

## POSITION STATEMENT

# The Multiple Roles of School-Based Specialized Literacy Professionals

This position statement addresses (a) the primary roles and responsibilities for specialized literacy professionals and (b) the critical importance of leadership for all specialized literacy professionals.

The International Literacy Association defines *specialized literacy professionals* as those who have advanced certification, support student learning, and have one or more of the primary roles and responsibilities specified below. Regardless of role, all specialized literacy professionals need leadership, facilitation, and communication skills to perform effectively in their respective roles and in collaboration with other educators.

- **Reading/literacy specialists:** Primarily responsible for planning, teaching, and evaluating instruction for students having difficulty with reading or writing at all levels (pre-K–12). Work collaboratively with classroom teachers (e.g., provide materials and ideas, coteach, and assess needs of students).
- **Literacy coaches:** Primarily responsible for improving classroom instruction by supporting teacher learning and facilitating literacy program efforts. Collaborate with individual and groups of teachers via coaching and professional learning activities to improve classroom, grade-level, departmental, and schoolwide literacy teaching and learning. May have some teaching or assessment responsibilities as part of their role.
- **Literacy coordinators/supervisors:** Primarily responsible for developing, leading, and/or evaluating the school or district literacy program. Work with other educators in the school, district, and community to lead efforts to improve literacy teaching and learning.

Responsibilities often overlap across these roles; however, there are specific distinctions in terms of the primary emphasis and professional qualifications needed to be effective in each role. A clear understanding of these roles and qualifications is needed to determine which candidates possess the appropriate knowledge, dispositions, experiences, and credentials for a particular role.

Additional information can be found in the research brief issued with this position statement:

[literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/ila-literacy-professionals-research-brief.pdf](http://literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/ila-literacy-professionals-research-brief.pdf).

### About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers, and experts across 75 countries. With 60 years of experience in the field, ILA believes in the transformative power of literacy to create more successful societies, healthy communities, and prosperous economies. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather, and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices, and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students, and inform policymakers. For more information, visit [literacyworldwide.org](http://literacyworldwide.org).

**Media Contact:** For all media inquiries, please contact [press@reading.org](mailto:press@reading.org).