Mission
To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

Vision
Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Motto
Kansans Can

Success defined
A successful Kansas high school graduate has the academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills and civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

Outcomes
- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success

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LITERACY NETWORK OF KANSAS: IMPLEMENTATION TO IMPACT 2018-2021

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Executive Summary

KSDE Award: The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) received the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy award in 2017 and named the initiative Literacy Network of Kansas (LiNK). In partnership with The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning (KUCRL) and a team of literacy experts, the Kansas State Literacy Team (KSLT), KSDE established guidelines to receive proposals from local districts and consortia.

State Grantees: KSDE announced eight grant recipients in June 2018, including four district awards and four consortia awards. The eight LiNK projects represent 32 school districts and approximately 88,000 children from 190 schools across Kansas. One of the largest grants ever received by KSDE, this $27 million-plus project provided the state with an opportunity to build capacity for literacy at the state, regional and community levels.

Purpose: LiNK grantees were selected based upon their local comprehensive birth through 12th-grade literacy plan to make a significant impact on literacy growth and development, especially for disadvantaged children and youth, including English learners, economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. LiNK projects are now able to provide the state with models for implementing effective practices to impact literacy with these four statewide goals:

1. Build capacity to impact literacy at the state, regional and community levels.
2. Implement and evaluate high-quality literacy plans to positively and effectively influence the literacy growth and development of disadvantaged students.
3. Conduct evaluation, implement data-driven decision-making and collaborate with external evaluators.
4. Implement and sustain high-quality literacy practices through ongoing and embedded professional learning.

Collaboration: A LiNK website https://www.litnetks.org provides opportunities for school districts and organizations throughout the state to share a mission related to the literacy growth and development of Kansas citizens. This platform will be sustained beyond the grant period. Communities of Practice in the areas of Adolescent Literacy, Early Childhood, Family Engagement and Instructional Coaching also will continue to provide opportunities for collaboration in a literacy perspective.

What we learned: This LiNK final report identifies LiNK strategies that proved impactful in meeting the literacy needs of school districts and communities. These strategies provide useful models for other communities and schools to improve literacy across Kansas.
LiNK Projects

1. Atchison-Leavenworth Consortium
   • Atchison USD 409
   • Leavenworth USD 453

2. Dodge City USD 443

3. Garden City USD 457

4. Greenbush L9 Consortium
   • Central Heights USD 288
   • Cherryvale USD 447
   • Columbus USD 493
   • Hiawatha USD 415
   • Neodesha USD 461
   • Riverton USD 404
   • South Brown County USD 430
   • Southeast USD 247
   • Woodson County USD 366

5. Greenbush M7 Consortium
   • Garnett USD 365
   • Iola USD 257
   • Labette County USD 506
   • Osawatomie USD 367
   • Pittsburg USD 250
   • Santa Fe Trail USD 434
   • Turner USD 202

6. Manhattan-Ogden USD 383

7. Olathe USD 233

8. Southwest Plains Consortium
   • Copeland USD 476
   • Deerfield USD 216
   • Kismet Plains USD 483
   • Montezuma USD 371
   • Ness City USD 303
   • Satanta USD 507
   • Stanton County USD 452
   • Sublette USD 374
   • Syracuse USD 494
   • Ulysses USD 214
LITERACY NETWORK OF KANSAS: IMPLEMENTATION TO IMPACT 2018-2021

A Model of Literacy Improvement

KSDE created a logic model to provide a visual representation of the process to which KSDE and the LiNK subgrantees measure the impact of this Striving Readers project during and beyond the grant cycle. Inputs include LiNK project resources, such as personnel, funding and time. Inputs help to provide for the activities, which make up each project’s plan to reach their intended outputs. The outcomes show short-term gain, while the impacts of LiNK projects will show long-term gain locally, regionally and statewide. Long-term impact mirrors the four statewide LiNK goals.

**Inputs**
- Personnel
- Professional development
- Regional consultants
- Instructional coaches
- Curricular resources
- Higher education tuition stipends
- Family resources and activities
- Community partner resources and activities
- District literacy leadership teams
- District literacy plans
- Networking opportunities

**Activities**
- On-site training
- Consultation
- In-person and virtual instructional coaching.
- Conferences and other off-site professional development.
- LiNK website/outreach
- Webinars
- Learning Labs
- Year-long Institutes
- Family/community literacy events
- Communities of Practice
- Higher education certification coursework
- Book studies
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Social media networks
- Student Assessment Inventory

**Outputs**
- More educators benefited from Professional development.
- More instructional coaching interactions with educators.
- More classroom resources for students.
- More books for kids.
- More family literacy events.
- New community partnerships to support literacy.
- New partnerships with early childhood providers.

