

Western Kansas Center for Literacy Excellence (WKCLE)

CATCHMENT AREA 1

CAEP ACCREDITED FOR:

- INITIAL PROGRAMS
- ADVANCED PROGRAMS

KSDE ACCREDITED FOR:

- P-6 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
- READING SPECIALIST

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Western Kansas Center for Literacy Excellence (WKCLE) – Catchment Area

I. Vision for Literacy Center

A. Why Fort Hays State University (FHSU)?

In making a choice of the lead institution to establish a center, it is important to consider what the lead brings to the table to serve the region.

1. *Presence and Partnerships*

FHSU President Mason has made being a steward of place for western Kansas an institutional priority. We have taken leadership and formed partnerships across the region to fulfill the needs for education, nursing, social work, criminal justice, banking, small business development, speech language and pathology (i.e. Herndon Clinic <https://www.fhsu.edu/commsciencesanddisorders/herndon-clinic/>) and technology, to only name a few, through partnerships with a variety of entities from community colleges, foundations, schools, and businesses. This fall FHSU officially announced our strategic affiliation with the two technical colleges in western Kansas that are now named Fort Hays Tech | Northwest (Goodland) and Fort Hays Tech | North Central (Hays). The power of these efforts is to ensure that the needs of western Kansas are being addressed. Two additional initiatives, launch summer 2024, are the telehealth program in community mental health counseling to serve rural communities in western Kansas and a Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) office to provide for the on-going professional development needs across the spectrum of professions in western Kansas. The college of education is currently working closely with the PCE group for counseling and educator workshops to provide micro-credentials and facilitate graduate level coursework through the PCE portal. The work that is being proposed for WKCLE is a natural enhancement and expansion of our institutional mission.

2. *Experience with Rural Schools*

FHSU College of Education (COE) works extensively with rural schools. Twice a year the COE meets with area superintendents to share current initiatives, seek their input, and open the door to find out what is needed or suggest innovative programs. Recent examples of this are the development of a Sponsored Student Teacher program to address employment shortages in the region, development of an Elementary Transition-to-Teaching program as an alternate pathway into teaching, Future Teachers Day to support CTE pathways in schools, and having two career fairs for districts to plant the seed for recruitment as early as the sophomore year in the university. We also provided Google training for schools, a special education low-incidence pathway, and summer conferences to address the recruitment and retention needs for rural schools.

An example that illustrates our commitment to rural communities has been our partnership with Barton Community College, Dodge City Community College, Seward County Community College, and Garden City Community College to develop a pathway for STEM teachers. We are able to award \$30,000 scholarships, supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), to community college students who transfer to FHSU to become a STEM teacher. Our current effort is to develop a rural teaching certificate to prepare teachers for rural schools, which is the result of our research on rural teacher preparation. A fuller description is in Supplemental Document 1 (SUP1).

The FHSU Science and Mathematics Education Institute (SMEI), that operates a traveling MakerVan to provide for STEM education experiences with schools (<https://www.fhsu.edu/smei/>), has partnered with STEMM FIRE, a group focused on providing opportunities for rural students to learn about STEM careers. The partnership has resulted in FHSU supporting a new effort called RAISE Kansas to continue the work with rural school students on STEM Careers and expand that work to develop an Educonomy to help schools be part of developing the local economy (<https://www.fhsu.edu/smei/raise-kansas/>). The description of these is provided here as an example of our work in rural communities. Also, and more specifically for WKCLE, the network created with this work provides an opportunity to expand and enhance our literacy work by joint efforts with our STEM outreach and community partners.

3. Strong Field-Based Component for Preservice Elementary Teachers Across the Region

Our reported elementary majors at FHSU on a traditional pathway is 664. Of these one-third are in the face-to-face program on campus, while two-thirds are considered to be virtual students from across the state and country. Additionally, we have 100 preservice elementary majors on alternate pathways such as the Elementary Transition to Teaching, all of which are virtual. Some of these students are in the state approved Registered Teacher Apprenticeship program.

All our elementary teacher candidates are prepared in the science of reading (see section II) with over 90 hours of field-based experiences and simulations built into the curriculum. The face-to-face students are fortunate to have direct experiences in schools through our developing Professional Development School relationship with USD 489. Our virtual students have an equivalent experience where feedback is provided on video recordings that the students produce. WKCLE provides an opportunity to enhance the virtual students field experiences through the distributed support of the network to be developed by WKCLE. Anecdotal data and purposefully collected data indicates our students are making a difference in literacy in the schools where they are placed, due to our strong curriculum (refer to section II). We genuinely believe our plans for WKCLE will enhance the preservice teacher experience. As this project develops, we hope to coordinate this effort with Newman University. Discussions were initiated as part of this proposal, but it was determined that this should be deferred at the current time.

