

10 Essential District Commitments

Superintendents, assistant superintendents, and curriculum and special education directors play a critical role in ensuring that systems and practices are implemented consistently and with integrity in support of student achievement.¹ The purpose of this document is to identify a small and practical set of commitments school district–level leaders can make in order to support implementation of the MAISA GELN *Essential Practices* in every classroom, every day. Utilizing these ten commitments, leaders can build school district capacity to improve literacy by identifying systematic, effective practices and tools that can be implemented across the district as part of the continuous improvement process. The commitments outlined below serve as a starting point for a sustained commitment to district-wide implementation of the GELN *Essential Practices in Literacy*.

1. Commit to Knowing What is Available



KNOW

... what is available at <https://literacyessentials.org> and commit as a district to implementation.



DO

- Ensure annually that every childcare provider, PreK-12 teacher, principal, and literacy coach in your district has a copy of the *Essential Practices* that are most relevant to them.
- Prioritize efforts related to implementation of the *Essential Practices* within the school district budget.

2. Commit to the School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy



KNOW

... about the [School-Wide and Center-Wide Essentials](#) and how these organizational practices systematically support the implementation of the *Essential Practices*.



DO

- Ensure that principals and literacy leadership teams:
- Receive training on the school-wide and center-wide *Essential Practices*.
 - Utilize the screening tool.
 - Use digging deeper assessments aligned to the screening tool, in partnership with your ISD, to plan the next steps in implementation of the *Essential Practices*.
 - Include the *Essential Practices* as a standing agenda item in PLC's and/or staff meetings.

3-5. Commit to the Essential Instructional Practices Birth-12



KNOW

... that the *Essential Practices* provide a birth-12 continuum of literacy practices.

... that free [online modules](#) are available for professional learning around the *Essential Practices* developed in partnership with leading literacy researchers.



DO

Ensure that all (birth-12) educators are provided ongoing and job-embedded professional development around the *Essential Practices*.

In partnership with your curriculum leaders and/or principals, establish a plan to utilize these resources in PLC's over a sustained period of time.

... that ISD instructional leaders are your best connection to the work of the *Essential Practices in Literacy Instruction* and that ISD literacy coaches are extensively trained in the *Essential Practices*.

Connect and collaborate with your ISD instructional leaders and coaches to work toward implementation of the *Essential Practices*.

6-8. Commit to Intentional and Research-Aligned Coaching Practices

KNOW

... about the [Coaching Essentials](#) and how literacy coaching increases teacher expertise and positively influences student achievement.

... about the [Michigan Department of Education Coaching Model](#).

... about the *Essential Practices* in [Early Literacy K to 3: Self-Reflection and Planning Guide](#).

DO

Ensure that the [Coaching Essentials](#) are considered in the hiring process and day-to-day duties of literacy coaches and teachers within your district.

Ensure that your principals, coaches, and leadership teams are following and reflecting on the model using the model continuum.

Ensure principals and/or literacy coaches are working with teachers to complete this self-reflection and using it to inform the work of literacy coaches and professional development across your district.

9. Commit to Continuous Improvement

KNOW

... that the *Essential Practices* and the tools provided should drive the literacy focus of your Michigan continuous improvement process (MICIP).

DO

Integrate the tools linked in this document to assess and reflect on the implementation of the *Essential Practices* to inform your MICIP.

10. Commit to Parent and Community Collaboration

KNOW

... that the *Essential Practices* call for parent and community involvement to ensure a whole-child approach to literacy.

DO

Use the *Essential Practices* to guide the connection with parents and community members about their role in literacy development. Feature the *Essential Practices* at open houses, parent-teacher conferences, Board of Education meetings, Great Start Collaborative and other multi-agency meetings, and other school and community events.

¹ Goodwin, Bryan, Greg Cameron, and Heather Hein. 2016. *Balanced Leadership for Powerful Learning: Tools for Achieving Success in Your School*. Cheyenne, WY: McREL International.