**Outcomes**

**Improving**
- District systems support literacy development.
- Schools adopt evidence-based practices in instruction.
- Teachers improve classroom instructional practices.
- Families increase knowledge of literacy.
- Communities and early childhood providers partner with families to improve early learner literacy.

**Impact**
- Increased capacity for impact on literacy at state, regional and community levels.
- Sustainable, high-quality literacy practices through ongoing and embedded professional networking and professional learning statewide.
- Student literacy improves as measured by KAP and local ELA Assessments.
- Kindergarten readiness improves as evidenced by ASQ and local screening tools.
What We Learned

MOST IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES:
Using the LiNK logic model as a guide, LiNK project evaluators identified the most impactful strategies that proved successful in obtaining these intended outcomes.

1. District systems support literacy development.
2. Schools adopt evidence-based practices.
3. Teachers improve instructional practices.
4. Families increase their knowledge of literacy.
5. Community organizations and early child care providers partner with families.
1 District systems support literacy development.

IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES:

- District Literacy Team includes broad representation from administration, staff members and stakeholders.
- District Literacy Team assesses literacy needs, implements a systemwide literacy plan and reviews annual progress.
- District Literacy Team selects one to three focus areas based on needs assessment.
- Professional development is offered in a variety of modes to address literacy needs.
- See an example of a district that used these impactful strategies on page 11.

2 Schools adopt evidence-based practices.

IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES:

- Districts use data to inform instructional decisions.
- Data used in the assessment system for literacy includes: universal screening, diagnostics, progress monitoring and measurement of student outcomes.
- Schools use instructional practices and resources which have evidence to support that the strategies are effective for the identified grade levels and student populations.
- See examples of districts that used these impactful strategies on page 15.

3 Teachers improve instructional practices.

IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES:

- District focuses on one to three instructional strategies based on literacy needs assessment data.
- Professional development is provided to guide instructional staff in the use of data to make instructional decisions.
- Professional development is offered in a variety of modes, including Instructional Coaching, an effective job-embedded mode of individualized professional development.
- Professional development is provided in the use of technology to engage student learning.
- Professional development is culturally responsive to the population represented within the community; and diversity, equity and inclusion is a guiding principle.
- See examples of districts that used these impactful strategies on page 17.
Families increase their knowledge of literacy.

IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES:

- Schools connect literacy with the culture of each community.
- Families are welcomed as active partners in their students' learning.
- Bring school to the family – in addition to bringing families to schools.
- Provide specific family support for specific student literacy needs.
- Schools partner with agencies who connect with families to provide multiple support systems.
- See examples of districts that used these impactful strategies on page 21.

Community organizations and early child care providers partner with families.

IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES:

- Schools partner with community agencies, organizations and early child care providers.
- Professional development and literacy resources are available for the community and early childhood providers.
- Address the literacy needs of early learners with community early child care providers, agencies and organizations who provide support for these families.
- See examples of districts that used these impactful strategies on page 29.
1. District systems support literacy development

**SPOTLIGHT**

Greenbush provides district-level implementation support

Greenbush regional consultants provided targeted support for 16 consortia districts. As part of the LiNK grant, each district formed a District Literacy Team, assessed literacy needs and created a systemwide District Literacy Plan. Consultants with experience in teaching and education administration helped to guide the District Literacy Teams through their action steps.

A LiNK District Implementation Checklist was added to the evaluation of the Greenbush districts in the second project year. The purpose of the checklist was to provide a list of essential components for district leaders to use when planning for districtwide implementation of LiNK. Multiple factors impact educators’ professional growth, and this checklist is a tool for addressing these multiple factors at the district systems level.

