

BALTIMORE'S PROMISE

Advancing Academic Literacy and Numeracy Learning for Older Youth, Young Adults, and Families in Baltimore



Abstract

This report provides the summary of national literacy landscape findings and provides initial system level recommendations and program level recommended practices for advancing academic literacy and numeracy learning for older youth, young adults, and families in Baltimore.

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I. Research Purpose and Questions

A. Scope of Inquiry

1. National Scope of Inquiry

High levels of print-based literacy and numeracy are required for navigating and negotiating most facets of 21st-century life including supporting a family, education, health, civic participation, and having the tools to compete in an increasingly global and digitally connected economy. According to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014, literacy refers to “an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems [emphasis added], at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society” (Title 2, §203). Yet, according to outcomes from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), the current nationally representative assessment used to describe the literacy and numeracy skills and abilities of adults and older youth (ages 16–65), the U.S. performs below many of our international peers (NCES, 2019, 2020a).

The PIAAC defines literacy as “the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (OECD 2013, p. 61.). Numeracy is defined as “the ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life” (OECD 2013, p. 75).

Forty-three million U.S. adults (21 percent or around one in five persons) possess low print literacy skills and are unable to complete tasks that “require comparing and contrasting information, paraphrasing, or making low-level inferences” (NCES, 2019, p.1). Further, 62.7 million U.S. adults (30 percent or around one in three persons) possess low numeracy skills and are unable to “make calculations with whole numbers and percentages, estimate numbers or quantity, and interpret simple statistics in text or tables” (NCES, 2020a, p.1). Those with low literacy and numeracy skills may find themselves unable to independently the navigate health, natural hazard, consumer/financial, and civic literacy and numeracy tasks of daily life (Greenberg, & Feinberg, 2019; Saal, 2016).

For adults seeking educational credentials or workforce advancement, low levels of literacy and/or numeracy skill can prevent their access, admission, or promotion through programs of their choice (Greenberg, & Feinberg, 2019). For adults who are also parents or guardians of children, literacy and numeracy skills can impact their ability to

effectively advocate for and/or engage their children in literacy and numeracy activities aligned to developmental and/or school-based expectations.

2. State/Local Scope of Inquiry

According to the PIAAC data (NCES, 2020c), the state of Maryland's average scale scores for both literacy and numeracy have no notable statistical differences with the U.S. averages described above. However, when comparing scores and outcomes by counties, Baltimore City scores for literacy and numeracy are significantly statistically lower than the state and national average (NCES, 2020c). 67% of Baltimore City residents (or 314,542 people) ages 16-65 are estimated to have low print literacy skills as defined by the PIAAC (NCES, 2020c). Around 75% of Baltimore City residents ages (or 352,100 people) 16-65 are estimated to have low numeracy skills (NCES, 2020c). These PIAAC assessment numbers, only recently available in April 2020, reinforce the data collected and analyzed by Baltimore's Promise and Baltimore City Public Schools, which spurred this project.

3. Research Purpose

Given these metrics, the purpose of this project was to identify themes across best practices, bright spots, and evidence-based practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs for literacy and numeracy that have demonstrated success with two specific sub populations:

- Academic Literacy & Numeracy Learning for Older Youth and Young Adults Within and Outside of Formal Education (Ages 14-24)
- Family Literacy and Numeracy Learning (Ages 0-5 and 14-24)

B. Research Questions

As a result, we crafted two related research questions to frame our national literacy landscape analysis.

1. What practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs have been successful in developing the academic literacy/numeracy skills of older youth and young adults (14-24) with significant gaps in their school-assessed literacy/numeracy skills?
2. What practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs have been successful in supporting/developing the literacy/numeracy skills of both young parents (24 or younger) and their children (birth to five)?

II. Research Methods

In order to appropriately frame and triangulate our analysis, we have drawn on three sources of expertise to complete the literacy landscape analyses – local/Baltimore literacy/numeracy stakeholders and experts, national literacy/numeracy experts, and existing published literature. (See Figure 1.) Drawing from these three sources of expertise allowed us to both illuminate promising/best practices already in existence locally as well as nationally. In doing so, we hope to achieve a panoramic landscape capable of both advocating for the expansion of existing literacy/numeracy assets as well as highlight areas for innovation beyond current models in the Baltimore area.

Figure 1. Data Collection/Analysis Frame



A. Equity Lens

Our explicit lens in this work is equity focused. We call on sociocultural and developmental theoretical perspectives in literacy and language to enhance understanding of the reading-writing-learning connections that allow people from diverse backgrounds to become confident, successful learners. We focus on language and literacy as a social justice issue and a right for all children and adolescents in public and private schools as well as adults in formal and community-based settings, with the knowledge that language and literacy are the foci of all community practices and educational endeavors. Our orientation toward literacy focuses on the many "ways" that people read and write in their lives, with specific attention to the cultural and social practices or activities that shape people's interaction with texts and contexts.

We operationalize our work using the lens of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) (Paris & Alim, 2017). "CSP seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris, 2012, p. 93). Many current educational systems, policies, and practices that have the unambiguous objective of creating a monocultural and monolingual society. Therefore, educational research and practice need equally explicit oppositions that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equity. CSP is an asset-

based and resource rich stance that “positions dynamic cultural dexterity as a necessary good, and sees the outcome of learning as additive, rather than subtractive, as remaining whole rather than framed as broken, as critically enriching strengths rather than replacing deficits” (Paris & Alim, 2017, p.1).

Culturally sustaining pedagogy is explicit in confronting racism, linguicism, and ableism and occurs wherever education seeks to sustain the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling (Paris & Alim, 2017). CSP builds on almost three decades of critical asset-based pedagogical research including Moll and Gonzalez’ “Funds of Knowledge,” Gutiérrez’ “Third Space,” Lee’s “Cultural Modeling,” and Ladson-Billings’ “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.” Each of these seminal theories have centered students’ and communities’ language and literate practices as assets that should be meaningfully integrated in all learning spaces. In our review of the literacy landscape, not all policies and practices share this explicit theoretical stance. However, we have used this stance to exclude or frame pieces that include deficit orientations and stances.

B. Data Collection

1. Local Expertise

a. Local Key Informants/Experts Interviews

We purposefully selected (Patton, 2002) to interview five local key informants/experts identified with assistance from Baltimore’s Promise. Through snowball sampling technique (Goodman, 1961), where additional informants were identified by initial interviewees, we ultimately **interviewed 13 local key informants/experts from 9 different organizations** (see Table 1) in order to identify existing assets, supports, and promising programs and practices for both sub populations. We also sought to identify areas of need for both scopes. See Appendix A for interview questions.

Given the constraints of building collaborations and conducting data collection during the COVID-19 crisis, we were encouraged that all the participants were willing to give their time to share their values, experiences, and expertise. While we had several local experts recommend interviewing members of the Parent Community Advisory Board (PCAB), we were unable to secure an interview in our timeline. Therefore, we recommend that planning for subsequent demonstration projects begin with an interview of this body.

Table 1. Local Literacy/Numeracy Expertise

Contact	Date/Time	Department/Role	Follow Ups
Rachel Y. Pfeifer	October 5, 2020, 1-2PM	Baltimore City Public Schools/Executive Director College and Career Readiness	Janice Lane PCAB – for focus groups
Gena O’Keefe	October 6, 2020, 9-10AM	Annie E. Casey Foundation/Senior Associate	Liz Tung, Abell Foundation Roger Schulman, Fund for Educational Excellence Tracey Durant, Baltimore City Schools Mildred Johnson, AECF
Herbert Malveaux Kelli Shimabukuro Wesley Wilson	October 6, 2020, 2PM-3:15PM	Pratt Library/ Chief of Neighborhood Library Services/ Chief of Programs and Outreach/ Chief of State Library and Central Library Resource Center (public service) – State Library Resource Center	Feather Stone Program Beth Myers Edwards – Marian House Return Home Baltimore
Debora Johnson-Ross	October 7, 2020, 1-2PM	BCCC, Mayor’s Scholars Program – City of Baltimore and City Schools/Director	Dr. Katherine Vanetta – Terrapin Teachers – Math Remediation
Rebecca Dineen Yolanda Jenkins	October 8, 2020, 11:00 -11:30 AM	Baltimore City Health Department/ Assistant Commissioner for Health – Healthy Babies Family League of Baltimore/Program Director of School Readiness	Gloria Valentine – Director of Early Intervention Judy Centers

Kevin Keegan (not interviewed) Amy Collier	October 8, 11:30-Noon	Catholic Charities /Director, Family Services Division/ Director, Community Services Division	
Janise Lane	October 19, 10-11AM	Baltimore City Public Schools/Executive Director, Teaching and Learning	Parent Community Advisory Board (Focus Group) Fund for Educational Excellence – Grade Level Reading
Brandy Carter	October 20, 2020, 11AM-Noon	South Baltimore Learning Center (SBLC)/Assistant Executive Director of Literacy Education	Sharee Turner (Focus Group) Missy Cochran (Focus Group) Phena Long (NEDP)
Roger Schulman	October 27, 2020, 10:30- 11:30AM	Fund for Educational Excellence/CEO- President	PCAB
Gloria Valentine	November 4, 2020, 12:00- 12:30PM	Baltimore City Health Department/Director of Early Intervention	

b. Family Literacy Focus Groups

While Baltimore's Promise has undertaken a series of focus groups dedicated to gaining the perspectives, experiences, and self-identified needs of youth and young adults around education broadly and literacy specifically, no such series of focus groups had been undertaken to hear from our second subpopulation – young adult parents/guardians and their young children. Compton-Lilly, Lewis Ellison, and Rogers (2019) use their own exhaustive research in family literacy as well as meta-analyses of the field to propose evidence-based and culturally sustaining practices that educators can use to learn with and from families including: “1) listening to children and families, 2) broadening what counts as literacy, 3) engaging students and family members as co-researchers, and 4) engaging with parents and guardians to transform educational spaces through activism” (p. 29).

In order to begin learning with and from the Baltimore community, we conducted two initial family literacy focus groups using video conference software with 15 total participants enrolled in Level C literacy classes at South Baltimore Learning Center. Level C indicates learners have been assessed at a 4th-5th grade level of print literacy skill in English (Pimentel, 2013, p. 10). Focus group questions were based on Compton-Lilly, Lewis Ellison, and Rogers' (2019) sample interview questions (see Appendix A).

Again, given the constraints of building collaborations and conducting data collection during the COVID-19 crisis, we were encouraged that all these participants were willing to give their time to share their values, experiences, and expertise with us. While digital literacy access and skill can present a challenge for data collection with this group, we recommend that planning for subsequent family literacy demonstration projects begin with additional video-conference focus groups with targeted subpopulations including (families with parents/guardians enrolled in K-12 education, families who are newcomers, families whose first language is not English, families experiencing homelessness, and families that include newly returning citizens (formally justice involved persons)).

2. National Expertise

Using our professional networks and expertise, we solicited input and recommendations from literacy and language professionals in order to identify national experts for our target areas. As a result, we were able to informally interview nationally recognized,

expert researchers in the fields of adolescents/older youth, adult literacy, and family literacy. We were able to speak with 1) Tisha Lewis Ellison, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Literacy, University of Georgia, 2) Carol Dawn Clymer, Ph.D., Professor; Co-Director, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy and Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Penn State University, 3) Lena Caesar, Ed.D., Ph.D., Professor of Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences, Loyola University Maryland, and 4) Daphne Greenberg, Ph.D. Distinguished University Professor; Director/PI for Center of the Study of Adult Literacy, Georgia State University. From each, we solicited advice for further data collection around evidence-based and culturally sustaining practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs that support the literacy and numeracy development of our target populations.

3. Published Literature

Using our professional expertise and information gained from local and national experts, we followed the five step (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) method for conducting a robust review of literature and current professional practices. As a part of this process, we reviewed thousands of pieces of literature and culled, based on our inclusion criteria, to produce an online database containing two libraries of evidence-based policies, practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs that support the literacy and numeracy development of our target populations. For the purpose of these databases, we have three criteria of evidence for each practice, strategy, intervention, and/or program.

Criteria 1: Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is a practice, program, strategy, or intervention that uses rigorous, high-quality empirical evidence to support its effectiveness with the target population. The hallmark of these studies is the use of quasi-experimental (or experimental) research designs and accompanying analysis using inferential statistics to demonstrate effect.

Criteria 2: Scientifically Based Research (SBR) is a framework grounded in scientific standards and principles, but broader and less narrow than the EBPs in what is considered the evidence. We utilized American Educational Research Association (AERA) (2008) definition of Scientifically Based Research.

