Program description
The State Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan (2012-2016) provides $261 million to lift the literacy and numeracy outcomes K-2 in NSW. Early Action for Success is the Department’s strategy to implement the plan.

The Early Action for Success strategy aims to improve students’ performance through a targeted approach in the early years in primary schools. The schools are selected from those in the lowest quartile of NAPLAN performance in literacy and numeracy, according to an index of need.

The strategy involves:
- early identification of the level of attainment in literacy and numeracy of each individual child (K-2) and tailoring a specific program of learning to that child’s needs
- change in teaching practice from a focus on the whole class to a focus on the needs of the individual student
- on-going, close monitoring of individual student progress against the Literacy and Numeracy continuums
- evidence-based use of tiered interventions in literacy or numeracy according to need.

Resources
Schools receive:
- an Instructional Leader, either dedicated to the individual school, or working with a small cluster of schools
- a training grant to support the professional learning needs of staff in differentiating instruction
- a full time equivalent (FTE) allocation to support tiered interventions in literacy and numeracy
- an establishment grant to support the establishment of an Instructional Leader position in the school.

The allocation of the funding is to address identified literacy and numeracy need in Kindergarten to Year 2. Schools are provided with an additional teacher allocation to deliver tailored interventions in literacy and numeracy as well as a training allocation to strengthen personalised learning for K-2 students.

Updating the school plan
As a result of the additional resources allocated to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of students in the early years, the school plan will need to be updated. In brief, the school’s involvement with Early Action for Success should be evident in the plan.

The Instructional Leader together with the Principal and Executive team should conduct a situational analysis, gathering evidence from appropriate internal and external data sources. This will provide the evidence underpinning the school planning process and authentic data on which to base school planning decisions.

This process will support a systemic approach to implementation, evaluation and reporting, including reporting the outcomes of the school’s *Early Action for Success* strategy in the Annual School Report.

**Tiered interventions**

Tiered intervention presents a means of delivering tailored learning support for students in literacy and numeracy. Research has shown that a tiered approach to the provision of learning support that involves quality evidence-based learning, regular monitoring and assessment of student learning and the implementation of targeted interventions has a positive impact on learning outcomes for those at risk of not meeting literacy and numeracy standards (O’Connor, Harty & Fulmer 2005; Hughes & Dexter 2011).

Tiered interventions are designed to progressively adjust the intensity and nature of support according to how students respond to interventions. Student progress is closely monitored *every 5 weeks* at each tier of intervention to determine the need for progressively intense instruction.

**Tier 1**

Tier 1 interventions provide support through high quality, personalised assessment and classroom teaching that is designed to engage, challenge and support *all learners* to achieve or exceed expected levels. *Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN)* used with a whole class is an example of a Tier 1 intervention.

**Tier 2**

Tier 2 interventions provide timely support through high quality, personalised assessment and instruction that is specific to identified need for *individual* and *small groups* of students. This intervention may be provided by the class teacher or a specialist teacher. *Language, Literacy and Learning (L3) Kindergarten* is an example of a Tier 2 intervention.

**Tier 3**

Tier 3 interventions provide more intensive, longer term support through specialist assessment and teaching for individual students with complex literacy and numeracy needs. Tier 3 interventions are documented using individual learning plans and follow a lack of response to Tier 2 interventions.
Instructional leadership

Instructional Leaders in *Early Action for Success* work directly with teachers in the early years of school and are often present in classrooms. They contribute to organisational management in planning appropriate support and resources to gain the shift for those students identified as being below grade expectations in literacy and numeracy.

Consequently, Instructional Leaders in *Early Action for Success* draw upon a strong understanding of and high expertise in quality teaching in literacy and numeracy across Kindergarten to Year 2.

The Instructional Leaders coordinate the identification of the literacy and numeracy achievement of all Kindergarten to Year 2 students against the end of year benchmark expectations to determine which students are ‘at risk’. Using this information they work with the school executive to determine the professional learning needs of staff to differentiate instruction and strategically plan appropriate interventions in literacy and numeracy across Kindergarten to Year 2.

The Instructional Leaders lead the professional learning of teachers in effective literacy and numeracy teaching practices. Effective teacher professional development and coaching is classroom based. Teachers develop skills in personalised learning and the use of diagnostic assessment under the direction of the Instructional Leader, working in the classroom with the teacher, and with the children for whom that teacher is responsible.

Literacy and Numeracy Trainers have been appointed to support schools participating in the *Early Action for Success* strategy. Trainers collaborate with school leadership teams, including instructional leaders to deliver professional learning as required.
Getting started: Plan, Do, See, Adjust

Implementing Early Action for Success begins with identification of individual needs followed by the strategic application of targeted support and ongoing monitoring:

1. Identification of needs. **PLAN**

   (a) **Students**
   You will need to collect baseline data on every Kindergarten to Year 2 student against the Reading, Writing and Numeracy benchmarks. Having identified how many students are in need of additional support you are then in a better position to determine how that will be provided.

   (b) **Staff**
   You will also need to determine what the specific professional learning needs of staff for K-2 are in familiarity with the literacy and numeracy continuums to track student learning and to personalise instruction.

2. Provision of targeted support. **DO**

   (a) Your school’s intervention allocation is designed to strengthen support for tiered interventions for every student you have identified as being below expectations.

   (b) Your training grant is to assist with the professional learning needs of staff to use evidence based practices in personalising instruction in literacy and numeracy. This could include engagement in programs such as Language, Learning and Literacy (L3) or Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN).

3. Ongoing monitoring of the impact. **SEE**

   (a) Tracking each student’s progress against key aspects of the literacy and numeracy continuums is used to monitor the impact of personalised instruction and the effectiveness of tiered interventions.