The checklist contains 20 items in the domains of Leadership, Communication, Commitment, Performance/Outcomes and Systems/Alignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Planned Focus Area</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>Not begun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form district leadership team (DLT).</td>
<td>In progress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assign district-level contact person for LiNK work.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designate building-level LiNK contact person (for each building in district)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>who disseminate LiNK information to faculty and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and follow a protocol for maintaining ongoing communication with designated literacy coaches (i.e. Greenbush coach, district/building instructional coaches focused on literacy)</td>
<td>In progress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and follow a district-wide plan for consistent and timely sharing of LiNK information with building leaders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Essential Function</strong>: District leaders maintain a collaborative culture and climate at the district-level and with building leaders in order to promote shared knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop and follow a process for monitoring progress of LiNK implementation, including annual goals and outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Example of the checklist of the 20 items of Leadership, Communication, Commitment, Performance/Outcomes and Systems/Alignment.
CASE STUDY

Dodge City USD 443 offers culturally responsive instruction

Dodge City USD 443 centered their literacy plan around cultural proficiency through the process of critical reflection and understanding perspectives. They developed a cohort model for implementation of culturally responsive (CR) teaching strategies.

1. Cohort 1 completed the CR sessions during Year 1 and focused on vocabulary instruction during Year 2 and writing strategies during Year 3.
2. Cohort 2 completed the CR sessions during Year 2 and vocabulary during Year 3.
3. Cohort 3 began the CR sessions during Year 3 and the cycle will continue beyond the grant.

Online modules for CR and reading/writing ensure that the information is available beyond the grant period. This cohort model has been replicated by other LiNK districts for the implementation of literacy practices.

Figure 2: Infographic of USD 443 Literacy Initiative.
A MODEL OF LITERACY IMPROVEMENT:  1. DISTRICT SYSTEMS SUPPORT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT
LINK IMPLEMENTATION TO IMPACT 2018-2021

DISTRICT IMPACT STORY
Dodge City USD 443

• Dodge City USD 443 Professional Learning Infographic (PDF)
https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uqP406EwkZo%3d&tabid=6321
SUSTAINING THE PRACTICE STATEWIDE
KSDE Structured Literacy Professional Development Series

With LiNK funds, KSDE created a series of professional development sessions for each of the evidence-based Structured Literacy components. The series aligns with KSDE’s dyslexia initiative to provide guided support for districts in providing high-quality literacy instruction and support for struggling readers pre-K through grade 12. A variety of different topics are covered for each grade band, from understanding the foundational elements of literacy instruction to screening for struggling readers and monitoring progress. Each session includes a video, note-taking guide, additional resources for further investigation, and a quick comprehension quiz.

This Structured Literacy professional development series is available on the Kansas Teaching and Leading Project website here:
https://kansasteachingandleadingproject.org/literacy-resources/

Understanding Assessment for English Language Arts

LiNK, in collaboration with Measurement in Practice, developed a professional development series for use by district administrators and professional learning communities. Participants will gain a better understanding of a balanced assessment system for English Language Arts. While the four-part series focuses on ELA, sessions can be used for all content areas.

Understanding Balanced Assessment

1. How summative, interim and formative assessments work together in a balanced assessment system.
2. What is aligned assessment?

Developing Actionable Classroom Assessments

3. Writing diagnostic items for a classroom assessment.
4. Interpreting results from a classroom assessment.

This series is available for all Kansas districts on the KSDE website here:

- Career, Standards and Assessment - Assessments (webpage)
2. Districts adopt evidence-based practices

**SPOTLIGHT**

A SPOTLIGHT on impactful evidence-based practices across LiNK districts

**ON-DEMAND LEARNING**

Garden City USD 457 has created an On-Demand Power Learning series with professional development specific to literacy at all grade levels. Paired with the annual Summer Institute, in-person sessions and book studies, these courses provide the resources for teachers to learn asynchronously and at their own pace. Atchison USD 409, Dodge City USD 443, Leavenworth USD 453, Greenbush and Southwest Plains consortia districts also have created online professional development that will be updated periodically and sustained following the grant.

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 offered opportunities for instructional staff to gain knowledge of digital technologies to meet their LiNK goal to “transform students from content consumers into content creators for a global audience.” Students are effectively communicating with online technology resources and sometimes with classrooms from other states.

**STRATEGY GUIDES**

Southwest Plains created evidence-based strategy guides for consortia districts with links to lessons, research and resources for instructional coaches and educators to utilize in reading, writing, language acquisition and early childhood.

