Last spring, Leslie Van Orman shared information with special education directors about the Wyoming Department of Education, Deaf-Blind Project’s literacy initiative targeting the needs of students with significant intellectual disabilities. Since the last reauthorization of IDEA, the expectation and requirement for all students to work toward academic state standards have been in place. This initiative is an effort to support educators in learning and implementing some of the research-based best practices in providing literacy instruction to students with significant intellectual disabilities. The activities of the initiative are outlined below. If you have any questions contact Leslie Van Orman at leslie.vanorman@wyo.gov or 307-857-9267.

* **Communication and Emergent Literacy Workshop**

September 18-19, 2019 at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper

The ability to formally and effectively communicate is the foundation for the development of literacy skills. This training will focus on supporting beginning communicators, providing access to core vocabulary and building the foundational skills for literacy.

The cost for this training is $50.00 and will be open to all interested school personnel. A block of hotel rooms will be held at the Ramkota until September 3rd. An agenda for the workshop is attached to this email.

Registration is currently open for this event. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/emergent-literacy-for-students-with-significant-cognitive-disabilities-tickets-68821377593>

* **Conventional Literacy for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities Workshop**

June 10-11, 2020 at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper

Registration will open as the workshop date nears.

* **Implementation Classrooms**

A limited number of classrooms, across the state will be selected as implementation sites. These sites will receive five additional trainings on specific literacy strategies and will be supported in implementing those strategies through web-based coaching. We will also hold a few web-based meetings during which participants can ask questions, share challenges/successes and brainstorm with other implementation sites (attendance for these discussions is optional). Teachers in these sites will need to have flexibility in their schedules to meet the requirements outlined below.

Requirements

* + Attendance at September 2019 and June 2020 workshops.
	+ Participation in five 60-90 minute onsite trainings, which will target specific instructional strategies. These will be held every 4 – 6 weeks throughout the school year. These trainings may result in teachers missing part of the school day, but locations and times for these trainings will be chosen in order to limit teacher time away from the classroom.
	+ Implementation of instructional strategies, video recording of lessons, completion of self-reflection worksheets and meetings with regional coaches based on the Implementation Site Schedule (attached).
	+ Provision of feedback for initiative improvement.

Interested teachers will need to complete the Implementation Site Application <https://forms.gle/HCfDhGY6LFveNANw5> and provide a brief letter of support from both their district special education administrator and building administrator outlining support for implementation of this initiative, including support of attendance at workshops and training, which will require use of district funds and time away from their classroom.

Implementation Site Applications will be accepted through September 23rd, applicants will be notified by September 25th if their application was accepted. All implementation site teachers must have attended the workshop on September 18-19.