Criteria 3: Community-Defined Evidence-Based Practice (CDEP) is a framework (Martinez et al., 2010) designed to illuminate practices that are locally developed that do not rise to the level of EBP or SBR but have shown promise of effectiveness in supporting literacy or numeracy and are particularly culturally sustaining (or drawn from community practices and ways of knowing).

Each library, one for advancing literacy older youth and adult learners and one for advancing intergenerational family literacy, contains over 200 resources/entries. Each evidence-based resource includes a notes/abstract page that identifies key metrics for each study, program, practice, strategy, or intervention and is coded based on the descriptors outlined by Baltimore's Promise. Gray literature including relevant reports, policies, and policy briefs were not coded with a criterion or given a notes/abstract beyond what was provided by the organization. See Appendix B for directions on using the databases and initial codes.

C. Data Analysis

We utilized the *constant comparative method* (Glaser, 1965) to categorize and compare the perspectives and experiences of our interview and focus group data. We also categorized the published literature by aspects of the central phenomenon of literacy (contextualized by each sub- population) and then separated these into topic areas (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Finally, we triangulated the two discrete bodies of knowledge and resulting categorizations to build a coherent justification for the themes of our findings and completed a second round of coding by recommendation (Patton, 2002). See Appendix B for codes by findings.

III. Findings

A. Research Question 1

The sections below constitute our findings to the research question, “What practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs have been successful in developing the literacy/numeracy skills of older youth and young adults (14-24) with significant gaps in their school-assessed literacy/numeracy skills?” We begin by defining the three stages of the literacy learning for older youth and young adults. Next, we summarize initial system level recommendations for advancing academic literacy learning for older youth and young adults in Baltimore. Finally, we detail recommended practices for programs supporting the advancement of academic literacy learning for older youth and young adults, which were highlighted across the three datasets (local experts, national experts, and published literature).

1. Three Stages of Literacy Learning for Older Youth and Young Adults

The advanced literacy and numeracy skills required for navigating 21st century life are developed over many years of education and life experiences. In Maryland, nearly thirteen thousand hours of instructional time and cultural/community learning support the literacy learning, high school graduation requirements, and corresponding college and career-ready standards for the state. In those thousands of hours and across years of life experiences, an older youth or young adults’ literacy and numeracy skills mature from basic skills like learning language conventions, reading, writing, and counting to the complex, critical disciplinary literacy and numeracy proficiencies necessary for personal and professional success and self-actualization (Moje, 2015).

Based on the metrics from both the PIAAC and Baltimore’s Promise, the majority of the Baltimore City population (aged 14-24) are experiencing significant difficulties with school-based, academic literacy and numeracy and are not meeting their grade level/developmental expectation for literacy and numeracy. While there are multiple methods for determining the problem of severity of older students’ challenges with literacy and numeracy, most revolve around the difference between a student’s *instructional level*, or the level of skill and texts students are ready/able to learn from/about, and the level of skill and texts considered developmentally appropriate for their *chronological age and associated grade level* (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013). As the gap between a student’s instructional level and their chronological age widens, the problem severity and need for intensive interventions increase exponentially. For students in seventh grade and above, a severe problem is indicated if the student’s *instructional level* is three or more years behind their chronological age and associated grade level in literacy (Spache, 1981). As indicated by the PIAAC and other data, the majority of

Baltimore City's older youth and young adults' print based instructional skills are more than three years behind their chronological age and associated grade level.

As we consider promising practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs that have been successful in developing the school-based literacy/numeracy skills of older youth and young adults (14-24), it is important to outline the three stages (or the progression) of related academic literacy skills and corresponding instruction necessary to achieve the goals of college and career-readiness in literacy for older youth and young adults. These stages and corresponding skills were initially outlined by Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) as basic literacy, intermediate literacy, and disciplinary literacy. While each stage and set of skills builds on one another, older youth and young adults who are still developing print-based literacy can experience difficulties in isolation or across each set of layered literacy skills. Therefore, each discrete set of skills (basic, intermediate, and disciplinary) must be explicitly taught and practiced across multiple text types and contexts in both initial instruction and in intervention.

a. Basic Literacy — “Learning to” Skills

Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) coined the term *basic literacy skills*. These basic skills are foundational academic skills of language and literacy and are typically clustered as “learning to read and write” skills. Early versions of these skills also fall under the name of *emergent literacy skills* and are developed preschool (from birth to the age of compulsory education) from language and literacy activities and practices and including concepts of print (like left to right directionality and book/page orientation), concepts of a story (characters, plot), phonological awareness (identification and differentiation of sounds like rhymes), letter identification, and beginning letter/sound correspondence (Clay, 2019). Formal school-based literacy instruction typically begins with these emergent skills and moves to decoding skills/phonics, basic comprehension work including building prior knowledge/concept development, vocabulary development, questioning, retelling, predicting, summarizing, and developmental spelling and writing activities (Shannahan & Shannahan, 2008). Each of these skills, and all of their sub-components, must be taught systematically in isolation and in context with frequent opportunities to engage with rich literature aligning with both the students' interests and culture (ILA, 2017b, 2017d; Saal & Sulentic Dowell, 2014). Students also must be provided frequent opportunities for choice and interest based independent reading and writing activities (ILA, 2017a, 2018b, 2019b, 2019c, 2019h).

As these basic literacy skills should be fully developed by the end of elementary school, older youth and young adults (eighth grade and beyond) whose

academic instructional level falls within the basic literacy skills level have a severe literacy proficiency problem that necessitates intensive balanced intervention incorporating both word level (decoding and vocabulary) intervention and comprehension/writing instruction (Greenberg et al., 2011; Hall et al., 2014; Nippold, 2017; Saal & Sulentic Dowell, 2014; Swanson et al., 2017). However, for older learners, it is inequitable to teach these basic skills in isolation as their developmental/grade level expectation will continue to move beyond their current instructional skill (Tatum, 2018b, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d). In other words, if the practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs employed only focus on the basic skill level in isolation, the skills gap between instructional and grade/developmental level will continue to widen (Gelzheiser et al., 2019). Therefore, practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs targeting older youth or young adult learners focused on basic literacy skills must not only introduce specialized disciplinary literacy skills but also incorporate the intermediate literacy skills described in the following section.

b. Intermediate Literacy — “Learning from” Skills

Intermediate literacy skills are a cluster of literacy skills which primarily fall under the former category of content literacy (ILA, 2017b, 2020b). These are the general literacy skills necessary to learn/comprehend the content areas (math, science, history, language arts) through print-based texts and tasks or oral/auditory texts and tasks (Gunning, 2018). Strong basic literacy skills “do not automatically develop into more complex skills that enable students to deal with the specialized and sophisticated reading of literature, science, history, and mathematics” (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 43). In this level of literacy, students systematically and explicitly learn the reading and writing processes that are common across disciplines (ILA, 2017b, 2020b). By the end of middle school, students should have developed stamina to maintain attention through longer passages and begin to monitor their own comprehension and apply fix-up strategies (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). The majority of U.S. learners acquire and utilize most intermediate literacy skills by the end of middle school (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

At the intermediate literacy level of learning, learners continue to gain skills for working with words and whole texts (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). At the word level, the instructional focus of intermediate literacy skill is on learning academic and content specific vocabulary as well as morphology and the ability to decode multisyllabic words (Mountain, 2015; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). At the passage/whole text level, the instructional focus of intermediate literacy skills is

on generalizable comprehension skill development and monitoring that assists students in both interpreting content texts as well as beginning to compose and revise texts (Brozo et al., 2013; Daniels & Steineke, 2011; Graham et al., 2017, 2018, 2019; Gunning, 2018; Goldman et al., 2016a, 2016b; ILA, 2017b, 2020b). While ten of the most commonly utilized general comprehension skills are listed below in a suggested sequence of instruction, this list is provided for exploration/consideration and not meant as exhaustive or authoritative.

- Self-questioning for purpose and monitoring
- Relating background knowledge to topic
- Sequencing of information
- Retell/Summarizing
- Inferencing
- Identifying the main idea, important facts, and supporting details
- Comparing and contrasting
- Drawing conclusions
- Problem-solving
- Distinguishing between fact and opinion

The literature supports the fact that older youth and young adults with gaps in their foundational (basic and intermediate) reading skills fall farther behind as texts become more challenging in content subjects that contain novel syntactic constructions, unusual discourse organization, and unfamiliar multisyllabic words (Armstrong et al., 2018; Faggella-Luby et al., 2012; Gunning, 2018; Poch et al., 2018; Tatum, 2019d; Torgesen et al., 2017; Vaughn et al., 2015). For many older youth and young adults who were able to master basic literacy skills, the move from basic skills to intermediate skills was not adequately scaffolded and differentiated (Brozo, et al., 2013, Faggella-Luby et al., 2012). Yet, students are expected to comprehend non-literal language and to analyze text structures and relate information to their knowledge base (Gunning, 2018; Lupo et al., 2019). They also are expected to integrate information across texts as well as determine the meaning of unfamiliar words while solving problems and formulating arguments using text-based information (Daniels & Zimelman, 2014; Paul et al., 2018). Students who lack either basic or intermediate skills (or both) often become frustrated and overwhelmed with the move to literacy for learning and may lose motivation in academic learning (Lesley, 2008).

c. Disciplinary Literacy — “Learning/Creating with” Skills

The deepest or most complex layer of literacy learning is disciplinary. Disciplinary literacy skill involves learning and mastering the focused literacy routines and language uses for advanced reading, writing, thinking, and computational tasks (Goldman et al, 2016a, Ippolito et al., 2019; Moje, 2008, 2010, 2015, Moje et al., 2019; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014b). These literacy tasks are much more specialized to the content area/discipline than basic or intermediate tasks and are not typically related to oral language use (Goldman et al., 2016a, Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For example, coding in Java, Scala, or Python, constructing proofs in geometry, or lab reporting in chemistry or biology are all examples of disciplinary literacies beyond intermediate literacy skill.

Because disciplinary literacy skills are not generalizable from basic or intermediate skills nor are they part of most students’ out-of-school language and literacy experiences/exposure, students must be taught how to think, read, write, and use the oral language of a mathematician, chemist, biologist, historian, etc. (Giroux & Moje, 2017, Ippolito et al., 2019; Moje, 2008, 2010, 2015; Moje et al., 2019; ILA, 2017b, 2020b; Rainey & Moje, 2012, Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, 2014b). The work of teaching disciplinary literacy skill should begin with elementary level learners when they are being introduced to the disciplines. This work should become much more focused and intense as learners move through middle and high school coursework (Ippolito et al., 2019; Moje, 2008, 2010, 2015, Moje et al., 2019).

Disciplinary literacy skill work supports equity and social justice (Ippolito et al., 2019, Tatum, 2019c, 2019d). Critical literacies, or the ability to understand texts in a manner that “promotes deeper comprehension of socially constructed concepts such as power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships” and advanced digital literacies, or the literacies that “encompass the socially mediated ways of consuming, generating and interpreting online content through multiple modalities” can be specific contexts of disciplinary literacy (ILA, 2020c, para 1).

Therefore, targeted and differentiated disciplinary literacy approaches and instruction are necessary for all students across racial, linguistic, socioeconomic, gender, and cultural boundaries and literacy abilities (Goldman et al, 2016a; Ippolito et al., 2019; Moje, 2008, 2010, 2015, Moje et al., 2019; 2019; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014b). “If we were to deny particular students in certain

communities or of certain backgrounds access to discipline-specific literacy instruction, we would be perpetuating the inequalities that have already led to majority White professions and institutions of higher education” (Ippolito et al., 2019, p.17). It is imperative that we “increase the rigor in how students are engaging in disciplinary tasks with disciplinary texts” across all instructional levels (Ippolito et al., 2019, p.16). Disciplinary literacy skills move learners from being consumers of knowledge and information to creative producers – capable of interrogating and revisioning disciplines and bodies of knowledge (Goldman et al, 2016a; Ippolito et al., 2019; Moje, 2008, 2010, 2015, Moje et al., 2019; 2019; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014b).

Therefore, regardless of instructional level, older learners in particular have a need for disciplinary literacy learning – especially in the context of college and career-readiness standards and curricula that demand them (Ippolito et al., 2019). Disciplinary literacies are critical to achieving advanced levels of understanding in specialized areas (math, science, history, language) and necessary for entering workforce development or college programming without the need for remediation (Ippolito et al., 2019, Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014b).

In conclusion, older youth and young adult learners do not automatically progress through the layers of literacy skill development (basic, intermediate, and disciplinary) (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). New and discrete skillsets within each layer must be explicitly taught and practiced across multiple texts and context (Torgesen et al., 2017). Older youth and young adults can, and do, experience problems at each transition point and across skillsets. This layering of skill results in a multiplicative and complex challenge for educators charged with developing the literacy and language skills older youth and young adults who are experiencing severe problems with academic literacy learning.