**DISTRICT IMPACT STORIES**

Examples of rural districts that have used LiNK to improve literacy with systemwide, evidence-based practices:

- Deerfield USD 216 (PDF) [Link](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=3vS5qOgo46c%3d&tabid=6321)
- Central Heights USD 288 (PDF) [Link](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ueEATmU0A6%3d&tabid=6321)
- Hiawatha USD 415 (PDF) [Link](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=m_06Xm8Hb1%3d&tabid=6321)
- Columbus USD 493 (PDF) [Link](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=kliE2CAk20%3d&tabid=6321)
- Stanton County USD 452 (PDF) [Link](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=nTkuzd0SaQ%3d&tabid=6321)
- Satanta USD 507 (PDF) [Link](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=UzfF2xyU7y%3d&tabid=6321)
SUSTAINING THE PRACTICE STATEWIDE

LiNK districts completed a baseline assessment of the literacy needs of their districts prior to beginning the LiNK project. Each district provided a rating for its district’s capacity to impact literacy at the local level, and these local scores were combined for a statewide average score on each element of the Kansas Literacy Needs Assessment. After three years, statewide results show that LiNK districts increased capacity across all domains by the end of programming in Year 3.

**Leadership:** Increased local capacity from 65.2% to 83%.

**Community and Partnerships:** Coordination with partners improved from 49.5% to 75.9% local capacity.

**Standards-aligned Curriculum:** LiNK districts rate their capacity to offer ELA curriculum aligned to standards at 84.3% at the end of the grant cycle. Many districts updated outdated curriculum resources with funding from LiNK.

**Standards-aligned and evidence-based instruction:** By the end of programming in 2021, LiNK districts rated their capacity to provide foundational skills in reading at 88.5%.

**Transitions:** LiNK districts rated their ability to ensure consistent student transitions at only 39.5% at the beginning of LiNK. In 2021, districts have student transition plans and monitoring tools in place for a capacity rating of 72.1%.

**Data-based decision-making:** Increased local capacity for using data to make instructional decisions from 58.2% to 82.1%.

**Professional Learning:** After three years of LiNK programming, districts rated their capacity to offer professional learning specific to meeting literacy needs at 82.1%
3. Teachers improve instructional practices

SPOTLIGHT
Professional development offered with LiNK funding

Throughout the grant period, LiNK districts offered professional development sessions relative to literacy for 22,961 educators. Content varied in the sessions, which ranged from one hour to multiple sessions throughout the year. LiNK sessions from across the state throughout the three-year grant period are categorized into these common content areas:

- Evidence-based literacy instruction: 14,975 participants.
- District data analysis and systems implementation: 5,071 participants.
- Cultural Responsiveness and Language Acquisition: 1,457 participants.
- Responding to individual student needs: 1,082 participants.
- Family and community engagement: 376 participants.

CASE STUDY
Olathe USD 233 increases access to assessment and professional learning

Olathe USD 233 set goals to “increase educators’ access to assessment tools and resources, increase professional learning in the areas of intervention and data-driven decision-making, and improve reading proficiency for all students with a focus on disadvantaged students.” The Literacy Leadership Team invited administrators and local board of education members to tour classrooms and visit with instructional staff about their learning. See reflections from teachers here:

- Olathe USD 233 Impact Tour Agenda (PDF)
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=r2oZIKBmWR8%3d&tabid=6321
DISTRICT IMPACT STORIES

Leavenworth USD 453 improved literacy by incorporating literacy strategies into all disciplines with their content-area standards. Syracuse USD 494 focused on evidence-based reading instruction strategies at all grade levels. Read more about the impact of LiNK here:

- Southeast USD 247 (PDF)  
  https://community.kiode.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=EwQg2SpEws%3d&tabid=6321

- Pittsburg USD 250 (PDF)  
  https://community.kiode.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=XVReVSfIdg%3d&tabid=6321

- Woodson County USD 366 (PDF)  
  https://community.kiode.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=nwp9dqdW4%3d&tabid=6321

- South Brown County USD 430 (PDF)  
  https://community.kiode.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=c4B8YKWGsL4%3d&tabid=6321

- Leavenworth USD 453 (PDF)  
  https://community.kiode.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=54pIqn5Vs4E%3d&tabid=6321

- Syracuse USD 494 (PDF)  
  https://community.kiode.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Bti_jZcXCg0%3d&tabid=6321

IMPACT STORY

Greenbush Consortium
Southeast USD 247

TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

2018
- Identify instructional materials and professional development materials.

