

Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Framework
April 6, 2026

This document includes domains, standards, and competencies developed through a collaborative partnership among the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, and the Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force. This work was supported by funding from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, as approved by the Executive Committee of the Georgia Council on Literacy, and directly aligns with Georgia’s Literacy Plan: *Vision 2030*.

Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Framework

Acknowledgements

The Georgia Literacy Coach Domains, Standards, and Competencies were developed through a collaborative partnership among the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center at Georgia College & State University, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, and the Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force (CTF). The CTF was comprised of literacy leaders, practicing literacy coaches, educators, higher education faculty, and regional and state partners committed to improving literacy outcomes through greater consistency and coherence in coaching practices. Please see a list of contributors in Appendix A.

The Task Force was charged with developing and refining a comprehensive competency framework, including literacy coaching domains, standards, and corresponding competencies, which reflect current evidence, align to Georgia’s literacy priorities, and is applicable across diverse educational contexts.

We extend our gratitude to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and Georgia’s Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) for their collaboration in reviewing and providing feedback on the Literacy Coach Domains and Standards. We also acknowledge the support of the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinating Committee (LCCC). The LCCC includes leaders from state education agencies, university partners, and research organizations engaged in preparing educators and literacy coaches statewide. This work was supported by funding from the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, as approved by the Executive Committee of the Georgia Council on Literacy, and directly aligns with Georgia’s Literacy Plan: Vision 2030.

Preamble

The Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Framework establishes a shared description of the knowledge, skills, and practices literacy coaches need to support strong literacy instruction and educator learning across settings. Together, the domains, standards, and competencies are intended to provide role clarity, guide professional learning, support self-reflection, and assist state, regional, and local systems in building coherent coaching support. The framework is designed to strengthen practice and promote continuous improvement. It is not intended to function as a scripted program or as an instrument for evaluation.

This framework is organized into three levels. Domains name the broad areas of literacy coaching practice. Standards describe the expectations within each domain. Competencies make those expectations more specific by identifying the knowledge and practices coaches should be able to apply in authentic settings. Read together, the three levels provide both coherence and usable specificity: the domains communicate the overall architecture of the role, the standards describe what matters within that role, and the competencies make the work interpretable for preparation, support, and implementation.

Development of the framework occurred through multiple rounds of drafting and revision. The process included reviewing relevant research on literacy instruction, assessment, coaching, professional learning, and learning science; examining Georgia policies, legislation, and related state guidance; comparing these elements with existing coaching frameworks; and collecting structured feedback from reviewers. Draft domains and standards were revised through a streamlined process review to improve clarity, reduce overlap, and strengthen alignment. Competencies were then written to operationalize each standard and were refined through additional review cycles, including task force feedback and public comment. Revisions focused on verb consistency, role clarity, technical precision, and usability for implementation.

The glossary was intentionally designed to remain limited and focused. Its purpose is not to serve as a comprehensive literacy lexicon. Instead, it was written to clarify the technical terms for coaching, assessment, implementation, and professional learning that readers are most likely to interpret inconsistently. This approach maintains readability of the framework while preserving precision where precision is most needed.

A deliberate effort was made to avoid duplication of existing state definitions. Literacy terms already defined in [Georgia's K-12 English Language Arts Standards glossary](#) should be interpreted according to that source rather than redefined here. Terms defined there, or in relevant Georgia legislation and state guidance, were only included in this glossary if they are used in a more specific or role-defined way within the competency documents.

The terms evidence-based and research-based require a brief usage note. In these documents, evidence-based is the term for literacy instruction, instructional practices, materials, and approaches supported by converging empirical evidence. When the term research-based appears, it should be understood as referring to approaches grounded in relevant research and field knowledge, including coaching practices and professional-learning approaches, or as language retained for alignment with existing state or field usage. Instructional practices, materials, and approaches that do not yet have a strong empirical evidence-base are approved for use when vetted by state leaders or supported by strong indicators of effectiveness in field use.