4. Teacher Vacancies in School Board District #5

The KSDE fall vacancy report for 2024 was recently presented at the state school board meeting. District #5, which is primarily located in catchment area 1, had the greatest number of teacher vacancies in the state. Three of the greatest vacancies by subject in the district were Elementary (205), SPED (108), and ELA (47). Because these teachers essential for literacy, this is a critical problem. WKCLE is essential to help close the gap through the network of services that it can provide through community-based help, traveling literacy van, service centers, and virtual opportunities for tutoring, coaching, and assessment. WKCLE will develop a network for this underserved section of our state.

5. Resources and External Assistance Needed

During the development phase of this project, we reached out to special education cooperatives, school districts, met with area superintendents as a group, and had an individual conversation with one district (see SUP2) as an initial needs assessment. What was found was not what was expected. While there are small districts with fewer resources that still request basic and essential

training from FHSU, specifically LETRS or the graduate micro-credentials under development, it was not the leading request. Some districts were asking for a LETRS 2.0 – that is professional development to extend the initial training, others were needing assistance in adapting or developing literacy materials for English language learners (ELL) as the demographics of the school was outpacing curriculum development and implementation. There was also a request to develop a “LETRS Lite” program for middle school teachers and discipline specific training for non-ELA high school teachers. The most significant finding, and one that will be a major effort of our work, was a need for community assistance to work with parents on being part of the literacy solution and providing community awareness of the importance of literacy and how to become part of the solution.

FHSU has some of this started, and will be expanded in sections III and V, but it is limited to the Hays area, and virtual requests by our graduates. WKCLE will provide the opportunity to develop a coherent and consistent approach through the network to be created across the catchment area and provide the resources to expand and enhance our current work.

It should be noted that our Reading Specialist professor, Dr. Carrie Tholstrup is meeting with a district on the 29th of October to look at professional development for middle and high school teachers and explore what is wanted for a “LETRS Lite” training. This is work, in the future, that will fall to WKCLE to coordinate and identify faculty with the skills to respond to requests. This work builds on workshops she has developed and delivered to school districts and teachers across the region.

B. Vision for the WKCLE

FHSU COE is proposing to create the Western Kansas Center for Literacy Excellence (WKCLE) for catchment area 1 located in the western third of the state. The catchment area for WKCLE is extensive – 33,000 square miles, with a round-trip driving distance from Hays to each school district coming to approximately 22,000 miles. At the outset of this initiative, we realized that the idea of a single center is not practical. Rather, the vision we have is to create a network of partnerships, virtual opportunities for literacy, community-based programs across the catchment area, traveling literacy van for isolated communities, and a planned expansion for a branch office in the southwestern section of WKCLE. The plan is for an extensive network to provide the identified services in SB 438. FHSU has both formed and is currently under discussion to form several partnerships across the region which include:

- programs at FHSU that provide professional training related to some aspect of literacy which includes teacher education (both elementary and secondary), speech and language pathology, school psychology, special education, education administration, and English. Specific preparation areas are described in section II;
- community-based groups to provide community & family literacy centers (e.g., community colleges, community organizations). A document indicating an intent to plan with community colleges located in SUP3 pending further development of WKCLE;
- the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center (SWPRC), the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center (NKESC);
- special education cooperatives and school districts;
- Newman University (discussions were initiated, but placed on hold pending further development of WKCLE);

- other entities described in section V.

A challenge faced in the catchment area is the varying needs of schools in terms of teacher professional development and support, school district needs for planning, work with families, and individual services for students. Coupled with this is the demographic distribution in the southwest section of the catchment area – i.e., 40 languages spoken in Garden City Schools – to rapidly changing demographics in the central and northern sections of the catchment area. While the scope of work that schools desire from WKCLE is daunting, we are confident that WKCLE can provide services by networking across the region with a combination of virtual and face-to-face work.

While we intend to address all the elements in SB 438, we have identified five key areas of specialization:

1. Coherent and consistent services through a network of providers across the catchment area coordinated by the main WKCLE office in Hays. This will allow WKCLE to leverage the expertise of university personnel, educational professionals in training (teachers, speech language pathologists, and school psychologists), technology support, fiscal management, and the strong relationships FHSU has created across the region.
2. Focus on community & family literacy by building community awareness about literacy and its importance with schools and rural communities (e.g., public service announcements, marketing materials, literacy celebrations, family literacy events, community needs for non-school age literacy).
3. Tutoring and assessment support both virtually and face-to-face.
4. Work with schools to create professional development opportunities, targeted simulations, and curriculum support.
5. Engage preservice elementary teachers, and students engaged with literacy (e.g., reading specialists, SPED, speech language pathologists, school psychologists) in center activities and simulations.