2019
- Support for Professional Learning Communities.

2020-2021
- Reading curriculum alignment completed and evidence-based materials in use.

CURRENT LiNK IMPACT

Southeast USD 247 participated in the LiNK project in order to define their literacy needs, determine what resources to use at each grade level, and update educator skills with appropriate professional development.

Evidence-based resources, such as 95% Group materials and the Barton Reading and Spelling System, provide support for all student levels.

Teachers receive excellent professional development and support in the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in order to work on essential literacy standards and collaboratively align standards by grade level.

Greenbush Consortium, Southeast USD 247 LiNK Impact Story.
SUSTAINING THE PRACTICE STATEWIDE

Districts have increased their capacity to use student data. Administrators and instructors within LiNK districts report systemic change in the ability to utilize data to make instructional decisions.

By the third year of LiNK, 83.1% of instructors used strategies learned in data-focused professional development to inform and modify instruction in their classrooms monthly or more frequently. (See Figure 4).

Q6: "I use strategies learned in data-focused professional development to inform and modify instruction in my classroom ..."

Prior to LiNK, 41.8% of instructors modified instruction or retaught based on student literacy assessment data more frequently than monthly. By the third year, 85.1% of instructors modified instruction or retaught based on student literacy assessment data monthly or more frequently. (See Figure 5)

Q3: "I modify instruction or reteach based on student learning (literacy assessment) data."
By the third year of LiNK, 80.5% of administrators reported they have adopted a consistent data review process to be used by all teachers. (See Figure 6)

Q5: “As a building/district we have adopted a consistent data review process to be used by all teachers.”

![Data review process adoption](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=MufpFA6x9mE%3d&tabid=6321)

**Figure 6.**

LiNK districts supported instructional coaches who are trained to help educators use data to make instructional decisions. Instructional coaches have become a valuable component of professional development and districts have found that peer interaction helps to guide instructional change.

Several LiNK districts will continue instructional coaching after the grant using one of these models:

- Virtual instructional coaches collaborate with educators by observing videotapes and discussing goals. This model allows for a coach to work with several districts that may be isolated by location or population.

- Regional consultant coaches have become so valuable that education service centers will offer this service following the LiNK grant period.

- District-supported coaches in which an in-district coach supports teachers to develop a student-centered goal, models or provides resources for strategies, and serves as a peer observer in the classroom.

- Peer triads in which three educators collaborate toward a common goal of improving student outcomes. Educators take turns in the role of teacher, facilitator, and observer.

- **Virtual Coaching** (PDF)
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=MufpFA6x9mE%3d&tabid=6321

- **Montemuza USD 371 and Copeland USD 476: Our Link Grant, Impact Story** (video)
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qHQomhfvo3PxpFxLy2Nf4bfEKNAAQ/view
4. Families increase knowledge of literacy

**SPOTLIGHT**

A SPOTLIGHT on impactful family activities across LiNK districts:

**STORY TIME**

Living through a pandemic created a need for schools to bring activities to the homes of families. Kismet-Plains USD 483 started Tucked-in Tuesdays. Columbus USD 493 and several other districts hosted Bedtime Stories in which families join an educator or community member reading a book on Facebook Live. Dodge City USD 443 shares stories on their group social media sites (and in person) with early childhood families read by community members in their native language.

Left: Many schools shared stories online (and in person) with early childhood families, as well as students in their classrooms. Right: A Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Center Story Time flyer.
LITTLE LIBRARIES AND STORY WALKS
Several LiNK projects opened community-based Little Libraries in parks and public spaces where students and families can share books in English and their native languages. Several LiNK communities host StoryWalks with a book and themed signage following the storyline throughout locations in the community.

Families around Kansas enjoy all StoryWalk activities.

Little Free Libraries were created in several LiNK communities.
ENGAGING MULTILINGUAL FAMILIES

Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 used their Konza-LiNK funding to purchase library books for school libraries in the heritage languages of students, providing an opportunity for multilingual growth in students pre-K through 12th grade. The K-LiNK novel project helped foster pride in students’ culture and language. Educators stress to students that their existing knowledge is a tremendous gift and invite students to reflect upon experiences of diversity, multiculturalism and connections to our standards and curriculum. These rich conversations glean many insights and encourage students to notice details between languages and deepen their understanding of how languages work. K-LiNK also distributed more than 50 literacy bags with multiple books written in English and the family’s native language.