The literature is profuse with promising practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs for advancing different types of literacy skills for young adults and older youth with significant gaps between their instructional and chronological/grade levels within and across literacy skills. In the following section, we provide initial system level recommendations for advancing academic literacy and numeracy for older youth and young adult learners in Baltimore.

2. Initial System Level Recommendations for Advancing Academic Literacy for Older Youth and Young Adult Learners in Baltimore

To move the needle on academic literacy learning for the older youth and young adult population of Baltimore, a strategic vision and mission around literacy must be created at the administrative level and implemented across systems. Based on the three datasets (local experts, national experts, and published literature), below are three initial system level recommendations for advancing academic literacy for older youth and young adult learners in Baltimore including: (1) collaborative strategic planning and visioning, (2) continuity of services and supports across systems, and (3) identification, access, and acquisition of literacy resources. See Appendix C for a summary of initial system level recommendations.

a. Focus on Collaborative (Community and District) Strategic Planning and Visioning for Equitable Academic Literacy Development of Learners

“Students of Baltimore are so talented. We have been working to build a broader portfolio for arts and music integration. We have a goal of building a sense of community and empowering students with voice. We want our students to become advocates. Does the curriculum match what they want or need to see?” — Janice Lane, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Baltimore City Public Schools

“While we have made significant strides in [making] the social studies curriculum [more equitable and culturally sustaining], there has been little curriculum development across disciplines at the district level for high school. We have no curriculum writers.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

“The formal programming and resources that are currently set up for older youth and young adults are not as celebratory. There is a model for younger students and great models of community-based programming which could be replicated.” — Gena O’Keefe, Senior Associate, Anne E. Casey Foundation

Because literacy is socially and culturally situated (Gee, 2015) and racialized (Flores & Rosa, 2015), literacy education, as a sociocultural and political institution, can and does perpetuate racism and other forms of oppression (Emdin, 2017). Based on the review of the published literature as well as interviews with local and national literacy experts, strategic planning for equity across the curricular and instructional structures is necessary to actively resist the

oppressive pedagogical structures of literacy education. Three specific areas of need are: (1) an assessment and redesign of curricula for equity and corresponding culturally sustaining practices, (2) a plan to address the vacuum in literacy leadership, and (3) a method of individually assessing the strengths and needs of older youth and young adult students and providing explicit instruction/intervention/enrichment in literacy across the scope of literacy continuum (basic, intermediate, and disciplinary literacies).

(1) *Assessing and Addressing Curricular Structures*

School systems and community-based educational programs must collaborate with communities they serve to interrogate the sociopolitical structure of the educational environment and the culture, psychosocial development, and family/community supports and forms of cultural wealth that exists for their students (Allen & Kinloch, 2013; Kinloch, et al., 2016; Kozleski & Smith, 2009; Yosso, 2005; Zenkov, et al., 2013). Collaborative systems should audit the existing literacy curriculum and assessment structures (across disciplines) for equity (as dictated by the existence and recognition of community's cultural wealth) and corresponding culturally sustaining practices and texts. Inequitable curricula and practices must be revised/replaced with equitable texts and practices aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines (CAST, 2018).

To create equity in classrooms, programs, and practices, especially for older youth and young adults of color, there needs to be an explicit focus on challenging and intellectually invigorating literacy practices (Muhammad, 2020). Muhammad (2020) outlines a four-layered equity framework for literacy learning that includes the learning goals of 1) identity development, 2) skill development, 3) intellectual development, and 4) criticality. Particularly, Muhammad draws from the work of 19th century black literary societies to suggest ten lessons for elevating literacy learning in urban contexts today.

These include that, literacy:

1. Encompasses cognition as well as social and cultural practices.
2. Is the foundation and central to all disciplinary learning.
3. Involves print and oral literacy that are developed simultaneously.

4. Instruction is responsive to the social events and people of the time.
5. Is tied to joy, love, and aesthetic fulfillment.
6. Learners come together to learn from each other as resources for new learning.
7. Learning is highly collaborative and shared space must be created.
8. Learning involves reading and writing diverse text genres and authorship.
9. Learning also focuses on how to reclaim the power of authority in language through critical literacy.
10. Learning cultivates identity and intellectual development.

Culturally sustaining educational systems, programs, classrooms, and practices for older youth and young adults should provide access to high quality, high interest, multimodal texts, and engage/support students (and all community members) in wide-reading, writing, and creating during curricular and non-curricular tasks and activities (Alvermann, 2016; Hegarty, 2016; ILA, 2017a, 2018b, 2019b, 2019c, 2019h). Specifically, books, materials, topics, and issues reflect the culture, interests, and capital of the students (Haddix, 2018; Kinloch, 2011; Lesley, 2008; Love, 2012, 2019; Love & Muhammad, 2020; Muhammad, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017; Shimshon-Santo, 2018; Tatum, 2018; Turner et al., 2013). The use of culturally relevant and sustaining curricula and texts can help to increase motivation to extend literacy learning across “in-school” and “out-of-school” literacies (Skerrett & Bomer, 2011). In addition, the incorporation of relevant materials creates a sense of social and academic community and belonging and are capable of facilitating criticality, political conscious raising, and organizing for change (Haddix, 2018; Hill et al., 2018; Kinloch, 2011; Lesley, 2008; Love, 2019; Love & Muhammad, 2020; Muhammad, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017; Shimshon-Santo, 2018; Tatum, 2018; Turner et al., 2013).

Specifically, in learners lives today, there is no boundary between the online world and the “real world.” Learners are forced to evaluate, summarize, and synthesize a large body of information, across multiple formats, at increasing speed (Ziemke & Muhtar, 2020). To foster life- long learning as well as college and career-readiness, educators must focus on digital literacy to promote agency (Avila & Moore, 2012; Duncan, et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2017; Ziemke & Muhtar, 2020). As the COVID-19

pandemic shifts in instruction have highlighted (Fisher et al., 2020), teaching students to become thoughtful and critical readers, evaluators, and writers/producers of various kinds of digital texts and tools is not a literacy extension. Equitable, culturally sustaining educational systems must also integrate the teaching and learning of digital literacy skills and safety as a non-negotiable component of all disciplinary literacy instruction along with print-based literacies (Bhatt, 2012; Castek & Beach, 2013; Cho & Afflerbach, 2015; Cihak et al., 2015; Howell, 2018; ILA, 2018, Kimbell-Lopez et al., 2016; Kinloch & Imig, 2010; Lewis Ellison et al., 2018; Sealy-Ruiz & Haddix, 2012; Stacy & Aguilar, 2018; Werderich, et al., 2017; Ziemke & Muhtaris, 2020). Digital literacy requires the ability to use digital tools and devices and to combine this knowledge and skills use with critical thinking and social engagement (Bulger et al., 2014; Cho et al., 2017; Howell, 2018).

Finally, equity cannot be achieved until there is greater flexibility in how students are able to show academic performance through advanced forms of literacy practices, such as creation of art, digital media, blogs, emails, podcasts, music, pictures and graphics, and video (Brown & Kwakye, 2012; Love, 2012, 2014). Ultimately, older youth and young adults need to feel safe, supported, connected, and respected as individuals, and valued for their cultural and personal practices as they expand their academic literacies (Haddix, 2013; 2018; Kinloch, et al., 2017; Osher et al., 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017; Shimshon-Santo, 2018; Turner et al., 2013).

(2) *Assessing and Addressing Literacy Leadership Vacuum*

“There is no clear sense of what to do, who is equipped to help. There are no reading or math specialists/coaches in the high schools. There are only English and Math teachers. We have no sense of urgency or intense way of addressing [this problem].”

The literature and interviews with local literacy experts from Baltimore City Schools and systems and national literacy experts identified a literacy leadership vacuum in the Baltimore area for those educating older youth and young adults. Specifically (as mentioned by interviewees and the published literature) administrators and educators trained to work with older youth and young adults are trained as disciplinary experts - not as intermediate or disciplinary literacy learning experts (Ippolito et al., 2019; Wexler et al., 2017).

Many professional educators and administrators educating older youth and young adults only receive one (or at most two) university courses on facilitating literacy development in their disciplinary area for older youth and young adults with typically developing literacy skills (ILA, 2019d, 2019g). Additionally, in-service professional development is not typically focused on developing basic or intermediate literacy and numeracy skills for older youth or young adults (ILA, 2018b, 2019f, 2019g). Finally, many instructors focused on workforce development or Career and Technical Education (CTE) are content area experts but not experts at literacy development (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; ILA, 2019f). They receive little to no professional development in differentiation of learning or providing classroom-based interventions for students whose academic literacies do not meet their grade level expectations (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; ILA, 2020a). At the same time, these instructors often have some of the largest percentages of students who fall into this category in their classes or programs.

“The CTE teachers get less support. As they are a specialized area in schools, many schools don’t know what to do with them. They need a lot more training on working with advancing literacy skills and working with students identified with exceptionalities. We don’t have a clear place or clear curriculum to address this.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

Intensive and intentional literacy instruction and intervention with older youth and young adults can be very complex and challenging (ILA, 2020a). There is little time for teachers, schools, or programs serving older youth and young adults to collaborate with one another around this issue. While some individual teachers and programs have success, there is no mechanism to learn or expand on these successes. Whole staff/program disciplinary literacy learning requires leadership by skilled and knowledgeable professionals in the areas of language and literacy who are largely absent in these spaces (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; ILA, 2020a).

Adaptive change, or challenging assumptions, letting go of familiar patterns and practices, and engaging in deep learning as a system is necessary (Ippolito et al., 2019). No technical change, or singular program, intervention, or even expert teacher, can shift the population level statistics around academic literacy needs that have been outlined in this

paper (Vaughn et al., 2018). District curricular leaders, principals, and other school and community leaders must assume the role of literacy leaders and implement system or school-wide literacy models (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; ILA, 2019d).

These systems must address lack of literacy instructional knowledge for many of those serving older youth and young adults with systemwide inquiry-based professional learning on disciplinary and intermediate literacy for all educational professionals inclusive of administration, faculty, and support staff (ILA, 2018a, 2018d, 2019d, 2019g; Ippolito et al., 2019; Wexler et al., 2017; Wexler et al., 2019). The system should also address lack of literacy leadership at the building level by hiring/placing full time literacy and language professionals/coaches (Reading/Math Specialists/Coaches, ESOL Specialists, and Speech Language Pathologists) in schools and educational programs to: 1) provide extensive/intensive instruction/intervention for students in literacy and language, and 2) serve as professional literacy and language resources and advocates for building level instructional teams, families, and community members (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; ILA, 2018d, 2019f, 2019g, 2019h, 2020a).

(3) *Assessing and Addressing Need for Individualized Assessment and Instruction*

“The [high school] instructional schedules are not designed with intervention or enrichment in mind.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

“We need access for intervention and enrichment during the instructional day – built in. We need an environment where students get access to core grade level materials as well as supplemental instruction at the school level. Students should get both and, not either or.” — Janice Lane, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Baltimore City Public Schools

Finally, there is a need for systems to create coordinated structures capable of assessing and targeting the individual needs and assets of students across the scope of literacy continuum (basic, intermediate, and disciplinary literacies) for explicit instruction/intervention/enrichment in literacy (Gunning, 2018). To address this need, individualized assessment

systems and instructional routines need to be selected. Additionally, new instructional schedules must be created that prioritize and provide time for (1) professional development around literacy for educational staff and (2) provide dedicated time to meet students' needs for explicit instruction/intervention/enrichment in literacy (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013; Gunning, 2018; Ippolito et al, 2019; SABES, n.d.; Summey, 2013; Stahlet al., 2020; Vaughn et al., 2020).

School-wide literacy models, or organization structures that have a significant impact on the learning environment for all older youth and young adult students, are a promising practice that has been implemented in similar systems to Baltimore (Vaughn et al., 2018). For example, PACT Plus (Vaughn et al., 2020), associated with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, uses a tiered approach to improving reading among 6th-8th grade students who have significant literacy learning needs in D.C. public schools. Within these types of tiered models, all math, science, history, and English teachers receive extensive professional development on implementing intermediate reading procedures and strategies in their classrooms. Language and literacy interventionists and instructional coaches placed within schools as both student and teacher supports also receive high-quality professional development to support the model. Wexler et al. (2019) identify intentional and systematic approaches/steps necessary to address the language and literacy instruction and literacy intervention needs of whole schools, programs, or school districts. These include:

1. Using school data to select evidence-based school-wide literacy practices for groups of learners including those whose home language is English and those who are learning English as an additional language.
2. Creating/aligning school structures and schedules to prioritize these practices for groups of learners.
3. Building a professional development plan and review with implementers.
4. Building or adopting criteria for success tools
5. Reviewing ongoing data with teachers (and students).