An organizational chart is provided in SUP4 that shows the structure of WKCLE. FHSU will provide fiscal oversight and contracts for services and partnerships and assure adherence to state of Kansas financial and personnel policies. A center director will be hired during the Start Up Period by FHSU with appropriate additional personnel (refer to sections IV and SUP5).

C. Methodologies to Achieve the Vision

1. Advisory Committee

One of the first actions of WKCLE will be to form an Initial Advisory Committee for the Start Up Period. The proposed membership is provided in SUP 9. The initial committee has a large representation from FHSU by faculty most directly involved in aspects of literacy. Both service centers in the catchment area (SWPRSC and NKSEC) are included in part because they will receive a contract to provide an instructional coach on call and due to their representation of a combined 66 school districts across the catchment area (see SUP 10 for the list). The service centers are critical to facilitate communication and needs from and to WKCLE. We have had two of the special education cooperatives indicate an intent to be involved. While we have not confirmed the involvement of Newman University (NU) at this point our intent is to invite NU to

be on the advisory committee due to their presence in southwestern Kansas. We will also contact the president of the Kansas Community College Association to identify representatives from the community college sector. After the Start Up Period, beginning July 1, 2025, the advisory committee will be reformed to a smaller representative group to work with the director of WKCLE upon hiring in the spring of 2025.

The FHSU Language and Literacy Institute has collaborated and had support provided by the Center for READING located at Pittsburg State University. Dr. Sarah Broman Miller and Dr. David Hurford have been in communication since 2019 and have developed a solid working relationship based on their like-minded goals of strengthening the literacy skills of Kansas children. We will continue this relationship as we move forward with this project and will consult with Dr. Hurford as we identify the needs for training and on-going operations.

The primary effort of the initial advisory committee is to work from this proposal to define deliverables and outcomes based on Fact Finding & Community Discovery (next section), represent their area to assure all elements are covered, develop job descriptions based on needs, assist with the job search for the executive director, and shape the operating budget after the Start Up Period is completed.

2. Fact Finding and Community Discovery

FHSU has conducted some initial exploration with schools, service centers, community colleges through the Kansas Association of Community Colleges, special education cooperatives, Newman University, and internal programs at FHSU to make partnerships and lay the foundation for partnerships. However, though this has been informative, a deeper exploration is necessary to ascertain the needs of the communities in the catchment area, as we have found with our cursory examination that there is a wide variety of needs as has been discussed earlier. During the Startup Period FHSU, on behalf of WKCLE, will contract with the FHSU Docking Institute (<https://www.fhsu.edu/docking/>). Docking has expertise in community-based research both by survey and focus group. The advisory committee will determine the development of the contract, key questions, and deliverables. The findings will then be used to define metrics for success, in addition to the impacts identified in SB 438, and determine critical needs across the catchment area to help allocate resources and structure the operational years and staffing needs.

3. FHSU Language and Literacy Institute: A Prototype for WKCLE Regional Literacy Network for Community and Family Literacy

Before going deeper into the details of the effort, the question that may come up is the capability of FHSU to develop and deliver the program. Part of the basis for our confidence in our success was presented in the **Why FHSU?** section. What is not widely known is our current literacy work that is being done in the immediate Hays area and through individual contacts with school districts for virtual tutoring. This work, though geographically limited, provides an excellent template for FHSU to expand and enhance its literacy work in alignment with the goals of SB 438, and our five areas of specialization.

The FHSU Language and Literacy Institute (LLI) (see SUP6 for more information and <https://www.fhsu.edu/tiger-read/>) was created at FHSU by Dr. Sarah Miller, faculty member in Teacher Education and lead undergraduate reading professor. It is primarily supported through volunteer hours, students taking reading classes, and donations from private donors and the local

Masonic Lodge. Physical space has been donated by the United Methodist campus center. At this time there is no direct state support except for a part-time student worker and recognizing Dr. Miller’s volunteer time as part of her service documentation in her annual review and promotion and tenure. COE has provided decommissioned iPads and Chromebooks to support the technological needs of her work.