Left: Students show books in different languages. Right: Virginia Rodriguez, language access and family liaison specialist, prepared literacy kits for distribution to families.

Read more about the impact of Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 LiNK project here:

- Konza-LiNK: Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 (PDF)
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jqaNWswb2aA%3d&tabid=6321
BOOKS ON THE BUS

Parents have shared their appreciation for Dodge City USD 443’s Books on the Bus (BOB) which travels to neighborhoods bringing books to children and their families in LiNK communities. During the summer, BOB partners with the school’s nutrition services to bring free lunches with books and literacy activities.


Community preschoolers and teachers enjoying interior of the refurbished bus classroom.
READYROSIE

ReadyRosie is an online resource with short videos showing fun literacy activities for caregivers and family members in real-life settings, such as the dinner table, backyard or grocery store. Atchison USD 409 and Leavenworth USD 453 classroom teachers shared these evidence-informed and research-based video clips with families throughout the year.

- ReadyRosie (website)
  https://www.readyrosie.com/modeled-moments/
CASE STUDY

Garden City bilingual classrooms

Garden City’s Buffalo Jones Elementary School provides classrooms with native language (Spanish) instruction in core subjects of reading, math, writing, social studies and social-emotional instruction in kindergarten and first grade. Second grade begins a transitional year in which students begin to receive instruction in English outside of reading and math content areas. Math and reading move from the native language of Spanish gradually toward English. By the end of second grade, the instruction is presented completely in English, with language support in Spanish to clarify or make clearer connections.

While in third grade, students receive instruction in English. If the classroom teacher is fluent in Spanish, he or she will support students in the native language, but most instruction in all classrooms utilizes English language supports and ESL strategies.

USD 457’s Dual Language system follows evidence-based practices and has been in place for 28 years. During this time, as research suggested new methodology, adjustments have been made to ensure students are getting the best education possible based on the latest research. The Dual Language system used today has been in place for 12 years. LiNK funding has allowed educators to receive professional development for language acquisition, as well as many resources in English and Spanish for their classrooms. In addition, LiNK provided many resources for Dual Language preschool programming.

Rosa Rodriguez, a Garfield Early Childhood Center teacher, says “The LiNK program serves as a foundation for the future transition of our bilingual students and prepares them for future success.” Rodriguez said, “It is fascinating to observe how students learn two languages and are able to translate for other students at such a young age. Students are very proud of their accomplishments and build strong connections with their families, many through their heritage language.”

- Garden City USD 457 (PDF)
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=xvjctBiD70%3d&tabid=6321

Rosa Rodriguez, a Garfield Early Childhood Center teacher interacts with students.
DISTRICT IMPACT STORIES

Thanks to funding from LiNK, many communities benefit from new programs such as One School One Book and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Several communities also created StoryWalks* and Little Free Libraries for long-term sustainability of literacy throughout public spaces. Read more about the impact of LiNK on these communities here:

LiNK Community website: https://community.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=6321

- **Turner USD 202 (PDF)**
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=J686od30l8c%3d&tabid=6321

- **Ulysses USD 214**

- **Garnett USD 365 (PDF)**
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FiUkKxPwNA%3d&tabid=6321

Garnett Elementary School students had an opportunity to read new books while getting physical activity with the new community StoryWalk.
SUSTAINING THE PRACTICE STATEWIDE

LiNK districts hosted more than 200 family activities (ranging from book distribution to virtual read-alouds, family field trips, family resources and guidance for meeting specific student needs). COVID-19 protocols prevented many in-person activities from occurring. However, during three years, 19,271 family members participated in literacy activities, not counting most of the numerous virtual activities presented to involve families in their children’s learning. About 91% of respondents attending events in person say they learned literacy skills at the activity. About 83% of respondents say they learned to help the student at home with literacy skills. LiNK districts use Kansas Parent Information Resource Center Family Engagement and Partnership Standards to align with KSDE’s Kansans Can vision for education.
5. Community organizations partner with families

**SPOTLIGHT**

Electronic Literacy Kiosks *(shown right)* placed in health clinics and community businesses in Garden City, Manhattan and Southwest Plains districts are preloaded with literacy tips, videos, literacy apps and vocabulary development. Families can access the activities with their children while waiting for appointments.