Finally, to make models sustainable, there are several suggested steps for program administrators and school leaders interested in implementing program-wide, school-wide literacy models grounded in servant

leadership and based in adult learning theory (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; ILA, 2018a, 2018d, 2019d, 2019g; Ippolito et al., 2019; Wexler et al., 2019). These steps include high expectations for learning/teaching challenging content, clarity of expectation, and a culture that embraces feedback including mentoring/peer support systems across teachers (ILA, 2018a, 2018d, 2019d, 2019g; Ippolito et al., 2019; Wexler et al., 2019). Models for literacy leadership should be incorporated into current Community High School models in Baltimore (Policy Studies Associates, 2020).

b. Focus on Continuity of Services and Supports Across K-12 and Adult Systems/Programming

“I don’t see why we couldn’t work on dual enrollment projects across BCCC or BCPS.” — Brandy Carter, Assistant Executive Director of Literacy Education, South Baltimore Learning Center

“We need an appropriate partnership within Career and Technical Education (CTE). We need to spend time identifying problems and resources. We need workforce training programs in the high schools. We need a learning ecosystem for students where things connect.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

For school -based and community -based programs focused on educating older youth and young adults, identifying the lack of continuity of educational service and supports across contexts (K-12 and continuing education) is important for advancing the academic literacies of this group.

Two sets of state and federal departments (Department of Education and Department of Labor), two different pieces of policy (Every Students Succeeds Act/IDEA and The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)), and two sets of standards for evaluation of literacy learning outcomes (Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (K-12) and College and Career Readiness Standards (Adult and Continuing Education) exist. As articulated by our local literacy experts above, dual enrollment and other creative, intentional solutions to meet the needs of this population are desperately needed.

However, those working with these populations across contexts need to compare and contrast these driving forces behind programming to identify areas of overlap and gaps in service and expectation. For example, assessments (like the Test of Adult Basic Skills (TABE)) that measure readiness and placement for

adult education and workforce development programs are based on WIOA and corresponding CCR standards (Pimentel, 2013). However, older youth and young adults in Maryland have been engaged in learning systems designed with ESSA) and its associated accountability measures like the College and Career-Ready Standards. In other words, learners have not been part of the same systems. In terms of standards and learning outcomes, there is some intentional overlap in content and learning outcomes, but the grouping of skills and levels (outlined by the National Reporting System (NRS) or K-12 grade-level learning) and context for learning can diverge significantly. Therefore, it is imperative to explore opportunities to increase alignments and remove redundancy across systems including assessment, curricular structures, and program supports.

A vision and strategic plan for advancing academic literacy learning for older youth and young adults must focus on collaborating with community members and across stakeholders to identify availability and gaps in service across community-based programming as well as government, school-based systems. Creating strategic partnerships for learner services (like dual enrollment) across the K-12 system and adult, family, and workforce education providers and agencies (labor, health, library systems) beginning with Career and Technical Education Programming and Community High Schools (Policy Studies Associates, 2020) is a clear priority. Collaboration around needs and assets should also identify opportunities to create strategic partnerships for professional development on literacy learning for older youth and young adults across the K-12 education system and adult, family, and workforce education providers and agencies (labor, health, library systems).

c. Focus on Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition

Older youth and young adults must be able to identify and access educational programming that can support their interests and needs (NRC, 2012; Saal & Lindbom-Cho, 2015). They must also be provided targeted resources to support their self-identified literacy learning and developmental needs (Greenberg et al., 2011; Kruidenier, et al., 2010; Levesque, 2013; NRC, 2012; Saal & Gomez, 2020) According to the literature and our local literacy experts, many older youth and young adults with and without significant literacy needs have a difficult time identifying and accessing resources that already exist and may meet their needs or interests (Saal, 2016, in press). This finding was particularly emphasized by our Baltimore City Health Department and Pratt Library experts and reiterated by our focus group participants. For example, one focus group participant stated:

*“Me, personally, I did my research. I start a free CNA training next month, but I am just asking and saying this for other people. Because not everybody, when it comes to the internet, some people are computer liter...., not everybody is good with the internet. Cause, I have an older friend of mine and whenever she wants to do research or something or go on a website, she calls me. Not everybody can just go ahead and do it. Some people are lost. It is not easy when you don’t have a high school diploma or GED to find.” — **Family Literacy Focus Group Participant***

In focus groups with adult learners and with local literacy experts, there was also a definite need for and a dearth of school-based and community-based tutoring focused and trained on working with this subpopulation.

*“We need much greater access to programming. We need community centers that offer adult education, English language classes, drop in tutoring space for children and adults, supplemental instruction. We need people trained to work in these spaces.” — **Janice Lane, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Baltimore City Public Schools***

One adult learner’s sentiments also exemplified this concept saying:

*“I was always online looking for tutors and paying for tutors. I paid out of pocket. I don’t want to put no bad word out there, but the ones I came in contact with was not helpful at all. They didn’t know where to start or where to begin or where to get assignments. They didn’t know where to begin with me. They are from college or teachers, but I forgot the name of the site.” — **Family Literacy Focus Group Participant***

Another adult learner focus group participant mentioned:

*“I think tutoring needs to be inside the classroom and outside. It is important for the teacher, so she doesn’t have to stop. You know how they used to have an aid in classrooms. Everyone is on a different level. Even though we in the same class, we still learn different, and we still are on different levels. The teacher can’t go in so many directions in that little bit of time.” — **Family Literacy Focus Group***

Older youth and young adults should be provided with the resources necessary to learn, create, and compete in a digital, 21st century environment. This means access not only access to computers and high-speed internet that make learning

possible, but also dedicated instructional time to explicitly teach digital literacy practices and safety to engage with and across the curriculum. For example, one participant stated:

“My daughter was struggling with getting on the school computer. She couldn’t type in her work. She couldn’t send in her work. They don’t give her no help at all. So, I just let her get on her phone. She used her school on her phone. Her phone is working better. She knows what she is doing, and she don’t got to login too many times and stuff like that.” — Family Literacy Focus Group

Across all datasets, three consistent suggestions were: 1) the need to identify existing literacy resources and programming older youth, young adults, and families in Baltimore and the surrounding area, 2) the need to improve access to literacy resources and programming for older youth, young adults, and families, and 3) the need to acquire additional resources to meet the existing literacy needs of older youth, young adults, and families.

Several strategies could help to achieve these recommendations. First, asset mapping of literacy resources and programming in Baltimore and surrounding area should be attempted. As identified by our local literacy expert, this mapping allows for a nuanced understanding of the current literacy resources and resource gaps.

“People don’t know about the programs [for literacy or numeracy services]. The providers don’t know. There is so much redundancy as well as gaps. Asset mapping is needed... crowd sourcing would be an effective model.” — Wesley Wilson, Chief of State Library and Central Library Resource Center

First, asset mapping of intergenerational family literacy resources and programming in Baltimore and surrounding area should be attempted (Dunsmore et al., 2013; Fox, 2014; Lopez, 2020; Ordonez-Jasis & Jasis, 2011).

VISTA Campus (AmeriCorp) has a “Activating Asset Mapping Course” that could be used to undertake this process (VISTA Campus, 2021). Community literacy resource mapping has been completed by many organizations. In an exemplary example, the Sacramento Literacy Foundation (2020) used this data to produce a digital interactive map for “philanthropists seeking positive literacy outcomes, parents seeking literacy resources... and literacy providers seeking community partnerships and growth opportunities” (Sacramento Literacy Foundation, 2020, para. 2).

Next, local Baltimore literacy professionals articulated the need to create interagency or interdepartmental council for literacy charged with creating, coordinating, and evaluating culturally and linguistically appropriate methods for navigating systems of delivery across literacy resources and programming. One task of this body should be to investigate the cultural and linguistic resources individual neighborhoods and local social networks use to consume and disseminate information about literacy resources. These identified local social networks and plain language strategies and tools should be used when communicating about available literacy resources and programming.

“Parents and families need to know about [services] they have access to, and they need to get the services they need.” — Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department

“There needs to be an interagency model here similar to the Governor’s Interagency Model. We also need to discuss how you make the connection [across agencies] and the warm handoff. Who helps someone get what they need? Will [they get] the run around? Who is the intake person?” — Wesley Wilson, Chief of State Library and Central Library Resource Center

Finally, across all three data sources, the need for barrier reduction identification and mitigation was prevalent. Transportation, lack of necessary personal (mental or physical health) or material resources, and fee-based services and programming were all reiterated across datasets as significant barriers to system access and acquisition of associated programs, skills, and practices.

“What if you have no car or funding. What if you don’t have funding to pay a tutor or childcare to sit in a learning center? These things need to be community based.” — Janice Lane, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Baltimore City Public Schools

“We have big challenges in Baltimore with the hierarchy of needs -high levels of trauma, food insecurity, housing insecurity. Finding food and a bed to sleep in trumps educational services. So often, we meet older youth or young adults who are looking for GED access. When we follow up on registration, we hear, “I was going to sign up, but I had to move,” “I had to get a job,” or cell phones are just turned off. Unemployment is very high right now, how do we balance program enrollment with immediate needs?” — Brandy Carter, Assistant Executive Director of Literacy Education, South Baltimore Learning Center

3. Recommended Practices for Programs Supporting Academic Literacy Development for Older Youth and Young Adults

Based on the three datasets (local experts, national experts, and published literature), we outline four sets of recommended practices for programs (or networks of programs) (see Appendix D) supporting academic literacy development for older youth and young adults. These are:

1. Primacy of individualized assessment
2. Prerequisite of targeted, differentiated learning
3. Strategies for increasing motivation, persistence, and retention in programming
4. Utility of wrap-around service models.

a. *Individualized Assessment*

“Students need to be known. Know that there is someone who has identified both areas of strength and challenge.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

As literacy is a complex process involving “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context,” no single assessment can possibly identify all of the literacy skill strengths and areas for growth of an older youth or young adult (ILA, 2017d, 2020, para. 1). Particular investigations of students’ *Community Cultural Wealth* (Yosso, 2005) including aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational and resistance must be explored to identify the talents, strengths, and experiences students bring to the learning environment.

Assessment for an older youth and young adult must be individualized and consist of a multifaceted process where the evaluator selects and administers a variety of assessments to determine existing literacy assets as well as needs for additional instruction/intervention/enrichment (Greenberg et al., 2009; Nanda et al., 2014; Paul et al., 2018). There are also multiple purposes for assessment – with the most common two being formative/ongoing or summative/evaluatory (ILA, 2017d). Many programs focused on this population are used for federal accountability requirements and are summative in nature (NRC, 2012).

While summative assessments such as high-stake state exams are designed to measure achievement against a norm-referenced standard, their results are not specific to the types of skills (and subskills) students perform at grade level expectation and those where their instructional level falls above or below this expectation. For example, an assessment may show that a 10th grader's literacy skills are assessed at the 2nd grade level may be helpful to determine the severity of this learner's difficulty with literacy in general, but it offers very little assistance identifying *which skills* are in need of additional instruction or intervention. As an example, there are 44 phonemic sounds in English but only 26 letters. Phonics skills and developmental spelling skills must be assessed discretely to identify gaps in instruction. Similarly, patterns in difficulties with comprehension (for both reading and writing) must be assessed at the basic to disciplinary level across both narrative and informational genres (Duke et al., 2012). For example, a comprehensive assessment of reading needs to be individualized and provide information about the ability of the student to "read accurately and fluently, relate text information to previously stored knowledge of the world and other texts, recall, paraphrase, and provide the gist of texts, use inferences to build cohesion and interpret texts, construct literal, critical, and creative interpretations, determine when comprehension is occurring or not occurring, and select and use appropriate fix-up strategies" across disciplines and genres (Kamhi & Catts, 2012, p.151).

The literature points to the utility of ongoing or formative assessment using many of these same tools. Formative assessments are typically curriculum based and used for screening, progress monitoring, and evaluating students' interests, strengths, and needs (Alvermann, 2016; Gunning, 2018; Stahl et al., 2020). They are capable of informing administrators, educators, students, and parents/guardians on specific skills needed and next steps for literacy learning (ILA, 2017d). In short, an initial comprehensive assessment system would rely heavily on formative assessments and evaluate interests, emergent literacy skill, decoding/developmental spelling, vocabulary, comprehension (listening and reading), writing by genre/discipline, motivation, and metacognition/strategic knowledge (Alvermann, 2016; Arya et al., 2020; Duke et al., 2012; Gunning, 2018; Stahl et al., 2020).