The FHSU Language and Literacy Institute (LLI) hosts approximately four family literacy nights each academic year. Family literacy nights are valuable because they strengthen the bridge between home and school, engaging families in their children's literacy development and fostering a community of support around reading. We believe family literacy nights provide many benefits to the community. For example, they provide an opportunity for parents and children to engage in reading activities together, helping to cultivate lifelong reading habits. They improve academic outcomes. When families participate in literacy, children often show improved reading comprehension, vocabulary, and overall academic performance, as they receive support at home that complements their classroom learning. Family literacy nights help empower parents. These events equip parents with strategies to help their children read at home, even if they may feel uncertain about how to best support literacy. Family literacy nights bring together families, teachers, and students, helping to create a supportive network. This shared time fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens the connection between families and schools. For families in underserved, rural communities, literacy nights can help address educational inequities by giving families resources, tips, and encouragement to support their children's learning. This access to literacy resources can be particularly impactful in communities where books and literacy programs may be limited. Overall, family literacy nights empower families to support their children's education while making literacy a communal value.

In addition to the above the LLI provides the following as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Hays Language and Literacy Institute Services

Free in-person and online language and literacy tutoring to everyone birth to grave	Administer literacy assessments and create individualized literacy interventions based on assessment data for the last 10 years
Preservice teachers work as tutors in literacy institute	Serve approximately 150 PK-12 students per year
Provide services to Kansas schools when asked (i.e., Osborne, Phillipsburg, & Ransom)	Provide services by FHSU students
Work with the FHSU Writing Center to help FHSU students with possible dysgraphia/difficulties	Host literacy family nights
Provide free conversational English lessons to Hays Hispanic population and USD 489 students	Provide free conversational English to FHSU students (China, West Africa)
Sponsor the Young Readers’ Conference held every other year at FHSU	Provide services at the Topeka Correctional Facility (TCF) modeling Read Alouds
Provide tutoring services to the children of incarcerated women at TCF	Provide additional programs for community groups on-demand

The identified list of services resonates with the requirements of SB438 and the essential elements of the center. The current effort serves 150 students with identified needs and is limited geographically and by personnel. There is only one director – Dr. Miller – and the students she brings to the center as part of their classroom requirements.

WKCLE intends to expand and extend the LLI model across the catchment area by creating the Regional Literacy Network for Community and Family Literacy to seven additional sites across the catchment area. The creation of Community & Family Literacy sites across the region provides accessible access to families, teachers, schools, and the community for literacy. While FHSU will be able to aid anywhere in the catchment area via distance technology, our Service Center partners indicated a physical presence is essential. This was echoed in our discussions with Dodge City school district and the FHSU Superintendents council (see SUP 2).

Dr. Paul Adams, Dean of COE, contacted Ms. Heather Morgan, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Community Colleges to ascertain the interest of regional community colleges to be involved in this work, specifically for local literacy activities (see SUP 3 for response letter). No agreements have been signed at this time pending funding and local meetings across the catchment area to determine specific needs. The current thought is to place sites of the Regional Literacy Network for Community & Family Literacy partners at a community college. This has four advantages – community colleges with early childhood and childcare provider programs would be enhanced with the materials and practices from the network site, the network could add to or enhance literacy instruction at the community college as it has at FHSU, it would provide an additional means to partner with local school districts, and it would provide employers an additional venue to help build the workforce language skills while involving the whole family. During the Startup Period this will be negotiated and fact finding will be done to determine the best locations to expand the network to the seven additional sites outside Hays.

WKCLE will hire an Associate Director of Community and Family Outreach to coordinate the efforts of the Regional Literacy Network to assure consistency and coherence within the network and its connections to the greater work of WKCLE.

4. Additional Support for the Regional Network for Literacy: Literacy Van and AmeriCorps Efforts

Literacy Van: The eight sites in Regional Literacy Network does not cover the whole catchment area limiting our efforts to have consistent and coherent access. Further, some of the activities, such as the Young Reader’s Conference, requires resources and tools that are not readily available at all the network sites. Our answer is to build on our current STEM/MakerVan project at FHSU that travels across the state providing STEM programs (<https://www.fhsu.edu/smei/>). Adams, Executive Director of the Science and Mathematics Education Institute (SMEI), as well as COE Dean, has agreed to reassign a Ford Transit van that was configured to provide STEM activities to WKCLE to support literacy. The van has a foldable worktable, cabinets, monitors, plug strips, a lift to move items and people into the van, mobile hotspot for WiFi, and a portable generator for remote work.