**DISTRICT IMPACT STORY**

Ness City USD 303 used LiNK support and funding for literacy instruction training, reviewing curriculum resources and standards, and partnering with the community. Read about how they created community opportunities to help students find a love of reading here:

- **Ness City USD 303 (PDF)**
  [https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=y1LoElFm0%3d&tabid=6321](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=y1LoElFm0%3d&tabid=6321)
SUSTAINING THE PRACTICE STATEWIDE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

LiNK districts across the state developed new partnerships with community agencies – including service agencies and organizations, health clinics and doctor offices, public libraries, community day cares, Parents as Teachers, and other early child care programs.

LiNK partnered with the Kansas Health Foundation to provide more than 16,000 bilingual books as part of their “Can’t Wait to Read” initiative. The partnership evolved into a LiNK Family Engagement Community of Practice (CoP) facilitated by Kristi Zukovich and Monique Garcia, community relations staff members of the Kansas Health Foundation. Members of the CoP share resources and tools for educators to support families especially families from diverse cultures and English Language Learners.

- LiNK Family Engagement CoP Resources (webpage)
  https://padlet.com/kmuft/3pwdhok56o0
EARLY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS PARTNER WITH FAMILIES

Greenbush creates Babble.Talk.Read. (BTR)

Greenbush created a website and social media applications to provide resources for educators and parents with the important message that helping children prepare to read can be easy and fun. Districts promoted the resources by distributing books and BTR items at community parades and other events.

- Babble.Talk.Read. (website)
  https://btr.greenbush.org
DISTRICT IMPACT STORY

Iola 4-year-old preschool programming

Iola USD 257 reviewed their literacy needs assessment at the beginning of LiNK and found gaps in learning between students entering kindergarten. Aligned with KSDE’s Kansans Can vision for kindergarten readiness, the District Literacy Team set a goal to close learning gaps before they enter kindergarten. With assistance from LiNK funding, USD 257 now provides free preschool to all 4-year-old community children.

Iola USD 257 provides free preschool access to all children in the community. The district, with assistance from LiNK funds, has new resources supporting communication and literacy in play-based settings.

Read more about the impact of LiNK for preschool programming here:

- Iola USD 257 (PDF)
  https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qj91vo8Km1Q%3d&tabid=6321
SUSTAINING THE PRACTICE STATEWIDE

AGES AND STAGES QUESTIONNAIRE ®

As part of the grant, LiNK districts offered the opportunity for all 4-year-old children in their communities to complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire ® (ASQ-3 ®). There were 6,981 preschool students who completed the Ages and Stages Questionnaire ® (ASQ-3 ®) survey with a family member.

- ASQ® Kansas (website)
  https://agesandstages.com/ks/

This ASQ-3® data for early learners is used to help early childhood care and education programs to support the needs of students and provide appropriate kindergarten readiness tools.

Many LiNK districts also use early language screeners in addition to the ASQ-3 ® survey to learn about the early literacy needs of students including phonological awareness, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. All three elements are critical to future reading success.
**EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

Another strategy that will be sustained after LiNK is an Early Childhood Community of Practice sponsored by LiNK and facilitated by the Kansas Masonic Literacy Center. Tasia Markowitz and Jodi Case, leaders of programming with the Kansas Masonic Literacy Center, will continue the monthly CoP to share resources and tools for caregivers and families of early learners.

- **LiNK Early Childhood CoP Resources** (webpage)
  [https://padlet.com/arowland1313/LiNKEC](https://padlet.com/arowland1313/LiNKEC)

**KANSAS STRIVING READERS HIGHLIGHTED AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL**

Southeast Kansas Education Service Center (Greenbush) and the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) were selected to share Early Learning resources created and disseminated through the LiNK grant on national Striving Readers site:

- **Kansas - Creating Early Childhood Resources** (webpage)
  [https://srclgrants.com/2021ClickandGo/supporting-early-childhood-literacy](https://srclgrants.com/2021ClickandGo/supporting-early-childhood-literacy)

- **Babble.Talk.Read.** (website)
  [https://bbr.greenbush.org](https://bbr.greenbush.org)

- **KHF Read With Them** (website)
  [https://readwiththem.org](https://readwiththem.org)

Dodge City USD 443 and Garden City USD 457 were selected to share English Learner supports and participate in panel discussion at the national topical meeting and with a podcast shared nationally:

