guide changes in teacher education in the area of reading.

Guided by advocacy groups and legislation, leaders of teacher preparation programs have been called upon to investigate what the “science of reading” has to tell us about reading instruction. It is timely to explore the correlations between legislation and the High Leverage Practices for Inclusive classrooms developed by the Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center, (2019). While all of the Instructional HLPs are applicable to good reading instruction, three in particular, [HLPs 14 - Use Cognitive & Metacognitive Strategies](#), [16- Use Explicit Instruction](#) and [20-Provide Intensive Instruction](#), promote extensive explicit instruction and cognitive strategies that are evidenced in the “Science of Reading.”

**Get Ready** to learn about the connections between HLPs and Reading Science by checking out these resources and websites:

- [High Leverage Practices in Special Education: Instruction](#)
- [HLP 16 Checklist: Use Explicit Instruction](#)
- [High Leverage & Evidence-Based Practices: A Promising Pair for All Learners](#)
- [At a Loss for Words: How a Flawed Idea is Teaching Millions of Kids to be Poor Readers](#) by Emily Hanford
- [Structured Literacy and Typical Literacy Practices](#) by Louise Spear-Swerling

**Get Set** to embrace a paradigm shift! In February of 2020, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Dr. James Lane, lead a literacy summit for the leaders of Virginia’s school divisions. SOL and NAEP reading data provided a rationale for a paradigm shift to phonics instruction that is direct, explicit and guided by a clear scope and sequence. Additionally, phonics instruction should include frequent, cumulative review, and address all 5 critical components of reading instruction identified by the NRP (2000). It was noted that phonics instruction should span all grades. A seven-step plan to improve literacy in VA was revealed, entitled, [7 Strategies to Improve Literacy Instruction in VA](#). First on the list was to “Enhance Awareness of the **Science of Reading** for All Learners.” Co-presenter, Dr. Emily Solari, cited decades of research confirming the value of direct, explicit, and systematic phonics as the most reliable way to teach children how to decode words. It was clearly stated that certain common practices, such as the 3-cueing system, which teaches children to decode by relying on context, syntax and lastly grapho-phonetics is not evidence-based. The [structured literacy](#) approach is promoted by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) for students with dyslexia. It is touted as a method that does no harm; meaning that students, in general, benefit from the methods and procedures that are integral to the approach.

Here are some resources to help you get a feel for the basics:

- [“A Powerful Approach to Reading Instruction”](#) by Jessica Hamman
- [Multisensory Structured Language Programs: Content and Principles of Instruction](#)
- [VDOE’s Comprehensive Literacy Webinar Series](#)

**Go** toward the future by learning the essentials of evidence-based reading instruction, including ways to effectively teach reading virtually. Start with these online resources:

- [An Explanation of Structured Literacy, and a Comparison to Balanced Literacy](#)
- [Evidence-Based Reading Instruction for Grades K-5](#)
- [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade: A What Works Clearinghouse Educator’s Practice Guide](#)
- [Virtual Literacy Resources on TTAC Online](#)
- [UFLI Virtual Teaching Resource Hub](#)

## References: General

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## References: Legislation

[Regulations governing licensure.](#) § 22.1-298.1. (2016)

[Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.](#) § 22.1-253.13:2 (2016)

[Education preparation programs; reading specialists; dyslexia.](#) § 23.1-902.1. (2018)

[SB 904 Higher educational institutions, public; dyslexia and literacy.](#) (2020)

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