The Literacy Van will be wrapped to market and advertise WKCLE (a moving billboard if you will) and become a mobile learning center and resource distribution vehicle. A sample of items in the literacy van are children’s books, books on literacy instruction, instructional kits, teacher resources, and tablets, and assessment tools that can bring literacy help to any community. The

van can be checked out by schools or FHSU preservice students to work with children. A more detailed document about the make up of the Literacy Van is in SUP7.

AmeriCorps Project *Reading Partners* (developing): FHSU, prior to the Blueprint for Literacy, submitted a plan to fund *Reading Partners* through an AmeriCorps grant. The grant team (Dr. Jerri Brookes, Dr. Brooke Moore, and Dr. Carrie Tholstrup) all have literacy expertise and also work with the special education community. They are currently working on Phase 1 of their grant to develop training models for AmeriCorps volunteers who will then work across the catchment area to address literacy needs. Assuming the project is approved for Phase 2 funding, the administration of the project will be subsumed by WKCLE through the Associate Director of Community & Family outreach as well as the training materials being developed for use with schools, families, and communities. A description of the current work is found in SUP 8.

After the *Reading Partners* team trains the AmeriCorps members on the methodology of structured literacy, the members will then train community Reading Partners from modules that have been developed on the foundation of structured literacy and provide explicit, sequential, cumulative, and multimodal instruction in key literacy components: phonology, orthography, syntax, morphology, semantics, and critical thinking. This ensures high-quality literacy instruction tailored to the needs of students at various levels, including those with exceptional needs (e.g., students with dyslexia). The modules will provide Reading Partners with the tools needed to support students, ensuring they implement the best practices in structured literacy.

Collaboration with school leaders and community organizations, such as Big Brothers and Sisters, 4-H groups, and mental health facilities, extends support beyond the classroom, reinforcing instruction in both formal and informal settings. The *Reading Partners* AmeriCorps grant offers year-round literacy support, including the summer months, to prevent skill loss, especially for diverse and exceptional students. This demonstrates a plan to address various needs throughout the year, including providing extra help during periods when students may be at risk of regression in reading abilities. Year-round literacy support for students when schools are not in session results from collaboration with community organizations and the Regional Literacy Network sites.

5. Simulations for Preservice and Inservice Educators

Simulation-based training for preservice teachers can effectively bridge the gap between theory and practice in literacy instruction, especially when aligning with the science of reading. By immersing teacher candidates in realistic, controlled teaching scenarios, these simulations can improve their readiness to deliver effective literacy instruction. For inservice teachers, simulations in literacy instruction can be adapted to focus on fine-tuning skills, addressing real classroom challenges, and implementing data-driven, evidence-based practices. Below is our plan, some of which is already occurring, for simulations.

Pre-Service Educator Preparation: Simulations

Simulations in the University Classroom: Preservice teachers receive a collection of videos featuring PK-12 students being assessed by their course professor. They are also given copies of the assessments used in these videos, allowing them to assess the students in the videos in the

same way as the professor. We will be making use of GoReact to help with this process as it is available to our students.

Simulations in the Field: The FHSU Language and Literacy Institute relies on simulation experiences when preparing preservice teachers as part of their field experience and content knowledge. Preservice teachers work as literacy tutors in-person and online in the FHSU Language and Literacy Institute as part of their internship requirements. The preservice teachers are trained to use literacy assessment data to create an intervention plan specific to the PK-12 student's needs. Preservice teachers meet in small groups throughout the semester to discuss the literacy assessment data and interventions with their peers and the course professor. This experience is designed to replicate grade-level team meetings the preservice teachers will engage in once they become licensed. This will be extended with WKCLE by providing virtual students with the opportunity to work as literacy tutors at locations in the Regional Literacy Network sites, AmeriCorps, and/or the Literacy Van.

House Calls: Preservice teachers assist the Science of Reading II university professor in visiting rural schools in need of literacy assessment assistance. The university professor is frequently called on by classroom teachers to help identify the source of individual student literacy difficulties and design individualized interventions based on data. Preservice teachers assist the professor on these calls, help develop interventions, and occasionally attend IEP meetings as a team. WKCLE will provide more opportunities for students as there will be instructional coaches at the Service Centers, instructional coaches working with WKCLE, and locations in the Regional Literacy Network that will expand the options for house-calls. The WKCLE network provides more opportunities for the students while helping the WKCLE address coaching, assessment, and interventions in the catchment area.

Simulations for Inservice Educators and District Coaching

Providers in the WKCLE network will offer literacy coaching on-demand. This service will provide in-service teachers with access to a literacy help-desk hotline during business hours. Staff in the WKCLE will be able to travel to the classrooms of those seeking assistance and aid with teaching, assessment, and observations to help improve practice.

