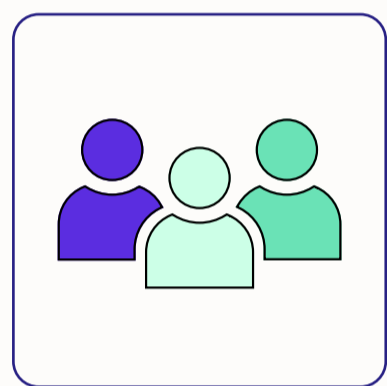


Literacy and Family Engagement Audit: A Free Protocol for District Leaders

What This Is

A structured protocol for district leadership teams to examine how well your literacy communication reaches families, and what to do next. It is designed to be honest, practical, and immediately actionable.



Who Should Be in the Room

This protocol works best with a cross-functional leadership team that includes district and building-level perspectives. Chief Academic Officers, Directors of Literacy, Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, Principals, and Literacy Coaches are all natural participants. Part Four works best when your team includes representatives from across grade levels.

What You Will Work Through

- 1 The School Lens:** What information you're currently sending to families about literacy
- 2 The Family Lens:** What families understand and whether they feel equipped to act
- 3 Grade-Band Considerations:** How your answers shift across elementary, middle, and high school (*optional, requires school-specific knowledge)
- 4 Summary Page:** Your team's key takeaways and one clear action

Why This Matters

Reading is the foundation for every other skill a student builds. It shapes academic success across every subject, influences whether students graduate, and has lasting effects on lifetime earnings. It also has a direct connection to attendance: students who struggle to read are more likely to disengage from school, and students who miss school fall further behind in reading. A strong literacy communication strategy accounts for all of this, making sure families have the information they need to keep students engaged and on track as readers.

How Long Does It Take?

In general, teams will spend 15 to 20 minutes per section, with the full audit taking approximately 60 to 90 minutes. There are four sections plus a summary page. You can complete the full protocol in one sitting or work through it section by section, depending on the time you have available.

What's the Rating Scale?

For each question, choose one of the following:

- **We do this well:** this is consistent, systematic, and working across our district
- **In progress:** we have started on this but it is not yet consistent or district-wide
- **This is a gap:** we have not addressed this yet or it is not on our radar

After each section, facilitators will guide a brief team discussion.

Part One

The School Lens

*What is your district sending to families about literacy?*

Families can only partner on reading progress if they receive information that is relevant, timely, and easy to understand. This lens examines what your district is currently communicating, how, and to whom, and whether that communication is built on a system.

- 1 Our district sends families individualized updates about their child's reading level, based on current assessment data. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 2 Families across our district receive consistent literacy communication regardless of which teacher or school their child is in. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 3 Literacy communications go out in families' home languages, and our district recognizes that a language-rich home environment supports literacy development in any language.
 We do this well *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 4 Our district communicates literacy progress on a consistent, predictable schedule, early enough for families to act on the information. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 5 Our literacy communications include concrete, grade-appropriate suggestions for how families can support reading at home. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 6 When a student's attendance patterns suggest they may be falling behind in reading, our district has a process for reaching out to their family with timely, relevant communication that connects attendance to reading progress. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 7 When students transfer into our district, there is a clear process that brings families up to speed on their child's reading level and connects them to school or district resources.
 We do this well *In progress* *This is a gap*

**Facilitator Questions | School Lens**

Take a few minutes as a team to discuss:

- Where did you agree quickly, and where did you land in different places? What does that tell you?
- If a family in your district wanted to know their child's reading level today, how would they find out?
- Is your district's literacy communication currently built on a repeatable system, or does it rely on individual teacher capacity and initiative?

Part Two

The Family Lens



Do families in your district understand their child's reading progress?

Nearly 9 in 10 families nationally believe their child is at or above grade level in reading, while fewer than half of students are actually performing at grade level. That gap between perception and reality is one of the most significant barriers to family partnership in literacy. This lens examines what families in your district actually know, what they are equipped to do about it, and whether they feel like genuine partners in their child's reading journey.