Several competencies use the verb demonstrate. In this framework, “demonstrate” means making practice visible in ways that support educator learning. Depending on context, demonstration may include modeling, explaining, thinking aloud, co-planning, rehearsal, guided application, collaborative analysis of student work, or feedback anchored in observation and evidence. The use of “demonstrate” is developmental and non-evaluative. It describes how coaches support practice; it does not refer to formal appraisal of educator performance.

This framework assumes a partnership stance. Literacy coaches work collaboratively with educators, leaders, families, and community partners to support instruction, build capacity, and improve outcomes. References to co-development reflect this stance and signal shared planning, shared problem solving, and joint refinement of routines, materials, goals, and professional-learning experiences. This framework should be used to clarify and strengthen literacy coaching work within local school, district, and regional contexts.

An effective literacy environment is more than the presence of books, print, or displays; it includes the instructional, physical, and organizational conditions that create the context for evidence-based literacy instruction. Although there is not a separate standard for the classroom literacy environment, coaches and leaders support schools in creating and sustaining the

necessary conditions through attention to routines, materials, grouping structures, and classroom practices that promote purposeful literacy learning.

Collectively, this framework is intended to support ongoing improvement. It should be used to inform coach preparation, induction, calibration, professional learning, and self-reflection; support shared expectations across agencies and systems; and help ensure that coaching remains focused on student learning, educator growth, and Georgia's broader literacy goals. Used in this way, the domains, standards, and competencies create a common language for literacy coaching.

Domains, Standards, and Competencies

Domain 1: Creating and Fostering a Culture of Collaborative Literacy Leadership

Descriptor: *Literacy coaches partner with stakeholders to build and sustain collaborative cultures that support continuous improvement in literacy instruction. They establish and foster trusting relationships, communicate effectively, align coaching efforts to school and district goals, and model continuous professional growth.*

- 1. Coaches establish and maintain collaborative and productive working relationships with educators, leaders, families, and community partners by creating routines for continuous improvement, demonstrating consistent follow-through, honoring confidentiality, and clarifying roles and responsibilities.**
 - 1.1.1 Coaches co-establish and facilitate predictable coaching routines grounded in data that align literacy goals to district and school priorities, support instructional improvement, and include ongoing monitoring of progress toward shared goals.
 - 1.1.2 Coaches build and maintain trust-based partnerships with educators, leaders, families, and community partners by clarifying coaching roles and consistently following through on agreed-upon literacy supports that complement instruction.
 - 1.1.3 Coaches discern when co-development is necessary for various processes and procedures.
- 2. Coaches develop and implement stakeholder-specific communication systems that convey literacy goals and student progress data with two-way feedback.**
 - 1.2.1 Coaches develop stakeholder-specific communication systems that clearly convey literacy goals, instructional priorities, and student progress to support collaboration and informed decision-making.
- 3. Coaches align goals, schedules, and coaching cycles to the district/school literacy plan and student targets; anticipate barriers; apply change-management strategies; and track implementation indicators for sustained improvement.**
 - 1.3.1 Coaches design and implement coaching cycles aligned to school and district literacy goals and prioritized student learning targets.
 - 1.3.2 Coaches collaborate with school and district leaders to align instructional schedules, intervention time, and coaching supports with literacy plans and student data.
 - 1.3.3 Coaches collaborate with educators to identify potential implementation barriers to new or revised literacy initiatives and apply evidence-informed strategies to support educator adoption and sustained implementation.
- 4. Coaches engage in ongoing professional learning to enhance coaching expertise and translate literacy research into actionable practices.**
 - 1.4.1 Coaches consume, synthesize, and evaluate literacy research to inform their coaching practice and support educators' understanding of evidence-based instructional approaches.

1.4.2 Coaches engage in ongoing professional learning, including participation in professional learning communities, training, and calibrations to inform their coaching practice and support educators' understanding of evidence-based instructional approaches.