Experimentation with AI

Given our geographic setting we are planning to explore the use of AI for coaching teachers and helping to provide assessments of students. Dr. Magdalene Moy, a staff member in the FHSU teaching center, has developed a application similar to this request for clinical psychology. We will define the scope of the work during the Start Up Period and then contract to develop a model to help students and teachers. Dr. Moy's initial thoughts are provided in SUP11.

6. Essential Partnerships

To achieve the full vision outlined in SB 438 and the center expectations there are essential, partnerships and allocation of university resources that will identified and pursued after the work

by the Docking Institute and determinations made by the Advisory Committee. Some specific partnerships that have been identified and initial discussions that have occurred are identified in Table 2 Essential Partnerships. Others will be added as the WCKLE network develops

Table 2 Essential Partnerships and Contracts

Entity	What is contracted	Purpose
FHSU Speech and Language Pathology	Graduate Assistantship/Internships of SLP students under the guidance of faculty to work in WCKLE and Professional Development opportunities to be identified for staff and schools.	Work with the network on assessment and intervention. Provide experience for the next generation of SLP professionals with literacy and rural community experience
FHSU School Psychology	Graduate Assistantship/Internship of school psychology students under the guidance of faculty to work in WCKLE and Professional Development opportunities to be identified for staff and schools.	Work with the network on assessment and intervention. Provide experience for the next generation of school psychologists with literacy and rural community experience
FHSU Preservice Teachers	Undergraduate internship to work under the guidance of WCKLE staff	Work with the network to provide classroom assessments and individual student work
Phillips Fundamental Learning Center	No formal contract at this time, only discussion of what additional professional development might be provided. Refer to SUP12 for current status.	Expand the opportunities and possibilities for professional development.
SWRPSC and NKSESC service centers	Contract to add an additional instruction coach to provide services for assessment and teacher professional development.	Expand services to all districts in the catchment area. Conduit to the WKCLE network.
Translation Services	To serve all families in the Regional Literacy Network.	Assure that we can work with all families and assist teachers with ELL literacy.
WCKLE Southwestern Branch	To manage services and provide uniquely targeted needs in the southern part of the network.	The southwestern portion of the state is the most populous relative to the other parts. Also, the language variations and work with families requires more direct access.

C. Proposed Timeline for the Start Up Period

The timeline being provided is only for the Start Up Period.

Fall 24

Formation of the advisory council, executive director job description and search

Spring 25

- Docking Institute Contract initiated for fact finding.
- Hire executive director; subsequent searches are led by the executive director.
- FHSU Language and Literacy Institute additional funding to develop essential replication elements for the Regional Literacy Network.
- Preparation of the Literacy Van for summer work.
- Identify 3 districts to work directly with in collaboration with Service Centers and WKCLE as an initial and direct start of the network work.
- Contract community & family literacy sites.
- Contract Southwestern Branch staff and remaining staff needed for WKCLE operation.
- Set annual goals and metrics for FY 26 and create an evaluation plan with the Docking Institute.

II. Pre-Service Educator Preparation

A. Current Programs

Elementary: The FHSU preservice elementary program is aligned to the science of reading requirements identified in SB 438. Documentation of this and copies of the syllabi are provided in SUP 13. Additional documentation of our course work meeting the requirements for reading is found in our report on identified measures for the elementary teacher program as reported to KSDE and is found in SUP 14. These two supplemental documents provide evidence of course work aligned with the science of reading and the scope of the program, and those courses with meaningful application of structured literacy. The impact on P-12 students has been indicated in the prior sections with the required literacy work done through the LLI. Additionally, the preservice teachers complete an assessment that is common across the KBOR schools and Washburn University to document their abilities to impact students. The course development to align with science of reading began in 2020 with faculty going through LETRS training and then applying that training to curriculum changes. We also provide science of reading instruction in the course used to prepare secondary teachers in ELA, as can be seen in SUP 15.

Graduate Programs in the College of Education with Literacy Elements: In addition to the preparation of elementary teachers we also are actively preparing graduate students in multiple programs for literacy: educational administration, special education, and reading specialist. SUP16 provides a complete listing of these courses as well as an overall estimate of the institutional cost to provide direct instruction for literacy.

Graduate Programs outside the College of Education: Speech and Language Pathology and School Psychology both prepare professionals to work with the science of reading.

