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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, Directors, Curriculum Leaders, Educators  
FROM: Jess DeCarolis, Student Pathways Division Director  
SUBJECT: Literacy Professional Development Modules and Learning Management System  
DATE: August 25, 2023

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### Purpose

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is pleased to announce the September launch of the first of six asynchronous professional learning modules focused on the neuroscience of literacy. The modules will be hosted on a new Learning Management System (LMS) PEPPER. The launch of the neuroscience of literacy modules is one component of the AOE's overall [Education Recovery and Revitalization](#) plan and the State's ongoing effort to improve literacy learning and student outcomes outlined in [Act 28](#) of 2021 and [Act 173](#) of 2018.

### About the Literacy Professional Learning Modules

After completing a competitive bid process, the AOE executed a contract with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to develop and deliver a series of asynchronous virtual professional learning modules for kindergarten through twelfth grade educators and administrators on the neuroscience of reading. The course provides a broad understanding of the science behind how the brain learns to read, as well as evidence-based literacy practices and high impact strategies for instruction. The series of modules entitled, *Building a Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy Success*, will be available to Vermont educators free of charge for the life of the five-year contract and includes over 45-hours of self-paced content. Each individual module is anticipated to take an average of 45 to 60 minutes to complete. Educators will be able to track and document their progress.

Module One is designed for all educators and concentrates on the neuroscience and research behind how students learn to read. Modules Two through Six are uniquely designed to concentrate on the needs of educators who teach or support students in grade bands K–3, 4–8, or 9–12. However, the series of modules was designed for any educator, no matter their subject matter expertise.

Topics for specific grade bands include:



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- **Grades K-3:** language and phonology, understating phonics and word study instruction, creating fluent readers, developing vocabulary, and increasing comprehension.
- **Grades 4-8:** exploring adolescent literacy, implementing advanced word study, creating fluent readers, developing vocabulary, and increasing reading comprehension.
- **Grades 9-12:** exploring adolescent literacy, implementing advanced word study, creating fluent readers, developing vocabulary, and increasing reading comprehension.

## Timeline

The AOE and PCG will host a webinar to launch the first module and provide an overview about the content and the LMS on September 21, 2023, at 3 p.m. for all educators and administrators. The AOE will release additional modules every six to eight weeks throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

Ongoing communications developed with the contractor are planned throughout the to provide updates on the literacy modules launch and reminders about upcoming trainings.

Please contact Emily Lesh, Act 28 Project Manager, at [Emily.Lesh@vermont.gov](mailto:Emily.Lesh@vermont.gov) if you would like to participate in the webinar on September 21, 2023.