1.4.3 Coaches set professional learning goals for their own learning and growth.

5. Coaches maintain a consistent, non-evaluative, and visible presence in classrooms and professional learning settings to enhance educator practice and demonstrate partnerships.

1.5.1 Coaches employ non-judgmental language, active listening, and reflective questioning during coaching conversations and professional learning settings to reinforce educator practice and growth.

1.5.2 Coaches maintain a consistent, visible presence aligned to their role to strengthen educator practice and reinforce collaborative partnerships.

Domain 2: Knowledge and Application of Assessment to Inform Literacy Instruction

Descriptor: *Literacy coaches support educators to use assessment data to inform literacy instruction. They support appropriate and effective assessment practices, including data analysis and interpretation. They support educators to use assessment results to strengthen instruction across all tiers, monitor student progress, and differentiate instruction as needed.*

1. Coaches support educators to administer universal screening and diagnostic assessments, using formative assessment and progress monitoring to monitor daily learning and intensify or adjust instruction, organizing flexible groups within a multi-tiered level of support for learners.

2.1.1 Coaches articulate the research and rationale for and underlying logic of collecting and analyzing multiple sources of literacy assessment data (e.g., universal screening, diagnosis, formative assessment, and progress monitoring) to identify and connect data patterns.

2.1.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in analyzing multiple sources of literacy assessment data to identify data patterns and use the results to make and adjust instructional decisions within and across tiers.

2. Coaches support educators to understand how to align assessments with targeted literacy constructs and state standards.

2.2.1 Coaches articulate the research and rationale for psychometric principles (i.e., reliability, validity, sensitivity, and specificity), and the underlying logic of specific assessments and how they align with and can be sequenced to measure targeted literacy constructs or state standards.

2.2.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in the selection and sequencing of assessments to measure targeted literacy constructs and curriculum or state standards.

2.2.3 Coaches engage educators in applying the appropriate assessment for their intended purpose.

- 3. Coaches support educators' data analysis to understand results and growth trajectories for the purpose of setting data-informed goals and instructional targets.**
 - 2.3.1 Coaches articulate and demonstrate how literacy assessment data are analyzed to interpret results and growth trajectories, including consideration of benchmarks and typical growth patterns, to inform the identification of instructional goals and targets.
 - 2.3.2 Coaches articulate how existing literacy data are analyzed to identify specific literacy skills and instructional needs at the classroom, small-group, and individual student levels.
 - 2.3.3 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in literacy data analysis to inform the identification of specific instructional targets.
- 4. Coaches support educators to select evidence-based literacy practices, components of curricula, interventions, and materials matched to assessed needs.**
 - 2.4.1 Coaches articulate the research and rationale for and underlying logic of how discrete components of evidence-based literacy practices, alone or combined, are effective for developing specific literacy skills.
 - 2.4.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in selecting evidence-based literacy practices, curricular components, and interventions aligned to assess student needs.
 - 2.4.3 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in the selection of instructional resources and materials to ensure alignment with evidence-based literacy practices, instructional objectives, and identified student needs.

Domain 3: Knowledge and Application of Literacy Development and Instruction

Descriptor: *Literacy coaches possess deep knowledge of literacy development, learning sciences, and evidence-based instructional practices across all components of literacy - reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They apply this knowledge to support educators to implement explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic, and integrated literacy instruction for all students.*

- 1. Coaches support educators to design and deliver instruction to develop students' oral language (e.g., phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics) across content areas and grade bands.**
 - 3.1.1 Coaches articulate how language is acquired and how development varies across learners and contexts.
 - 3.1.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in analyzing student language data to inform instruction.
 - 3.1.3 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in embedding oral language routines, informed by student language data, within instruction to support academic meaning-making across content areas.