- 1 Families in our district know their child's current reading level and where that stands relative to grade-level expectations. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 2 Families understand what their child's assessment scores mean, including how the assessment works and how results connect to classroom instruction. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 3 Families in our district understand how building a language-rich home environment, through conversation, storytelling, and shared reading in any language, supports their child's literacy development. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 4 Families who receive literacy updates from our district feel equipped to support reading at home. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 5 Families in our district feel comfortable raising concerns about their child's reading progress and sharing what they observe at home. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 6 Our district has a clear, accessible way for families to ask questions and share observations about their child's reading progress. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 7 Families in our district receive literacy information early enough in the year to make a meaningful difference. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 8 Families in our district receive literacy communication and support over the summer months, so that reading progress continues and summer learning loss is addressed before it compounds. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*



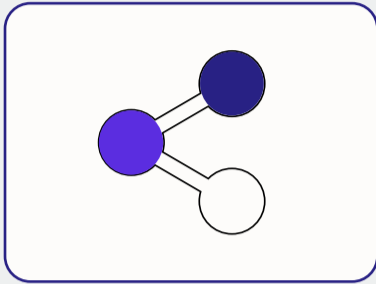
Facilitator Questions | Family Lens

Take a few minutes as a team to discuss:

- If you asked 10 families in your district right now what their child's reading level is, how many could tell you accurately?
- Where are families getting their information about reading progress? Is that source reliable and actionable?
- What would it take for families in your district to feel like true partners in literacy?

Part Three

Grade-Band Considerations



Literacy communication looks different across elementary, middle, and high school. Use this section to pressure-test your responses above against the specific grade bands in your district. Your answers may reveal that your district communicates well at one level and has significant gaps at another.

Note: This section works best when your team includes representatives from across school division levels.

Elementary School

The early years are the highest-stakes window for literacy development. Students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade face significantly greater challenges in every subject area going forward.

- 1 Families of our youngest students (Pre-K through Grade 3) receive frequent, accessible updates about their child's early literacy development. These updates include oral language, phonological awareness, and foundational reading skills. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 2 Our district actively communicates to early elementary families that rich conversation, storytelling, and shared reading in any language builds the foundation for literacy. Families know that home languages are an asset in that process. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 3 Families of students who are identified as "at risk" for reading difficulties in the early grades receive timely, specific, and actionable information about what that means and how they can help. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*



Facilitator Questions | Elementary

Take a few minutes as a team to discuss:

- How early do families in your district receive meaningful information about literacy development? (What grade?)
- Are families of your most at-risk early readers getting more communication, or less?

Middle School

Literacy challenges that went unaddressed in elementary school often become more visible and more consequential in middle school, as content complexity increases.

- 1 Families of middle school students receive literacy updates that connect reading level to content area performance. They understand how reading proficiency affects success across subjects, not just in English Language Arts. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 2 Our district communicates with middle school families about the connection between attendance and literacy. We reach out to families of struggling readers about potential student disengagement. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 3 Middle school students are involved in their own literacy progress conversations. Families are equipped to have those conversations at home. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*



Facilitator Questions | Middle School

Take a few minutes as a team to discuss:

- At what point does your district stop communicating proactively about literacy? Do you shift reactive outreach about grades or behavior?
- Is the attendance and literacy connection visible in your middle school data? Are families part of that conversation?

High School

By high school, literacy gaps are often deeply entrenched and less likely to be named explicitly. Students who struggle with reading are more likely to disengage, miss school, and fall behind across all content areas.

- 1 Our district has a clear way to identify and communicate with families of high school students who are reading significantly below grade level. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 2 Families of high school students understand the connection between reading proficiency, attendance, and graduation outcomes. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*
- 3 Families of high school students reading below grade are connected to available school supports. *We do this well* *In progress* *This is a gap*



Facilitator Questions | High School

Take a few minutes as a team to discuss:

- Is literacy still a named priority in your district's family communication at the high school level? Or does it get absorbed into broader academic or behavioral conversations?
- How would your graduation outcomes change if more high school families understood their child's reading level and how to help?

Summary

What We Found



Use this page to capture your team's key takeaways across all areas.

1 OUR STRONGEST LENS

Looking across your ratings in Parts One through Three, where does your district communicate most consistently and effectively: the school lens, the family lens, or the grade-band considerations?

2 OUR BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY

Where did your team identify the most significant gaps? What is the one area where stronger communication would have the biggest impact on families and students?

3 ONE CHANGE WE COULD MAKE IN THE NEXT 30 DAYS

Based on your discussion, what is one concrete, actionable step your district could take right away?

3 THE QUESTION(S) WE ARE STILL SITTING WITH

What came up in your conversation that you want to keep thinking about or bring to a broader team?

What Comes Next

If your audit surfaced gaps in how literacy information reaches families, you are not alone. Most districts have rich assessment data and families who are ready to be partners. The missing piece is a consistent, personalized, timely way to connect the two.

SchoolStatus Literacy helps districts do exactly that, without overburdening staff. We pull in student literacy scores from your assessment platform, send personalized updates to families in their home languages, and provide links to district resources so families can support at home. [Learn more at schoolstatus.com/literacy](https://schoolstatus.com/literacy)