Many of these areas could be addressed through the use of several group informal assessments like self-assessments of interest, attitude/motivation, and metacognition. These informal assessments could be utilized in digital or print based formats with minimal time investment (less than 10 min for all) and, in digital format, self-score. Other individual assessments like a genre-based

writing sample, informal spelling inventory, and informal reading inventory (like the Qualitative Reading Inventory) can take longer to implement and score, but all offer invaluable identification of specific skill strengths and areas for growth in instruction/intervention/enrichment (Gunning, 2018; Stahl et al., 2020).

When selecting assessment tools for literacy skill, both descriptive and criterion-referenced evaluation tools are needed that are also developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the learner (Paul et al., 2018). Materials collected should include portfolios of schoolwork samples, dynamic assessment (evaluates how the student performs after provided with instruction and assistance), curriculum-based assessment (such as informal literacy inventories) and think-aloud procedures (for example, students are asked to comment about what they read after each sentence or paragraph) (Kamhi & Catts, 2012).

Many older youth and young adults who experience difficulties with academic literacy learning have very negative prior experiences with assessment and with educational structures more broadly (McKinley & Larsen, 2003). Therefore, the assessment process should be student-centered, meaning that the student should first provide their own insight into their interests (in literacy and more broadly), their attitudes about literacy, personal insights on their learning trajectory and processes, and self-evaluations of their own learning products (McKinley & Larsen, 2003). This allows the learner to develop rapport with the assessor prior to more performance-based assessments. After the assessments are administered and scored, the results and data should be fully explored along with the learner for both confirmation/validation and explanation. Tying results to instructional recommendations provides purpose for the older learner when beginning new instructional practices, routines, interventions, etc. (Paul et al., 2018).

The literature was echoed in the experience of a focus group participant who noted the following about their initial adult literacy placement assessments,

“I thought [I was starting] from ground zero but actually I didn’t. It was my nerves thinking I didn’t know, when, in reality, I did know more than I thought I knew. I thought I was going to walk out when I first came in to take the test. I was going to walk out because my nerves were so bad, and I started having anxiety and looking at this thing like, ‘I don’t know this.’ I am about to leave, but something was like no- stay and try, stay and try and I did. And I’m glad I did.” — Family Literacy Focus Group Participant

Similarly, both local literacy experts from Baltimore City Public Schools identified the need for more nuanced assessments to drive instruction and intervention with this population.

“We need tailored supports based on what their strengths and areas for growth are. We need to both set the purpose and understand how we are addressing what we have identified.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

b. Targeted, Differentiated Learning

According to the National Research Council (NRC) (2012), intervention should be “differentiated to scaffold learning and meet the individual needs” of those with significant literacy needs (p. 63). Differentiated instruction is the term used for teaching that involves matching instruction to meet the individual needs of learners or groups of learners in a given classroom (Houge et al., 2008; Horn, 2010; Greenberg et al., 2011; Lupo et al., 2019; Moje et al., 2010; Vaughn et al., 2018). Differentiated instruction allows for small group instruction that targets the needs of the learners while allowing ample time to practice skills that are taught during whole group instruction (Kruidenier, et al., 2010). The instruction is targeted to the needs of the students and focuses on discrete skills that the learner is in need of further development (Kruidenier, et al., 2010, Kosanovich et al., 2010; NRC, 2012). Scaffolding is a term that describes an instructional approach where the instructor or program supports the execution of a skill or practice until the learner develops full mastery of grade/developmentally appropriate skill or practice over time.

(1) Explicit, sequential, intensive instruction and intervention using assessment data

Instructional practices or interventions that “directly target specific literacy difficulties in the context of explicit reading and writing instruction result in better literacy outcomes for readers and writers” (National Research Council, 2012, p. 58). Explicit instruction involves direct instruction, or overt teaching, in the need area (Greenberg et al., 2011; Marchand-Martella et al., 2013; Moje, et al., 2010; Reed 2013; Ward-Lonergan & Duthie, 2016; Wexler et al., 2015). Typically, explicit instruction involves a five-step process including:

1. The educator introducing the skill or strategy and explaining its purpose;
2. The educator demonstrating and modeling the skill or strategy for the students while describing their mental process (think aloud);
3. The educator guides students through multiple practice opportunities of the skill or strategy across different text types;
4. The students independently practice the skill or strategy in a variety of materials and content areas to promote transfer; and
5. The educator assesses students' success with the skill or strategy across contexts.

On the other hand, an implicit approach to teaching may encourage students to, for example, read a text related to the topic without directly teaching them related skills but instead engage students in the process of attending to text ideas and building a mental representation of the ideas with no direction to consider specific mental processes (Gunning, 2018). The literature supports a combination of both structures for a successful program for learners struggling with literacy (Moje et al., 2010, Greenberg et al., 2011).

Assessment data is key in determining the areas where explicit instruction should occur. Assessment must be ongoing by collecting student data in order to continue to inform instructional practices in terms of the student's development over time (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013; Moje et al., 2010; NRC 2012; Greenberg et al., 2011; Kruidenier, et al., 2010). For older students who have persistent problems with academic literacy, areas for explicit instruction can range from being able to blend sounds in words (phonological awareness), to using phonic patterns for decoding or spelling, to increasing comprehension skills and using reading and writing to learn (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013; Collins et al., 2020; Moje et al., 2010; NRC 2012; Greenberg et al., 2011; Kruidenier, et al., 2010; Scarborough et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2017). Explicit instruction targets a particular area through focused practice so that skills become automatized (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013 Greenberg et al., 2011; NRC 2012).

Most older youth and young adults whose instructional level falls far below their grade level expectation need targeted explicit instruction

across multiple areas and subcomponents of literacy (Greenberg et al., 2011, NRC, 2012). As a result, these areas should be addressed in the appropriate sequence (NRC, 2012). For example, explicit teaching of missing consonant blends before missing consonant diagraphs. However, word level (decoding, vocabulary, or spelling) instruction must be coupled with comprehension instruction (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013; Moje et al., 2010; NRC 2012; Graham et al., 2018; Greenberg et al., 2011; Kruidenier, et al., 2010; Zoski et al., 2018).

Older youth and young adult learners with gaps in academic literacy “can be assumed to have missed out on many thousands of hours instruction and need substantially more practice” with a greater degree of focus or increased intensity (NCR, 2012, p. 108). Increased intensity can take many forms including lengthening of the instruction time and reducing student-teacher ratio thereby increasing the interaction time (Roberts, 2013; Solis et al, 2014; Solis, 2015, 2018). The latter can be accomplished by small-group instruction, peer tutoring, and one-to-one intervention (Fogarty et al., 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Greenburg et al. 2002, 2011; Johnson et al., 2017; Okkinga et al., 2018; Scarborough et al., 2013; Solis et al, 2014, 2015, 2018). Lots of opportunities to practice across texts and context is important as some students may not require a different kind of instruction but rather more exposure and practice to accomplish transfer (or the capacity to use what was learned in new contexts and learning conditions) (Greenberg et al., 2011, NRC, 2012, Malani, 2013; Mayer & Wittrock, 2006, Wachen et al., 2011). Unfortunately, one major impediment to instructional effectiveness is variable literacy knowledge and expertise of teachers who with these populations (NRC, 2012; Wexler et al., 2017). Older youth and young adults have the right to knowledgeable and qualified language and literacy educators and therapists capable of guiding their intensive, individualized learning needs (ILA, 2018d, 2019f, 2019g, 2019h, 2020a).

(2) Strategy focused, multi-strategic, and flexible

The concept of transfer is a key outcome for any literacy instruction for older youth and young adults (Frey et al., 2017; Houge et al., 2008; Moje et al., 2010; Moje, 2015). If a learner is only able to perform a skill in a single context or in the structure of an intervention setting, but is not able to generalize to new situations, they have not achieved mastery of that skill (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013). Strategy based learning focuses on

improving or facilitating academic literacy performance in and across skills (Asaro-Saddler et al., 2018; Boudah, 2018; Flaggella-Luby et al., 2011; Goldman et al., 2016; Horn, 2010; Moje et al., 2010; Greenberg et al., 2011; Werderich et al., 2017). Strategies are taught in a systematic way that allows for modeling and adequate guided and independent practice to ensure they are internalized (Capin & Vaughn, 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Saal, 2015; Serravallo, 2015, 2017; 2019; Vaughn et al., 2015; Wexler et al., 2019). The desired outcome of strategy use is that the student is able to be flexible and critical in thinking when and how the strategy can be used (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013; Saal, 2015; Vaughn et al., 2015). Strategy use is highly connected to metacognitive processes in that the student needs to be able to reflect on their thinking processes in order to know the appropriate strategy to use (Arya et al., 2020; Frey et al., 2017; Gunning, 2018; Stahl et al., 2020). For this reason, it is important that the learner be explicitly taught that a strategy may be used across more than one task (Saal, 2015). For example, the learner being taught a strategy for understanding a narrative text (fiction) could/should also be used in an expository text (non-fiction and used to instruct) (Boudah, 2018; Gillam & Gillam, 2016; Hemphill et al., 2016; Poch & Lembke, 2018; Saal, 2015; Vaughn et al., 2015; 2018; Wanzek et al., 2013; Zoski et al., 2018).

(3) *Contextualized/Authentic Learning (Work, Career, Interest)*

Older youth and young adults need to know why they need to know something and, specifically, how this new knowledge will help them (Knowles, et al., 2015). Older youth and young adults find the most relevance in contextualized or authentic learning that aligns with their own experience and reality (Knowles, et al., 2015). As identified in the system level recommendations above, older youth and young adults need literacy instruction that prioritizes equitable and culturally sustaining practices across instruction, intervention, and extension (Haddix, 2018; Kinloch, 2011; Lesley, 2008; Love, 2012, 2019; Love & Muhammad, 2020; Muhammad, 2014, Paris & Alim, 2017; Shimshon-Santo, 2018; Tatum, 2018; Turner et al., 2013). Additionally, literacy learning should prioritize and provide meaningful digital literacy learning and experiences (Bhatt, 2012; Castek & Beach, 2013; Cihak et al., 2015; Howell, 2018; ILA, 2018; Kimbell-Lopez et al., 2016; Kinloch & Imig, 2010; Lewis Ellison et al., 2018; Prins, 2017; Sealy-Ruiz & Haddix, 2012; Stacy & Aguilar, 2018; Werderich, et al., 2017; Ziemke & Muhtaris, 2020). Therefore, there is a

primacy in contextualizing of academic literacy skills instruction in both work and home settings to promote motivation, engagement, and transfer of learning (Anderson et al., 2020; Couch et al, 2018; Eyster & Gebrekristos, 2018; Saal, 2015, in press; Windisch, 2016).

To address this need, programs that address adult education and occupational skills have emerged. This approach to integrating career/workforce development and adult education/academic skills has shown the greatest promise across program models (Couch et al., 2018; Wachen et al., 2010, 2011; Windisch, 2016). These programs are collectively known as contextualized educational programs. Within the specific context of vocational training, these programs are known as integrated educational programs. Contextualized instruction places a larger emphasis on skill development while integrated instruction focuses more on the ability to perform a specific occupation (Perin, 2011; Saal, 2015). Integrated instruction offers a rapid pathway to credentialing and a quicker entry into meaningful employment and (Perin, 2011).

Apprenticeships are another avenue for contextualized learning (CAST, n.d.). However, given that many of these programs require strong foundational academic skills, they are out of reach for many in Baltimore. Pre-apprenticeship programs, housed in high schools, workforce agencies, and community-based organization, are designed to both bridge a skill gap as well as support older youth and young adults in their exploration, through shadowing and mentorship, and preparation for advanced skills in apprenticeships (Anderson, et al., 2020). According to Anderson et al. (2020), examples of programs that focus on this type of programming include the Youth Development Institute (Albuquerque, NM), JEVS Human Services (Philadelphia, PA), and CAST (Wakefield, MA).

Both of these contextualized learning structures can be adapted across many careers and professions. The focus of programs should be based on both the interests of the learner and the employment opportunities of an area (Couch et al, 2018). For example, East Side House, located in Manhattan, offers a post-secondary pathways program that offers opportunities for students to explore careers in the health and technologies sector while completing their high school credential. They offer certifications in CPR, EKG/Phlebotomy, Home Health Aide, Microsoft Office Specialist, and others. These areas were identified as

growing fields and sectors and ripe for immediate, meaningful employment allowing for economic independence. In a second example, *CareerAdvance*, located in Tulsa, offers a sequence of certifications in healthcare including nursing, health information technology, and medical assisting. Students can continue with deeper levels of field exploration, in partnership with local community colleges or can exit to meaningful employment (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2019; Sabol et al., 2015;).

c. Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, Retention

First, for programs supporting the academic literacy development for older youth and young adults, the literature, local, and national experts reiterate the need to build authentic and meaningful relationships. Working on basic or intermediate literacy skills as an older learner requires trust in the program, educator, and environment. Learning environments must be safe places for older youth and young adults to be vulnerable to undertake the difficult task of academic literacy learning. School, classroom, and program cultures should be evaluated to determine how they support the literate environment (Ares et al., 2019).