- 3.1.4 Coaches articulate the five components of oral language and explain how language expectations vary across content areas and grade bands.
- 2. Coaches support educators to deliver phonemic awareness instruction (e.g., isolating, blending, segmenting) linked to decoding and encoding.**
- 3.2.1 Coaches explain the reciprocal relationship between phonemic awareness, decoding, and encoding by explicitly linking blending to reading and segmenting in isolation and connected text.
- 3.2.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in the planning and implementation of instruction that reinforces the role of high-leverage phonemic awareness skills (i.e., isolating, blending, and segmenting) in decoding and encoding.
- 3.2.3 Coaches identify and address misconceptions and inaccuracies related to phonemic awareness (e.g., inaccurately stating that consonant blends make one sound).
- 3. Coaches support educators to deliver instruction in phoneme-grapheme correspondences, advanced phonics/orthography, irregular words, and morphology to build accurate, automatic decoding and encoding aligned to a cumulative scope and sequence.**
- 3.3.1 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in the planning and implementation of instruction in phoneme-grapheme correspondences, advanced phonics, orthographic patterns, irregular words, and morphology.
- 3.3.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in appropriate sequencing of instruction within a cumulative scope and sequence to build increasingly accurate and automatic decoding and encoding.
- 4. Coaches support educators to deliver instruction that develops accuracy, rate, and prosody through practice with connected text and help educators connect fluency growth to comprehension outcomes.**
- 3.4.1 Coaches articulate the research and rationale for and underlying logic of how instructional practices develop reading fluency, including accuracy, rate, and prosody, and explain the reciprocal relationship between fluency and comprehension.
- 3.4.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in the selection and implementation of evidence-based instructional practices in a variety of appropriate texts to develop reading fluency, including accuracy, rate, and prosody.
- 5. Coaches support educators to plan and deliver instruction that builds breadth and depth of morphological, academic, and discipline-specific word knowledge.**
- 3.5.1 Coaches explain how the intentional selection of sophisticated vocabulary supports students' oral language, word knowledge, and comprehension.
- 3.5.2 Coaches explain how the intentional selection of morphological, academic, and discipline-specific vocabulary supports the development of students' oral language, word knowledge, reading comprehension, and writing composition.

3.5.3 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in the planning and implementation of instruction that includes intentional vocabulary selection to support students' development of oral language, word knowledge, reading comprehension, and the writing process.

3.5.4 Coaches explain the logic of word construction and deconstruction using morphology and etymology to support educators in understanding how pronunciation and meaning are related.

3.5.5 Coaches articulate the research, rationale, and underlying logic of how morphological and academic vocabulary instructional strategies promote the development of word knowledge.

3.5.6 Coaches demonstrate the process of and engage educators in selecting from among evidence-based morphological and academic vocabulary instructional strategies, including how and why instructional decisions are made, to support building word knowledge for all learners.

6. Coaches support educators to deliver instruction that builds new knowledge, activates background knowledge, and supports proficiency in using evidence-based comprehension strategies within increasingly complex texts with appropriate scaffolding.

3.6.1 Coaches articulate the research and underlying logic of how background knowledge and comprehension strategies interact to support students' understanding of increasingly complex texts.

3.6.2 Coaches model the process of, and engage educators in, the selection and implementation of instructional strategies and scaffolds that build knowledge and support students in using comprehension strategies to access increasingly complex texts.

7. Coaches support educators to design and deliver instruction in transcription, composition, and the writing process to interpret and construct text.

3.7.1 Coaches articulate the research and rationale for, and underlying logic of, transcription development (handwriting, spelling) and composition skills and explain how these components interact within the writing process.

3.7.2 Coaches explain the process of, and engage educators in, instructional planning and implementation of handwriting, spelling, composition, and the writing process.

3.7.3 Coaches articulate the research and rationale for the underlying logic of the writing process, and support educators in providing instruction to ensure students can produce text for a variety of purposes and audiences.

8. Coaches support educators to apply evidence-based literacy practices for students with varying needs to ensure accessibility, appropriate scaffolds, and acceleration.

3.8.1 Coaches demonstrate how to select evidence-based literacy scaffolds and engage educators in adjusting instruction across tiers of support based on student data.

