



Standards of Practice Statement

The **State of Maryland Literacy Association (SoMLA)**—a leading literacy organization in Maryland and an affiliate of the International Literacy Association—establishes the following **Standards of Practice** to guide the professional conduct, strategic actions, and shared commitments of its 1,500+ members across several active chapters. These standards reflect SoMLA’s mission to empower educators, inspire students, advocate for literacy, and ensure equitable access to high-quality literacy instruction grounded in the Science of Reading (SoR) and approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

1. Professional Excellence and Integrity

- **Commitment to Research-Based Practice** — Members will engage with and apply continuously developing literacy research, including cognitive science, structured literacy, and evidence-based reading components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) ensuring that instructional decisions are grounded in evidence and aligned with the International Literacy Association’s and Maryland State Department of Education professional standards.
- **Ethical Conduct** — Members will uphold honesty, transparency, and professionalism in all literacy-related work, interactions, and leadership roles.
- **Continuous Learning** — Members will pursue ongoing professional growth through conferences, publications, collaboration, and reflective practice.

2. Advocacy for Literacy Access and Equity

- **Equitable Literacy Opportunities** — Members will champion literacy as a fundamental right and ensure all learners—including multilingual and neurodivergent learners receive access to systematic, explicit, evidence-based instruction working to eliminate barriers that prevent individuals from accessing high-quality literacy instruction.
- **Policy Engagement** — Members will advocate for funding, legislation, and policies that support educators, school systems, and learners across Maryland.
- **Community Empowerment** — Members will promote literacy as a tool for personal, civic, and economic empowerment.

3. Support for Educators and Literacy Leaders

- **Professional Recognition** — SoMLA will honor excellence through awards, grants, and public acknowledgment of outstanding literacy leadership.
- **Resource Dissemination** — Members will share high-quality, practical resources that translate SoR research into classroom-ready strategies.
- **Leadership Development** — SoMLA will cultivate literacy leaders who can influence instruction, policy, and community engagement.

4. Collaboration and Collective Impact

- **Statewide Chapter Engagement** — Members will collaborate across all county-based chapters to strengthen literacy initiatives statewide.
- **Partnership Building** — SoMLA will work with schools, universities, families, community organizations and Maryland State Department of Education to expand access to SoR aligned literacy opportunities.
- **Global Literacy Community** — As an ILA affiliate, SoMLA will contribute to and learn from the worldwide network of literacy practitioners.

5. Commitment to SoMLA’s Mission and Vision

- **Literacy as a Transformative Force** — Members affirm literacy as a catalyst for personal growth, economic opportunity, civic participation, and lifelong learning.
- **Creating an Age of Literacy** — Members will work collectively toward a future in which every individual in Maryland—and beyond—can access the transformative power of literacy.
- **Service to All Learners** — Members will prioritize inclusive practices that honor diverse cultures, languages, abilities, and learning pathways, integrating SoR with culturally responsive instruction.

6. Organizational Stewardship and Accountability

- **Responsible Governance** — SoMLA leaders will ensure transparent decision-making, ethical stewardship of resources, and alignment with organizational goals.
- **Data-Informed Decision Making** — Members will use data to assess needs, measure impact, and refine literacy initiatives including monitoring SoR implementation outcomes.
- **Commitment to Mission Fidelity** — All actions, programs, and partnerships will reflect SoMLA’s core purpose: making literacy accessible for all.

Closing Affirmation

The State of Maryland Literacy Association commits to these Standards of Practice as a living framework that guides our work, strengthens our community, and advances our shared vision. Together—with educators, students, families, and partners—we strive to build an **Age of Literacy** in which every individual can thrive through the power of Science of Reading aligned instruction.

For additional information: <https://www.somla.online>