Literacy is a set of complex skills and the literature suggests that around 3,000 hours of instruction are required for mastery (NRC, 2012). Yet, many older youth or young adult literacy learners lack sufficient amounts of instruction and practice time necessary to significantly improve skills (Greenberg, & Feinberg, 2019). Currently, according to local literacy experts, there is limited time available in the school day schedule past the middle school level for older youth or young adults to learn or practice the basic or intermediate literacy skills. Many older youth and young adults become disengaged from learning and either do not persist (stop out or drop out) in formal literacy instruction or intervention either in school settings or community based settings or do not have enough time to practice their educational skills outside of the formal school setting (Anderson et al., 2020; Greenberg et al., 2002, 2013; Moje, 2010; Roberts, 2013, Saal & Sulentic Dowell, 2014; Tatum, 2019; Windisch, 2016).

The profiles of older youth and adult literacy learners are not homogenous (NRC, 2012). Therefore, optimal literacy instruction needs to diverge with students' goals, culture, motivations, background knowledge, skills, interests, and language backgrounds (Greenberg, & Feinberg, 2019; NRC, 2012; Saal & Sulentic Dowell, 2016; Saal & Shaw, 2020). Educators working with older youth and young adults who experience literacy difficulties should also be aware that

their profiles are dissimilar to younger children (NRC, 2012; Saal & Sulentic Dowell, 2016). Older learners with gaps in their academic literacy learning are more likely to have a low sense of self-efficacy regarding academic work and are more likely to attribute failure to personal factors and success to external factors (Caldwell & Leslie, 2013; Casey, 2008; Greenberg et al., 2002, 2013; NRC, 2012; Roberts, 2013; Saal & Sulentic Dowell, 2014; Stahl et al., 2020; Tatum, 2019). Therefore, a close evaluation of school, classroom, and program cultures is necessary to determine how they support or hinder the literacy learning environment and make appropriate changes (Gunning, 2018; ILA, 2019h; Moje, 2010).

Motivation is indispensable to learning. Research around fostering motivation and persistence in the learning environment has showcased how older youth and young adults' academic performance and skill increases when motivation is fostered (Barrie et al., 2015; Casey, 2008; Rocco, et al., 2020; Sabol, et al., 2015). Building older youth and young adults self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy in literacy learning and education, more broadly, is paramount to increasing persistence and retention in learning programs (NRC, 2012). Given these challenges to instruction, the literature points to (1) curricular contexts and (2) systems and structures that address concerns with motivation, persistence, and retention.

(1) Curricular Contexts that Support Learner Motivation and Persistence

There are two types of motivation that impact persistence in learning: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation can be fostered through the self-selection of learning goals along with the topics and texts that are aligned to literacy learning lessons (Casey, 2008; Daniels & Ahmed, 2015; Daniels, 2017; Goldman et al., 2016; Harvey & Daniels, 2015; Moje, 2015; Pearson et al., 2010; Wilhelm, Douglas, & Fry, 2014). These strategies also build autonomy in literacy learning and can foster lifelong learning beyond formal educational programming (NRC, 2012). Giving students opportunities to collaborate around learning experiences with their peers and families and tangible experiences where they can see their skill expansion are two concrete ways to shift learners' self-efficacy and increase intrinsic motivation (Cramer et al., 2015; Farkas & Jang, 2019; Giannikas, 2019; Harvey & Daniels, 2015; NRC, 2012; Moje, 2010). Intrinsic (internal) motivation can be impacted by rewards for performance

and accomplishing skills, for example achieving distinction in learned tasks or completing a certificate program (Barrie, 2018;).

Learners, especially adolescents and young adults, are more engaged when literacy instruction and practice opportunities are embedded in meaningful, authentic learning activities (Knowles et al., 2015). Inquiry is an instructional model that positions literacy learning in the lived experiences of the students, connects this experience to the curriculum or skills to be taught, and guides students to address real-world issues using their prior and newfound knowledge (Daniels & Ahmed, 2015; Daniels, 2017; Goldman et al., 2016; Harvey & Daniels, 2015; Moje, 2015; Pearson et al., 2010; Wilhelm, Douglas, & Fry, 2014). Instruction is based on an essential question or problem to be solved drawn from students' authentic interests, cultural values, experiences, or wonderings (Daniels & Ahmed, 2015; Goldman et al., 2016; Harvey & Daniels, 2015; Moje, 2015; Pearson et al., 2010; Wilhelm, Douglas, & Fry, 2014; Saal & Gomez, 2020). Inquiry learning has been shown to reengage youth, in particular, with learning while serving as a bridge to literacy skills and academic language development (Ippolito et al., 2019). Service-learning is a particular structure that could be utilized to meet both inquiry/project based learning requirements as well as meet Maryland's graduation requirement (Saal & Shaw, 2020; Wilhelm et al., 2014). This structure presents an opportunity to integrate meaningful literacy learning in the context of current curricular requirements.

(2) *Systems and Structures that Support Motivation and Persistence in Learning*

There are also systems and structures that the literature identify as promising in their support of motivation, persistence, and retention in learning for older youth and young adults including: external incentive/reward programs, cohort programs, and proactive advising/mentoring.

(a) *External incentive/reward systems/structures*

Debate exists around the use of programmatic systems and structures that focus on extrinsic rewards to foster extrinsic motivation and persistence in learning activities. There is early promise in the literature around earn and learn models like

CareerAdvance (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2019; Sabol et al., 2015; Sommer et al., 2020) and Opportunity Works Programs (Anderson et al., 2020; Anderson, 2017). These programs have been associated with increased learner outcomes including persistence and retention. However, if learners participate in literacy learning programming only to obtain an extrinsic reward (like a cash-incentive or job referral), their motivation to engage with learned literacy activities may decrease after the external reward has been obtained (NRC, 2012). The literature has no longitudinal evidence examining the long-term causal effects or outcomes of these systems and structures and more research is needed for full recommendation.

However, if external rewards are provided, they must be done in a way that doesn't decrease intrinsic motivation to learn complex literacy tasks (NRC, 2012). A student must see rewards as related to accomplishing a learning specific skill or goal versus for completing a task that could be viewed as a controlling element and may reinforce adults' flawed beliefs about their "inabilities" (NRC, 2012). As a positive exemplar, in the CareerAdvance program, parents were eligible for a \$300 gas card each time they received a certificate, became employed, or maintained a 3.0 GPA. However, as a negative exemplar, in the CareerAdvance program, parents also received cash transfers for attending required meetings.

(b) Cohort systems/structures

The literature, particularly in adult and higher education, increasingly points to the value of cohort programs, or formal learning communities, in improving students' critical thinking and communication abilities as well as autonomy in learning and persistence and retention (Beachboard et al., 2011; Drago-Severson et al., 2001). The value is not in the establishment of the cohort itself, but in providing opportunities for belonging or connectedness and associated relatedness (Beachboard et al., 2011; Drago-Severson et al., 2001).

Learning cohorts are teams or groups of people with a common goal and shared interest in completing an educational program together (Drago-Severson et al., 2001; Rinke, 2020). The goal

of cohort programs is to promote student success, retention, and ultimately graduation. The benefits of this model include increased self-efficacy, higher academic achievement, and social support (Drago-Severson et al., 2001; Rinke, 2020). Many cohort models include access to small group/peer mentoring and high interaction with faculty. These characteristics support strong collaboration and a sense of community that supports learning.

Successful cohort models create an environment expansive enough to support and challenge adult students in their academic learning while also acknowledging and valuing each person's perspective through collaborative learning (Drago-Severson et al., 2001; Rinke, 2020). Cohort models can facilitate an environment where students provide each other with emotional and psychological support (Drago-Severson et al., 2001). Finally, cohort models should challenge learners to broaden their perspectives through intentional engagement with members of the cohort, staff, and content/curriculum (Drago-Severson et al., 2001).

Two intentional strategies often used in tandem with cohorts to build learner trust and community and lift up learner voice are peer mentoring programs and learner advisory boards (Moje et al., 2010; Rocco et al., 2020). The Children's Defense Fund's Freedom Schools® summer program model, in particular, has shown great promise utilizing cohorts and learner voice by focusing on literacy engagement and achievement through authentic learning, civic engagement, social action, intergenerational leadership development, nutrition, and health (Ares et al., 2019). While this model has focused on younger children and youth, this model is ripe for adapting to work with older youth and young adults in Baltimore.

(c) Proactive/Intrusive Advising/Tutoring
Systems/Structures

The final promising set of practices, proactive/intrusive advising and tutoring, were first identified for ancillary exploration by local literacy expert, Dr. Debora Johnson-Ross, Baltimore City

Community College, Mayor's Scholars Program. In their programs, they use a well-established proactive and intentional approach to advising and tutoring for student identified at risk. The literature for working with at-risk learners in adult and continuing education supports this perspective. For example, an analysis of 19 studies that met extensive criteria evaluating extensive tutoring and supplemental instruction with adolescents found small increases in performance in all targeted literacy areas (Wanzek et al., 2013).

Each student meets with their assigned academic counselor early and often to set goals, identify barriers to success, and establish a continuum of supports to overcome these barriers. In these meetings, students and advisors develop a deep rapport based on the counselor advisor model (Burt et al., 2013; Rodgers et al., 2014). Academic supports like tutoring or small group/supplemental instruction, are built directly into the classes or other instructional time. Instead of using a "wait to fail" approach across disciplinary courses, students with identified metrics are provided supports from the beginning of a course of study or at the earliest signs of their learning challenge (Mairs, 2019). Tutoring or supplemental instruction may be provided by the teacher, but, more commonly, supplemental instruction is provided by tutors who work with instructors and have access to course materials and may even attend primary course/class sections. Similarly, other social emotional supports, like mental health counseling or other kinds of therapies and wrap-around supports (to be discussed in below), can and should be discussed proactively implemented where possible (Mairs, 2019).

d. Utility of Wrap-around Service Models

In order to address the complexities of learning for older youth and young adults, some of the most successful programs also employ a "wrap-around" service model incorporating many of the system level structures previously identified in this report. Educational program advisors or professionals meet with the learner to establish "need-driven" approach to program participation. Learners are guided to identify their own goals, needs and strengths. Proactive supports and services are provided that both fit the learner's needs and the

communities cultural preferences. Common components of a wrap-around model are academic supports (like access to academic advising, tutoring, peer mentoring, supplemental instruction, and language) and health/wellbeing supports (like access to mental health counseling, employment support, childcare, and transportation). Finally, wrap-around models leverage the community-based health services provided by governments and non-profits by making intentional connections and assisting learners with navigating these systems.

The literature points to the effectiveness of four different models that all focus on wrap-around supports for older youth and young adults including (1) programs utilizing career pathways models, (2) community high schools, (3) adult charter schools, and (4) individual case management and coaching models provided by community-based adult education and community college programs. Many of these models are already flourishing Baltimore and in Washington D.C. Greater strategic planning around and investment in these program models is warranted.

(1) Career Pathways Models

Programs and educational systems that adopt a career pathways model utilize the following elements: contextual or integrated instruction, modular program structures, accelerated credentialing, bridge programs, support services, and evaluation and assessment mechanisms (CLASP, 2020.; Couch et al., 2018). Career pathways models can be housed in community colleges, adult education centers, and TANF Jobs First Systems (Couch et al., 2018).

Washington's I-Best model, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), is the flagship program after which others are modeled (Couch, et al., 2018). The goal of the program is to increase the rate at which adults can complete requirements of a basic education and advance to occupational programs at the college level in an effort to be competitive in careers that offer stability (Anderson et al., 2020; Wachern et al., 2010; 2011). The I-BEST program was developed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) in collaboration with the community and technical colleges in the state. In addition, the program has support (wrap-around) services built in throughout the time students are in the program. These support

services are more than what is typically offered for a student attending community college (Wachern et al., 2010; 2011).

Most I-Best programs use a cohort model, which was found to be highly effective in reducing drop-out rates. Yet, an area of continued need born out of the literature was post-program transition supports. Many of the colleges that participated reported that there was no structured built-in transition that bridged the entrance to a particular professional program, such as nursing. Overall, students reported benefits in the method of teaching and level of support. There are many programs who have adopted the I-BEST model in other states and countries (Anderson et al., 2020; Couch, et al., 2017).