Per the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2001) the role of an SLP is crucial in developing literacy for children and adolescents with communication disorders, including those with severe or multiple disabilities. SLPs also support broader literacy efforts within schools and communities, collaborating with other experts in written language development. SLPs often play a crucial role in early intervention and prevention strategies

focused on addressing potential language and literacy related concerns for at-risk preschoolers and kindergarteners. The SLPs primary role in the education setting is typically to serve as a collaborative team member, supporting teachers in the classroom, particularly in some of their areas of expertise such as phonological awareness and certain aspects of reading comprehension, especially those related to vocabulary and syntactic structure.

In School Psychology, reading assessment is covered in Appraisal of Children (PSY 840) and Teaching Reading in Special Education (SPED 832). However, it has also been proposed to add an Advanced Assessment course which would allow for more instruction on reading testing, specifically on testing for dyslexia and testing reading skills in specific populations. This course has not been developed yet, so there is an opportunity to explore specific content related to reading assessment as needed.

Please refer to SUP 17 for SLP and SUP 18 for School Psychology. These documents identify current literacy work and future plans to expand the curriculum on the science of reading.

B. Success of Program Completers

Praxis Content Test 7812 – Elementary Ed: CKT Reading and Language Arts Subtest data is presented in Table 3.

In the state of Kansas, candidates must pass the ETS Praxis Content test to obtain a license. The content of each test is based on national content standards. The proprietary assessments are developed and validated by ETS as well as assurance of the interrater reliability. Elementary Education program completer data demonstrates that candidates are consistently successful, with an average pass rate on first attempts of 89.6% (n=596) over the last five AY cycles. Assessment results are analyzed and interpreted by program faculty. Changes in coursework and/or program needed to integrate the standards are made based on the results from the data analysis. Faculty also recommend changes at the annual data retreat held in the fall of each year.

Table 3. Initial Level: ETS Praxis Content Test Data Chart from Performance Report

	Year	Number of Students	Passing Score	Mean Score	Median Score	# Passing on First Attempt	% Passing on First Attempt	% Passing within two years of finishing program
Grades K-6 Elementary (7812 – Reading and Language	2023-24	95	159	169.61	169.00	85	90%	
	2022-23	119	159	171.37	171.00	107	90%	
	2021-22	122	159	169.26	169.00	110	90%	98%

C. Proposed Enhancements

FHSU is in the process of developing a competency-based education program. We believe that this program will provide more direct interaction in the classroom as the students will be showing their mastery of being a teacher through action. The science of reading curriculum will still be required; however, assessment will focus on documentation of effective teaching of literacy.

We are also continuing to develop courses to align with SOR such as Children's Literature and revising the graduate coursework taken by students pursuing a career in elementary teaching through alternate paths.

Another enhancement is changing our teacher work sample to a portfolio assessment where we will be able to have students document their work and growth with the science of reading over their academic career. Currently it is a one-time assessment done during student teaching. We believe this will be a major change to our program and provide accurate data on student ability.

WKCLE is creating the position of Associate Director of Field Experiences, Simulations, and School Helps. This individual will work directly with our Office of Field Experiences and Licensure to place students in settings where there is a teacher who has experience with structured literacy instruction and, if not, will direct WKCLE staff to work with the school, student, and cooperating teacher to address the needs of the district.

Other curriculum improvements for the graduate programs will occur in SLP and Psychology as identified in SUP 17 and SUP 18. Of particular note is a proposed joint graduate program with SLP and Reading Specialist that will cross train graduate students.

One other enhancement is to employ undergraduates as interns at WKCLE and graduate students in advanced areas at WKCLE. This provides an additional opportunity for students to develop their skills and share with their peers.

D. Simulations: This was addressed in an earlier section.

III. In-Service Educator and District Support

A. Current Programs

Dr. Miller and Dr. Tholstrup have been working in school districts to provide LETRS training for school districts. Due to our work with LETRS we have worked out an arrangement to award teachers graduate credit in READ 851 & 852 for LETRS Volume 1 & Volume 2, respectively. Candidates can take this as a non-degree seeking student, as part of the MSE in C&I in Science of Language and Literacy or apply READ 852 toward a Reading Specialist endorsement or MSE. We have also designed READ 853 & 854 for the MSE in C&I in Science of Language and Literacy to supplement and take a deeper dive into the foundation of the LETRS content. A more complete description of our current work is found in SUP 19. This describes curriculum and practicum experiences.

As noted earlier, we also aid teachers and schools through the LLI. As noted, this serves as a prototype of future work through the WKCLE network.

A program that is under development for inservice teachers is a National Science Foundation grant to promote student reading. The working title is *Critical Literacy for Understanding Essential Science*, led by Dr. Brooke Moore.