   (b) The Instructional Leader, in collaboration with the school executive, will monitor K-2 teachers progress in professional learning to address the literacy and numeracy needs of every student.

4. Fine tune the interventions. **ADJUST**

   (a) Determine which interventions are creating the necessary improvement in literacy and numeracy and change what is not working. This could involve changing the tier of intervention being used with individual students.

   (b) Modify professional learning programs to address personalised learning in reading, writing or working with quantity as required.

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1 The “Plan, Do, See, Adjust” cycle is based on the Shewhart Cycle, popularised by William Edwards Deming.
Monitoring the strategy
Ongoing data collections take place each term for the duration of the student’s engagement in the strategy. At the commencement of the strategy, baseline data on every Kindergarten to Year 2 student is collected against end of year expectations in Reading, Writing and Number. This is to identify which students are below, at or above end of year expectations, described by elements of the literacy and numeracy continuums. This information, broken down into identified subgroups is provided to Erebus International, the external evaluation team.

In addition to baseline data, the progress of K-2 students in Early Action for Success is closely monitored every 5 weeks against the literacy and numeracy continuums. This progress data is entered in the Planning Literacy and Numeracy (PLAN) software each term and assists in measuring the effectiveness of specific interventions. The aspects recorded are Reading texts, Comprehension and Aspects of writing for literacy, and Early arithmetical strategies and Counting sequences for numeracy.

Finance and staffing
Funds allocated to the school as part of the Early Action for Success strategy should be shown as income within an available dissection number between 011 and 039 in your school's OASIS Chart of Accounts and labelled “EA4S”.

1. A training grant to assist with the professional development needs of staff in identifying and supporting each Kindergarten to Year 2 student’s progress in literacy and numeracy. Please ensure that if you use this grant to employ a casual teacher, CEPS Code 306 is used.

2. Intervention support allocation. You may use the allocation to employ a temporary teacher to provide targeted support in K-2. If you choose this option, please ensure that the salary claims for the allocation use CEPS Code 156.

3. Innovation grant to assist with planning local initiatives to address innovative ways of resourcing identified intensive student needs in literacy and numeracy in the early years. This could involve, but is not restricted to, planning programs with your preschools or pooling resources to broker access to scarce intervention programs. If you use this grant to employ a casual teacher, CEPS Code 306 should be used.

Using evidence to inform practice and make adjustments
Within Early Action for Success there is a strong focus on evidence-based decision making. In the classroom, teachers map the progress of students against key aspects of the literacy and numeracy continuums. Decisions as to which students need interventions and the type of intervention needed are based on the end of year expectations described in the benchmarks (http://www.earlyactionforsuccess.com.au/pdf/Benchmarking2013.pdf).
Work Plans
The Instructional Leader’s work plan is constructed in collaboration with the School Principal and the leadership team responsible for the early years of schooling.

The document identifies the resources invested and the activities undertaken with particular school and community members to achieve specific short and long term outcomes for teachers and students learning.

The plan is a working document, reviewed every 5 weeks by the Principal and the leadership team following the collection and analysis of student data.

Building effective teams
Tuckman\(^2\) described a series of stages that teams progress through in becoming highly effective. The stages of Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing are central to the model of group development.

In the *forming* stage, the individual’s behaviour is influenced by the need to be accepted by others. During this stage team members tend to behave quite independently. The forming stage of any team is important because the members of the team get to know each other.

In the *storming* stage different ideas compete for consideration. It is often during this stage that the style of leadership is established. This stage can be contentious and requires tolerance from team members. During the storming stage tension, struggle and sometimes arguments occur.

In the *norming* stage the team shares a common goal and plan. Some members may have given up their own ideas to work for the success of the team goals.

In the *performing* stage the team functions as a unit in finding ways to get the job done smoothly and effectively. Dissent is still expected and allowed as long as it is channelled through means acceptable to the team. During this phase, leaders are almost always active participants in the work of the team.

Even highly effective teams will revert to earlier stages in response to changing circumstances.

It is through the process of sharing information and experiences with the team that members learn from each other and have an opportunity to develop professionally. Wenger\(^3\) (1998) described a similar development in the creation of communities of practice.

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Appendices

Role Statement
The role of the Instructional Leader, Literacy and Numeracy is to work in close collaboration with the school principal and the school executive in:

- Realigning the school plan, to clearly describe the shared expectations and targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in the early years of schooling. This process will include the realignment of existing and new school resources to focus on evidence based strategies that build teacher capacity to achieve these outcomes.
- Building teacher capacity to identify the literacy and numeracy learning needs of students in the early years of schooling. Leading local decision making regarding the choice of tiered literacy and numeracy intervention strategies based on the analysis of student learning needs.
- Identifying teacher professional learning needs and providing high quality professional learning and in-class support. Ensure teachers gain expertise and knowledge in differentiating instruction to improve student Literacy and Numeracy outcomes in the early years of schooling.
- Monitoring the impact of practice and interventions on student literacy and numeracy learning in the early years of schooling.

Skills and Experience
- Proven successful experience in leading the improvement of learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy for students in the early years of schooling.
- Demonstrated knowledge of, and experience in, implementing successful innovation and change that has resulted in improved learning outcomes for students in the early years of schooling.
- Demonstrated deep understanding of current research in effective instructional leadership and effective high quality teaching in literacy and numeracy acquisition.
- Demonstrated experience in the provision of high quality differentiated professional learning that has enhanced teacher capacity in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in the early years of schooling.
- Demonstrated capacity to work alongside teachers to both model and support teaching and assessment skills in literacy and numeracy in the early years of schooling.
- Outstanding communication skills with the demonstrated capacity to contribute to building and strengthening a collaborative learning culture in a school.
For further information

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