(2) Community High Schools

Community High Schools are structured as the nucleus for local community services and supports. They also aim to tackle and remove the barriers that may negatively affect high school student's motivation, persistence, retention, and performance (Fries et al., 2012; Policy Studies Associates, 2020). The needs of the specific community dictate many of the services and supports located within or leveraged through Community High Schools. Four common features that define the strategy: (1) integrated student supports; (2) expanded learning time and opportunities; (3) family and community engagement; and (4) collaborative leadership and practice (Oakes et al., 2017). Research indicates that each of the strategy features is deeply interconnected with collaborative school leadership and community-based councils (Medina et al., 2019, 2020).

Baltimore currently has 29 Community High Schools with varying levels of integration into the community schools model (Policy Studies Associates, 2020). One standout is the model established at Benjamin Franklin High School in partnership with the United Way Ben Center. Two areas of need within the Baltimore City Community High School Model is a consolidated district vision and a focus on continuity of supports across education and health systems in Baltimore (Policy Studies Associates, 2020). Two different iterations of this model merit supplementary investigation for the Baltimore context. UCLA's Center for Mental Health in School (Los Angeles) (Adelman & Taylor, 2010) has a specific focus on supports and professional development around

holistic mental health. Yale University's Schools of the 21st Century (New Haven, Connecticut) utilizes a six-component structure including: guidance and support for parents; information and referral services; networks and training for childcare providers; health and education services, before, after and vacation programs for school-age children; early care and education) to address the needs and resources of diverse community settings. The Communities in Schools of Chicago Partnership Program, which follows the Yale model, has been shown to have positive effects on students' literacy outcomes (Figlio, 2015).

(3) *Adult Charter Schools*

Adult charter schools are adult learning programs offering a range of services from high school diploma or equivalency programs, English language learning programs, and vocational education/certificate programs. Most adult charter schools serve adults but, for many, the model extends to out of school youth (LINCS, 2015). Adult charter schools are different from community-based centers for adult education in their funding streams and their accountability and credentialing requirements (which also differ by state). This model has proven beneficial to students with significant academic literacy and numeracy needs due to its flexibility in schedule and delivery of coursework, in-house support services, freedom to easily partner with other organizations for student support services, options for stacked programming, professional/certified staff and opportunities for staff development, and emphasis on aligned data collection. Research conducted with these programs have shown positive outcomes in skill development and self-esteem as a result of the highly structured and supportive nature of the programs (Windisch, 2016).

Two particular programs of promise are the Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (Washington, D. C) and YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School (YBPhilly). Academy of Hope employs GED programming, the National Diploma Program, and career pathway models in hospitality, health care, and office administration to meet learners needs and learning preferences. Their student support services include a full-time support team that assists with housing instability, food insecurity, finding reliable childcare, transportation, and mental health resources. They also offer courses and tools for mental and

physical health like: emotional hygiene, eating on a budget, coping with grief and loss, boundaries and communication tools, and others.

YouthBuild Philadelphia offers an accelerated academic program for residents aged 18-20 without a high school diploma or GED in addition to vocational training in business administration/customer service, childcare, healthcare, and building trades in real-world settings. This service-learning model, in partnership with Americorps, requires students to complete 300 hours of community service by graduation. This model differs from the community-based Civic Works (Baltimore) model as the Philadelphia model is a school-based model under the preview of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

(4) Individual Case Management & Coaching Models

Finally, the literature supports utilizing either individual case management or coaching models to advance the academic literacies of older youth and young adults. This may be employed through a student support services model, like those used in higher education or community-based adult education programs. Program participants are assigned a professional counselor or program coach (and often a peer mentor) to guide them through the transition into programmatic expectations and proactively identify participant's needs and barriers to success. For example, according to Brandy Carter of South Baltimore Learning Center, the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) facilitates learner's self-paced completion of requirements for an external diploma in a flexible, hybrid format, and assists in the learner in transition or co-enrollment in a workforce certification program. Each NEDP learner is assigned an individual assessor who sees the client/learner throughout the entire program. There are two challenges with this model. First, there is a fee of \$400.00 to associated with training assessors. Second, the assessor is required to be with the client from beginning to end. For programs serving older youth and young adult learners whose staff are not full-time, these requirements impede a broad implementation of this model.

B. Research Question 2

The sections below constitute our findings to the research question, “What practices, strategies, interventions, and/or programs have been successful in supporting/developing the literacy/numeracy skills of both young parents (24 or younger) and their children (birth to five)?”

We begin by defining family literacy and outline two common approaches to family literacy programming. Next, we summarize initial system level recommendations for advancing intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore. Finally, we detail recommended practices for programs supporting intergenerational family literacy development that were highlighted across the three datasets (local experts, national experts, and published literature).

1. Family Literacy Defined and Two Approaches to Programming

Family literacy is a social/cultural practice that includes all of the ways that families (children, parents, grandparents, and extended family) engage in literacy practices intergenerationally. These literacy practices constitute sociocultural practices that involve cognitive processes, specific context, and purpose (Prins et al., 2021). Yet family literacy also refers to the specific programs, interventions, and curricula that attempt to develop both parents’ and young children’s “educational, language, and literacy development and to foster parental involvement in education – primarily focusing on lower-income families” (Prins et al., 2021, p. 340). These are very different definitions and, correspondingly, have resulted in two very different approaches to family literacy programming in the U.S.

a. *Family Literacy as Sociocultural Practice*

The first approach to family literacy programming is one that views family literacy as a sociocultural practice focuses on multimodal meaning making across generations. These literacy practices can involve many types of communication including verbal, visual, aural, and special literacies across print and digital texts and contexts through talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing (Lewis Ellison & Solomon, 2019; Neuman et al., 2017). The literacy literature is full of examples of family literacy practices, programming, and curricula from this asset lens. From intergenerational literacy programs housed in community spaces (Celano & Neuman, 2019, Neuman et al., 2017) to school-based practices where children are encouraged to bring their family’s cultural funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005, Kim & Song, 2019) around literacy into the classroom/early childhood space, the focus of these programs,

practices, and curricula are to assess and draw from the language and literacy assets families bring to the table and utilize these practices for further practice or literacy extension (Lewis Ellison & Toliver, 2018, Jarrett & Coba-Rodriguez, 2017).

Many members of the family literacy focus groups focused on these types of rich intergenerational family literacies and literate practices across print and digital literacies.

“We, me and they grandmother, it is ABC Mouse or ABC Ya, especially [for] the four-year-old. She is too smart. She [is] on it. She [is] learning. She knows the letters in her name. She knows her address. She knows the majority of her colors; we are working on her numbers. The online programs are really important.” — Family Literacy Focus Group Participant

Another focus group participant gave an example of her use of cognitive processes across social contexts and spaces for specific family literacy learning purposes saying,

“[I do family literacy on a] day-to-day basis. Like, if you gave them some cereal, like when my daughter was young, she didn’t really like the milk, so, I would give her some dry cereal and say, “If I give you four, subtract...” just do it like that. Math with the cereal or M&Ms.” — Family Literacy Focus Group Participant

Finally, a grandparent participating in the family literacy focus groups mentioned her intergenerational family literacy practices saying,

“I have a grandson that is three years old. We do a lot of games, and YouTube, and I have like, Bingo, board games. I’m teaching him that way as well. His father, my son, we do bible study together as a family.” — Family Literacy Focus Group Participant

As a result of this highly contextualized and authentic conceptualization of family literacy, there are no set “criteria” for effectiveness of these socioculturally-based practices and programs (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019). These practices and programs are born out of community interest or need and are highly variable in curricular and programmatic components. Many scholars point to the need to meaningfully and authentically partner with families to both identify needs and outline community literacy assets for inclusion in family literacy programs or policy initiatives (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019)

b. *Compensatory Family Literacy Programs*

Four component compensatory family literacy programming began in the 1980s in the U.S. and was developed by the National Center for Family Literacy in response to rising awareness of both the gap in formal educational outcomes for children when disaggregated by race and class and corresponding concerns about low parental education among low-income parents (Gadsden, 2017; Prins et al, 2021). The four-component model includes adult/continuing education, early childhood education, parent education, and interactive parent-child literacy activities (ILAs), or activities where parents and children learn by engaging in language and literacy practices together (Clymer et al., 2017). Since the passage of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, all family literacy providers who utilize Title II - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act- federal (and aligned state) funds must also report their outcomes around participants' ultimate employment and/or transition to postsecondary education and training (Katsiaficas et al., 2016). This mandate, along with the defunding of Even Start, has led to a fundamental shift in focus for some federally funded family literacy programs (Belzer, 2017; Katsiaficas et al., 2016; Soliman, 2018).

Many programs and organizations provide some form of the four-component model, often in partnership with other organizations (Cramer & National Center for Families Learning, 2016; Prins et al., 2021). However, some models have greater emphasis on either on adults or children, and there is great variation in the length and intensity of programs (Clymer et al., 2017). A three-component variation of this model also exists that subsumes the parent education component into another piece of the model (Clymer et al., 2017). For example, parent education programming may be included in adult education or early childhood education programming or during programming and instruction on ILAs. As such, ILAs, early childhood education, and adult education are the essential components of comprehensive compensatory family literacy programming and networks (Clymer et al., 2017).

The target audience for these types of four-component or three-component compensatory program are "families in poverty, caregivers who have unmet literacy needs, lack a secondary degree, or want to learn English or the official language(s) of the country" (Prins et al., 2021, p. 341). Nationally, immigrants and newcomers constitute an overrepresentation of families with young children in the U.S. and are also a large portion of compensatory family literacy program participants (Katsiaficas, 2016).

Recent scholarship and practice has also focused on families who may have a harder time accessing language and literacy educational resources or whose intergenerational literacy practices are encumbered by barriers. These types of families include those with homeless parents (Di Santo et al., 2016, McGrail et al., 2018, Wiseman et al., 2019), current or recently justice-involved parents (Flint et al., 2020; Nutbrown et al., 2019), families struggling with addiction (Wiseman et al., 2019) and immigrant and refugee families (Katsiaficas 2016, Kibler et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2015, Taylor, 2016). These national trends in compensatory family literacy participation and need were also reiterated in interviews with Baltimore’s local literacy experts from the Pratt Library System and the Baltimore City Health Department.

“We need more support for our returning citizens [formally justice-involved] who are parents. While they are often in need of permanent housing and job placement, re-establishing their connections with their families and their literacy practices are also important.” — **Wesley Wilson, Chief of State Library and Central Library Resource Center**

“If we had more [financial] support, we could be partnering with transitional housing programs, especially connecting family literacy to job skills training already underway at some programs.” — **Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department**

As a result of this programming’s origin and impetus, a primary concern and critique regarding three or four-component compensatory family literacy programming is its promotion of deficit discourses where white, middle-class language, literacy, and family practices are considered the “norm” and individualistic explanations (versus systemic or institutional) for success or failure are reinforced (Anderson et al., 2015, Beckett et al., 2012, Nogeron-Liu et al., 2020, Prins et al., 2021). Beyond these critiques around the lack of culturally sustaining practices and inequitable/ deficitized assumptions, family literacy programming is also additionally critiqued for focusing on the supremacy of the role of the mother and, as a result, fostering/reproducing gendered understandings of family practices (Anderson et al., 2015, Rizk, 2020; Santos & Alfred, M. V., 2016). Finally, family literacy programs have been critiqued for their focus on children’s health and educational outcomes in isolation without enough focus and consideration for the positive educational and health outcomes for parents (Clymer et al., 2017).

Related critiques (and corresponding lack of trust) of Baltimore's family literacy and early intervention/health programming and lack of supports were reiterated during our interviews with local literacy experts.

"Families don't feel the support that they can do this. They hear us focus on how they have all these things wrong. There is a hesitancy to involve social services. We hope that the early family coaching model [recently implemented system-wide since COVID-19] will constitute a paradigm shift – getting away from the medical model and deficitized perspectives." — **Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department**

Participants in the family literacy focus groups also echoed these ideas. For example, participants mentioned,

"Some parents don't want to ask for the help [with their families' needs] because some parents think that if they ask for help from the government, or whatever, the children's services will try to take their children away." — **Family Literacy Focus Group Participant**

"Yeah, so some parents don't want to get the help. That means they are not a good parent, and they [programs] are going to try to take their kids away." — **Family Literacy Focus Group Participant**

These concepts and concerns were particularly evident when discussing the role of early identification for language and literacy delays or collaborating and advocating around specialized educational programs for children with disabilities. When focus group participants were asked how family literacy and early childhood education and health programs could shift some of these perspectives, they mentioned the importance of a single person assigned to a family to assist with their needs. For example, one participant mentioned,

"They need to have at least one somebody assigned to that family and assist them with any further help they need. Not everybody want[s] their business out there or wants to tell everybody their business in meetings with lots of people." — **Family Literacy Focus Group Participant**

The implications of these conversations for family literacy, early intervention, and special education programming and services are particularly pressing and necessitate additional investigation with families in Baltimore.