B. Simulations: This was addressed in an earlier section.

C. Coaching: This was addressed in an earlier section.

D. Assessment and Evaluation Services: This was addressed in an earlier section

IV. Personnel

The lead FHSU COE faculty responsible for literacy are Dr. Sarah Miller and Dr. Carrie Tholstrup. Both have their PhDs in reading, and both are LETRS trained. Additionally, Mrs. Amy Shafer, a literacy instructor, is also LETRS trained. Adjunct faculty hired to instruct additional sections of literacy courses are vetted to ensure they are knowledgeable of the science of reading and capable of teaching our courses. Our faculty in SPED provide literacy instruction as it applies to literacy interventions in their discipline. Our speech and language pathology faculty and school psychology faculty, Dr. Karmen Porter and Dr. Amy Drinnon are currently updating their curriculum to prepare school professionals in reading assessments. Dr. An in SLP specializes in issues related to ESOL instruction. She has indicated an interest in working with this project to address the ELL needs in our catchment area. SUP 21 provides a listing of faculty, preparation, assignment, and research for the COE faculty at FHSU as evidence of the personnel support for the project.

While our current faculty effectively manage and teach our curriculum, evidenced by our passing scores, they will not be able to run WKCLE other than in an advisory capacity or developing curriculum to support the professional development needs of WKCLE. Therefore, the following lead positions are needed for WKCLE: Executive Director, Associate Director of Analysis and Assessment, Associate Director of Field Experiences, Simulations, and School Helps; Associate Director of Community & Family Outreach, and a Southwest Branch Director. Additional staff are manager positions at the network locations for community & family literacy, instructional coaches (2) at the central WKCLE office, and those employed by the service centers. SUP 5 contains more on staff needs and position descriptions.

V. Outreach

A. Existing Partnerships

Several partnerships have been identified in an earlier section. One additional partnership is our work with the Phillips Fundamental Learning Center (PFLC). Our current work involves the offering of a micro-credential for introductory work on the offerings at PFLC. We have made an active effort to make this available to administrators and paraprofessionals. Additionally, we collaborated with PFLC in offering graduate credit. Please refer to SUP 20 for further information as it most directly addresses literacy partnerships.

B. Future Partnerships

The Regent institutions and Washburn University will develop a Council of Directors of the Centers of Excellence in Literacy. The center directors will meet regularly to ensure knowledge across the center system, identify areas of strength, needs and places for sharing, collaboration, and partnership, and learn from each other. Particularly impactful areas of focus and expertise

will be shared so that duplication of services and resources can be kept to a minimum. Additionally, the Council of Directors will meet with the Regent and Washburn College/School of Education deans to ensure a focus on our common mission.

The deans of education in the KBOR system + Washburn University have already had initial discussions. For example, KU has the greatest expertise in special education. Their knowledge and experience will inform all of the group of best practices. K-State has indicated they have a solid plan for early childhood and community colleges, this will be of use as we develop our community & family centers. FHSU has expertise in rural communities and distance learning. Our insights into developing a literacy network will inform others.

Our other partnerships have been identified earlier.

C. Current and Planned Student/Family Support: This was addressed earlier.

VI. Quality Assurance System

A. Data Collection and Analysis

FHSU has a robust quality assurance plan that looks at the effectiveness of our teacher preparation program. The plan collects data from multiple sources, involves analysis by all stakeholders, and results in action steps to improve the program. A full description and data flow is provided in SUP 22. This plan was recognized through our accreditation process as being effective and we had no areas for improvement on our external review in February 2024. The primary improvement and changes to the plan will be to adapt the system to our work on a new teacher work sample assessment that will provide more pinpoint data on reading instruction than we currently have. We do make the data and actions available through our annual data retreat with faculty, schools, and students where these groups have the opportunity to suggest improvements.

B. Impact Measures

While our current data collection and analysis is effective, it does not address the significant impact data identified in SB 438, nor does it look at the larger impact on our area. We propose to contract with the FHSU Docking Institute to be an external evaluator of WKCLE. The Docking institute has the expertise to do this and has collaborated effectively with us on our NSF grants. The Associate Director of Assessment and Data Analysis will be responsible for collecting the required impact data identified in SB 438 to produce an annual report for the Blueprint for Literacy Committee and distribution through the network to all partners and clients.

During the Start Up Period the advisory council and director will work with the Docking Institute to develop an annual evaluation plan that will be conducted each year to evaluate all network operations and outreach to provide both formative and summative assessment to ascertain the quality of the effort and identify areas for improvement with a 360 degree scan of the catchment area in order to receive input and guidance from the whole network to improve the operations and offerings of WKCLE for catchment area 1.