3.8.2 Coaches articulate the research-based principles and decision-making processes that guide differentiated instruction and explain how instructional adjustments are made using student data across levels of instruction (at, below, or above grade level).

3.8.3 Coaches demonstrate the planning process, and engage educators in, planning and implementation of evidence-based differentiated literacy instruction based on student data to improve accessibility and learning for all students.

9. Coaches support educators to select appropriate texts aligned to instructional purpose and specific learning outcomes.

3.9.1 Coaches articulate the research and instructional principles that guide the selection of decodable and complex texts, including how different text types serve distinct purposes in developing word reading, language comprehension, and overall reading proficiency.

3.9.2 Coaches demonstrate the process of, and engage educators in, selecting texts to match the purpose of instruction.

Domain 4: Development and Implementation of Literacy-Focused Professional Learning

Descriptor: *Literacy coaches design and facilitate professional learning that builds educator capacity to plan, implement, and monitor effective literacy instruction. They apply adult learning principles and learning sciences, use intentional coaching approaches, and monitor the impact of professional learning on instruction and student outcomes.*

1. Coaches design and facilitate literacy-focused professional learning using adult-learning principles and knowledge of educators' context, roles, and experience levels to ensure learning is relevant, engaging, and immediately usable.

4.1.1 Coaches articulate the principles of adult learning and learning science that inform the design of effective literacy-focused professional learning for educators with varied roles, contexts, and experience levels.

4.1.2 Coaches design and facilitate engaging literacy-focused professional learning that applies principles of adult learning, learning science, and is responsive to educator context to promote transfer to classroom practice.

2. Coaches develop and manage multi-session professional-learning plans by setting goals informed by needs and data, sequencing learning experiences, and monitoring participation, implementation, and outcomes to refine supports over time.

4.2.1 Coaches develop data-informed goals and expected outcomes for multi-session literacy-focused professional learning aligned to identified instructional priorities.

4.2.2 Coaches sequence professional learning experiences to build educator knowledge and skills progressively over time.

4.2.3 Coaches monitor evidence of implementation and impact to refine literacy-focused professional learning.

- 4.2.4 Coaches discern when co-development is necessary for planning and delivering professional learning experiences.
3. **Coaches use job-embedded, research-based coaching and multiple data sources to strengthen educators' literacy knowledge and improve instructional decision-making and classroom practice.**
 - 4.3.1 Coaches justify the selection of research-based coaching techniques based on educator data to differentiate literacy coaching support.
 4. **Coaches employ a strategic combination of literacy-focused professional-learning practices to build educator capacity and ensure evidence-based practices are implemented with fidelity.**
 - 4.4.1 Coaches plan and deliver differentiated literacy-focused professional learning to support educators in building capacity in implementing evidence-based literacy practices.
 - 4.4.2 Coaches articulate and implement differentiated research-based coaching strategies to support educators in implementing evidence-based literacy practices.
 5. **Coaches engage in ongoing, systematic reflection on the design, delivery, and refinement of professional learning to continuously improve instructional support for educators.**
 - 4.5.1 Coaches engage in systematic reflection, examining multiple sources of evidence, including teacher observations, student data, and educator feedback, to inform the refinement of literacy-focused professional learning.
 6. **Coaches support educators to become reflective practitioners through self-evaluation of their instructional practice and student learning outcomes.**
 - 4.6.1 Coaches demonstrate the process of, and engage educators in, ongoing self-reflection and self-evaluation that supports them in analyzing their impact on student progress toward state standards and developing as effective practitioners.

Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Acceleration	Increasing the rate of learning so that students move more quickly toward grade-level or otherwise prioritized outcomes.	(Burns & Contesse, 2024)
Adult learning principles	Core assumptions about how adults learn relevance, autonomy, prior experience, problem-centered learning, readiness to learn, and internal motivation.	(Knowles, 1980)
Co-development	A collaborative process in which the coach and educator jointly design, refine, or adapt goals, routines, materials, decisions, or professional-learning experiences in response to identified needs and context.	(Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, 2026)
Coaching cycle	A structured, ongoing coaching process in which a coach and educator set a goal based on data, plan and enact action steps, examine evidence, reflect on progress, and refine practice over time.	(Cox Campus, 2025)
Data	Information drawn from multiple sources and used to understand student learning, instructional practice, implementation, and progress toward goals.	(Cox Campus, 2025)
Demonstrate	To make practice visible in ways that support educator learning. Depending on context, demonstration may include modeling, explaining, thinking aloud, co-planning, rehearsal, guided application, collaborative analysis of student work, or feedback anchored in evidence and observation.	(Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, 2026)
Diagnostic assessment	An assessment used to identify specific strengths and needs so that instruction can be targeted more precisely.	(Cox Campus, 2025)
Diagnostic instruction	Instruction that is planned and adjusted based on identified student strengths and needs, with the goal of addressing the reason a student is having difficulty, not merely the presence of difficulty.	(Cheek & Collins Cheek, 1983; Duffy, 2009)

Term	Definition	Source
Discipline-specific vocabulary	Words and expressions that are particularly important within a specific field, content area, or discipline and that support learning and communication in that domain.	(Georgia K-12 ELA Standards Glossary)
Educator	An education professional whose role influences teaching and learning, such as a classroom teacher, interventionist, literacy coach, school leader, or other instructional support professional.	(Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, 2026)
Fidelity of implementation	The degree to which an instructional practice, intervention, assessment, or process is carried out as it was intended to be used, while still allowing for appropriate contextual responsiveness.	(IRIS Center, 2026)
Formative assessment	Planned, ongoing assessment used during instruction to gather evidence of learning and inform immediate instructional adjustments.	(Cox Campus, 2025)
Growth trajectory	The pattern and rate of student progress over time as shown by repeated data points, used to judge whether learning is accelerating, maintaining, or slowing relative to goals.	(IRIS Center, 2020)
Implementation indicators	Observable or measurable signs that show the extent to which a new practice or initiative is being adopted, enacted, and sustained.	(Evidence for Learning, 2026)
Instructional target	The specific skill, concept, or learning outcome instruction is intended to develop.	(Burns & Contesse, 2024)
Learning sciences	The interdisciplinary study of how people acquire, process, organize, retain, and apply knowledge, drawing on fields such as cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and education.	Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, 2026)

Term	Definition	Source
Professional learning	Structured learning experiences for educators; designed to build knowledge, strengthen practice, and improve outcomes, including job-embedded and collaborative forms of learning.	(Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, 2026)
Progress monitoring	Repeated assessment over time used to determine whether students are making sufficient progress toward an instructional goal and whether instruction should be adjusted.	(IRIS Center, 2020)
Psychometric principles	Technical qualities of assessments, such as reliability, validity, standardization, and freedom from bias that determine how well an assessment measures what it is intended to measure and how confidently results can be interpreted.	(Rust, 2006)
Routines for continuous improvement	Structured and recurring ways of working in which participants set goals, examine evidence, reflect on implementation, and make disciplined adjustments to improve outcomes over time.	(Evidence for Learning, 2026)
Scaffolding	Temporary support provided to enable a learner to successfully perform a task that would be difficult to complete independently, with the intention that support is gradually reduced as competence increases.	(Georgia K-12 ELA Standards Glossary)
Stakeholder	Any individual or group with a legitimate interest in literacy teaching and learning outcomes, including educators, leaders, families, students, and community partners.	(Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, 2026)
Universal screening	A brief assessment administered to all students at planned intervals to identify those who may be at risk and who may need additional assessment or instructional support.	(Georgia HB 307)

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Appendix A

Contributors

The development of the Georgia Literacy Coaching Competency Framework was made possible through the contributions of the Georgia Literacy Coach Competency Task Force, state literacy coaches across Georgia, and members of the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center.

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