- **Kansas – VOICE Framework and Biography Driven Culturally Responsive Instruction** (webpage)
  [https://srclgrants.com/2021ClickandGo/supporting-literacy-for-english-learners](https://srclgrants.com/2021ClickandGo/supporting-literacy-for-english-learners)

- **Dodge City USD 443 English Learner Overview** (PDF)
  [https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=T1OaMexZA8Q%3d&tabid=6321](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=T1OaMexZA8Q%3d&tabid=6321)

- **Garden City UsD 457 English Learner Overview** (PDF)
  [https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8QncmNAcX8E%3d&tabid=6321](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8QncmNAcX8E%3d&tabid=6321)

Kansas shared models of Professional Development using instructional coaching at the national convening:

- **Kansas Instructional Coaching Models Overview** (PDF)
  [https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4FvgPzTP5Bg%3d&tabid=6321](https://community.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4FvgPzTP5Bg%3d&tabid=6321)

Olathe USD 233 shared their model of providing systems of support with a podcast.

- **Kansas – Leveraging Instructional Coaching** (webpage)
  [https://srclgrants.com/2021ClickandGo/SupportingLiteracy#FamVid](https://srclgrants.com/2021ClickandGo/SupportingLiteracy#FamVid)
Summary of Impactful Literacy Strategies

Using the LiNK logic model as a guide, LiNK projects identified strategies that proved successful in obtaining the intended LiNK outcomes.

1 District systems support literacy development.
   Each LiNK district assessed their literacy needs with the Kansas Literacy Needs Assessment and implemented their literacy improvement plan under the direction of their District Literacy Team. While each project’s goals varied depending on local need, LiNK districts are now able to share models for implementation strategies related to their intended outcomes.

KSDE created resources with LiNK funding which are now accessible to all districts statewide:

- **STRUCTURED LITERACY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES**
  - Kansas Teaching and Leading Project (website) [https://kansasteachingandleadingproject.org/literacy-resources/](https://kansasteachingandleadingproject.org/literacy-resources/)

- **UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SERIES**

2 Schools adopt evidence-based practices.
   With LiNK personnel and resources, LiNK districts were able to increase their capacity to impact literacy with systemwide, evidence-based practices in all domains of their literacy needs assessment including: leadership, standards-aligned curriculum and evidence-based instruction, transitions, data-based decision-making, and professional learning.

   LiNK districts of all sizes and demographic make-up are now able to share these models of district literacy continuous improvement cycles with other districts.

3 Teachers improve instructional practices.
   LiNK projects offered professional development sessions for 22,961 educators during the three years of LiNK programming. Many of these sessions will continue to be accessible asynchronously through online portals created by districts with LiNK funding.

   LiNK districts supported instructional coaches who are trained to help educators use data to make instructional decisions. LiNK districts found that the job-embedded professional learning and peer interaction offered by an instructional coach helps to guide instructional change and several districts will sustain instructional coaching for their district following the grant.
Families increase their knowledge of literacy.

Families increased knowledge of literacy through impactful activities and events that are responsive to the culture and languages represented within their communities.

From bedtime stories on social media sites to new Little Libraries and StoryWalks and books and literacy activities representing the diversity of our communities, LiNK districts will continue to welcome families as active partners in their students’ learning.

Community organizations and early child care providers partner with families.

These LiNK partnerships with agencies and organizations statewide will continue to build capacity for literacy:

- Kansas Association of Teachers of English
- Kansas Health Foundation and the “Can’t Wait to Read” initiative
- Kansas Masonic Literacy Center
- Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
- Kansas Regional Library Systems
- Storytime Village
- University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

New community partnerships have also formed across the state with service agencies and organizations, health clinics and doctor offices, public libraries, Parents as Teachers and community early child care and education programs.

Community child care centers across the state received books, literacy materials and professional development opportunities from LiNK districts. Most of these early childhood care and education programs have never before partnered with their school district to receive these types of supports.

New partnerships with community early child care and education programs result in more understanding of the community’s early childhood needs and resources to support kindergarten readiness.
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OLATHE


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For more information, contact:

**Kimberly Muff**  
Education Program Consultant - LiNK  
Striving Reading Comprehension Literacy Program  
(785) 296-7779  
kmuff@ksde.org

Kansas State Department of Education  
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212  
www ksde org