In the following section, the assets and affordances of each of the family literacy models are combined to create initial system level recommendations for creating an ecosystem of asset-based, culturally sustaining, and equitable family literacy programs and practices in Baltimore.

2. Initial System Level Recommendations for Advancing Intergenerational Family Literacy in Baltimore

Based on the three datasets (local experts, national experts, and published literature), below are three initial system level recommendations for advancing intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore including: (1) collaborative strategic planning and visioning, (2) continuity of services and supports across systems, and (3) identification, access, and acquisition of literacy resources. See Appendix E for a summary of initial system level recommendations.

a. *Focus on Collaborative (Community and Government) Strategic Planning and Visioning for Advancing Intergenerational Family Literacy in Baltimore*

Currently, neither Baltimore's government nor community-based educational or health systems have a shared understanding or focus on intergenerational family literacy. As mentioned in the section above, a pressing need remains to collaborate with additional families in Baltimore to learn more about and explore their family literacy assets and needs for programming. This exploration should include an intentional emphasis on families who have been or are: young parents, newcomers (both immigrants and refugees), justice-involved, experiencing homelessness, and/or those impacted by addiction. Directly learning more about the specific needs of these populations through additional focus groups, surveys, or interviews is pivotal to planning for and designing an asset-based, culturally sustaining vision for intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore (Campano et al., 2013).

Collaborative strategic planning and visioning for advancing intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore is necessary to create shared definitions and operationalizing of a four-component ecosystem inclusive of early childhood

education programming and services, adult education/workforce development programming and services, parent-child interactivity literacy activity (ILA) programming and services, and parent education/advocacy. Unfortunately, providers often collaborate to provide two-component models that are incomplete. They do not close the family literacy learning loop on parents and children literacy learning together. For example, “a community-based organization may offer adult ESL classes, while a Head Start provides early childhood education” (Clymer et al., 2017, p. 5). In these models often labeled under the moniker of “2Gen” or “two generation,” typically one component is favored over the other, the model loses the integrated [interactive] nature of intergenerational family literacy, or both (Clymer et al., 2017). Further, there is a risk that family literacy, inclusive of ILAs, become “a stand-alone event, like a family reading night, instead of a longer-term sustaining learning experience for families” (Clymer et al., 2017, p. 5). Duration and family characteristics of these programs vary significantly but research showcases the longer you can sustain the learning experiences for families, the better the outcomes (Kim & Byington, 2016).

Creating an intergenerational family literacy vision for Baltimore will require intentional collaboration with families/community members and across government departments (education, health, library) and community programs to create an ecosystem of networks. Currently, as there is no overarching vision for intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore, major stakeholders and providers in each component of model should be identified. Based on our review of the data and interviews with local and national experts, we have initially identified the following possible local stakeholders across the four-component model for Baltimore.

Table 2. Initially Identified Baltimore Stakeholders Across Four-Component Model

Early Childhood Education	Baltimore Families, Head Start, Judy Centers, Esperanza Center, Pratt Library System (Maryland Family Network & Catholic Charities)
Adult Education/Workforce Development	Baltimore Families, Baltimore City Community College, Strong City Baltimore, South Baltimore Learning Center, Catholic Charities, Pratt Library System, The William & Lanaea C. Featherstone Foundation, Marian House, Return Home Baltimore, Maryland New Directions, Adult High School
Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Activities	Baltimore Families, Pratt Library System, home visiting programs like nurse/family partnerships and early intervention, Early Head Start
Parent Education	Baltimore Families, Early Head Start, Head Start (Maryland Family Network, Catholic Charities), Judy Centers, Pratt Library System, home visiting programs like nurse/family partnerships and early intervention

Finally, stakeholders (government agencies, community-based agencies, and community members) must create shared definitions and operationalizing of culturally and linguistically sustaining, asset driven family literacy ecosystem of networks in Baltimore. This family literacy ecosystem must celebrate and foster the linguistic and cultural diversity of Baltimore’s families.

b. *Focus on Continuity of Services and Supports Across Government (Health, Education, Library) and Community-based Programming*

A second system level recommendation for intergenerational family literacy is to focus on the continuity of services and supports across government and community-based programming. Specifically, Baltimore should explore opportunities to increase alignments and remove redundancy across systems including funding, assessment, curricular structures, and program supports in the four-component model.

Since the four-component model can be costly to implement, strategic partnerships for delivery of services and professional development across and between government systems and community-based systems in the four-component model is necessary. In Maryland, the adult education and parenting components of the four-component model are often funded through Title II of WIOA, and the early childhood education and interactive literacy components are offered through “arrangements with partners such as school districts, private foundations, workforce agencies, and community action programs” (Clymer, 2017, p. 6). These arrangements must be carefully coordinated to ensure the intergenerational family literacy model (inclusive of interactive literacy activity) is not fragmented or divorced.

Unfortunately, there is no data collection required in the National Reporting System (NRS) for family literacy programming. As a result, the lack of systematic data on or assessment of family literacy programs and outcomes makes system level data-based decision making difficult. Different systems (adult/workforce and early childhood education) have different (possibly competing) reporting requirements. Additionally, without data tied directly to family literacy programming and participation, the system and network of family literacy programs will struggle to demonstrate their worth to both public and private funders. Therefore, to demonstrate impact, assessment structures and corresponding metrics for family literacy networks must be agreed upon across government and community-based systems and programs in partnership.

(1) States Innovating Family Literacy Networks, Services, and Programs

As Baltimore focuses on the continuity of intergenerational family literacy services across systems, three states that may be of interest for further exploration are Illinois, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Pennsylvania and South Carolina collect family literacy specific data (as part of the NRS) to support program development, improvement, and sustainability. Pennsylvania and Illinois both supplement WIOA Title II funding with state-allocated funding. In an interesting variation of intergenerational family literacy, South Carolina has an explicit focus and tie to Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs with career exploration built into their model.

Finally, Illinois has an additional (fifth) mandatory component of their intergenerational family literacy model. In addition to adult education/workforce development, early childhood education, interactive

parent-child literacy activities, and parent education/advocacy, programs/networks of programs are required to include library services and systems. Programs are required to have a library partner, adult literacy provider, and a “child at risk” agency collaborate around services. Service delivery is not prescriptive by provider, but integrated delivery of all five components of their family literacy model (early childhood education, adult education/workforce development, parent-child interactive literacy activities, parent education, and library) is required. Given Baltimore’s strong asset in the Pratt Library System, the Illinois model may prove generative.

(2) States Aligning Service Delivery at the Statewide Level

Three additional state-wide systems that merit highlighting for investigation as Baltimore attempts to align services across systems are Connecticut, Colorado, and Utah. They all have innovated their systems with a focus on the continuity of supports. Connecticut passed both the first legislation for a state-wide two-generation initiative and the first two-generation implementation bill. Their 2017 report outlines their lessons learned after implementation. The report highlights the need to base accountability indicators for evaluation on systems and coordinated outcomes versus existing metrics for funding requirements. As such, Connecticut has developed its own set of reporting requirements/standards with which to judge/evaluate the impact of their system and its associated programs and networks of programs. In other unique models, Colorado’s approach is driven by the Department of Human Services and employs specific strategies based on the population they target for service (Clemens et al., 2019). Utah has created an interagency commission to align data collection across all government programs involved in intergenerational poverty reduction to ensure that services are more intentionally and efficiently connected.

c. Focus on Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition

A final system level recommendation for advancing intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore is to focus on literacy resource identification, access, and acquisition. Across all datasets, three constant suggestions were: 1) the need to identify existing family literacy resources and programming in Baltimore and the surrounding area, 2) the need to improve access to literacy resources and

programming for families, and 3) the need to acquire additional resources to meet the existing literacy needs of families.

Several strategies could help to achieve these recommendations. First, asset mapping of intergenerational family literacy resources and programming in Baltimore and surrounding area should be attempted (Dunsmore et al., 2013; Fox, 2014; Lopez, 2020; Ordonez-Jasis & Jasis, 2011)

As identified by our local literacy expert, this mapping allows for a nuanced understanding of the current family literacy resources and resource gaps.

“People don’t know about the programs [for literacy or numeracy services]. The providers don’t know. There is so much redundancy as well as gaps. Asset mapping is needed... crowd sourcing would be an effective model.” — Wesley Wilson, Chief of State Library and Central Library Resource Center

VISTA Campus (AmeriCorp) has a “Activating Asset Mapping Course” that could be used to undertake this process (VISTA Campus, 2021). Community literacy resource mapping has been completed by many organizations. In an exemplary example, the Sacramento Literacy Foundation (2020) used this data to produce a digital interactive map for “philanthropists seeking positive literacy outcomes, parents seeking literacy resources... and literacy providers seeking community partnerships and growth opportunities” (Sacramento Literacy Foundation, 2020, para. 2).

Next, local Baltimore literacy professionals articulated the need to create interagency or interdepartmental council for literacy charged with creating, coordinating, and evaluating culturally and linguistically appropriate methods for navigating systems of delivery across family literacy resources and programming. One task of this body should be to investigate the cultural and linguistic resources individual neighborhoods and local social networks use to consume and disseminate information about family literacy resources. These identified local social networks and plain language strategies and tools should be used when communicating about available intergenerational family literacy resources and programming.

“Parents and families need to know about [services] they have access to, and they need to get the services they need.” — Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department

“There needs to be an interagency model here similar to the Governor’s Interagency Model. We also need to discuss how you make the connection [across agencies] and the warm handoff. Who helps someone get what they need? Will [they get] the run around? Who is the intake person...?” — **Wesley Wilson, Chief of State Library and Central Library Resource Center**

Many local stakeholders were also dismayed over either the inadequacy of funding or resources for existing programs that have been proven effective in these efforts or the imbalance of funding and priority across agencies.

“People are listening to parents and responding to those needs appropriately. For example, in Patterson Park, the community leadership is there, and they know what they need – like parent reading programs. But the need for funding is extreme. Running these programs takes money and expanding it takes more money.” — **Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department**

Finally, across all three data sources, the need for barrier reduction identification and mitigation was prevalent. Transportation, lack of necessary personal (mental or physical health) or material resources, and fee-based services and programming were all reiterated across datasets as significant barriers to system access and acquisition of associated programs, skills, and practices.

3. Recommended Practices for Programs Supporting Intergenerational Family Literacy Development Using Four Component Model

As identified above, an intergenerational model of family literacy includes a network of programs inclusive of early childhood education programming and services, adult education/workforce development programming and services, parent-child interactivity literacy activity (ILA) programming and services, and parent education/advocacy. The priority of this model is the intentional programming (and associated curricula) for parent and child to experience language and literacy learning in tandem through interactive literacy activities (ILAs). The recommended practices for programs supporting adult education/workforce development were outlined earlier in this report in the findings for research question one, and the recommended practices for programs supporting early childhood education (in isolation) are being addressed by the early childhood development workgroup of the Baltimore Children’s Cabinet. Therefore, based on the three datasets (local experts, national experts, and published literature), we outline four sets of recommended practices (see Appendix F) for programs (or networks of programs) supporting intergenerational family literacy development.

These are:

1. Primacy of individual, family-driven assessment
2. Prerequisite of parent-child interactive literacy activities (ILAs) & parent education/advocacy
3. Strategies for increasing motivation, persistence, and retention in programming
4. Utility of wrap-around models.

a. *Primacy of Individualized, Family-driven Assessment*

Family literacy programs and initiatives must begin with acknowledging family's expert role in their child's development and learning. All three data sources reiterated this primary understanding of the primacy of parent/family voice and expertise.

"We can't say that this is what you need to do, we are working with the family. No matter what, parents are the experts on their children." — Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department

As each family is unique, individual assessment of both the parents' goals as well as their needs for support should be the basis of program/service recommendation and delivery. Specifically, programs should formally inquire about and prioritize the family's goals for their and their child's development and learning (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019, Katsiaficas et al., 2016). This includes interviewing or questionnaires that ask for parent/family insights about their child's interests, developmental history, attitudes/behaviors, and needs (Clay, 2019, Compton-Lilly et al., 2019, Gunning, 2018, Katsiaficas et al., 2016). Family's and community's funds of knowledge should also be intentionally assessed (Friedrich et al., 2014; National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2015, Nogueron-Liu et al., 2020). Individualized assessment should include interdisciplinary developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate formative educational, language, and literacy and numeracy assessments in child's home language (Clay, 2019, Gunning, 2018, Nogueron-Liu et al., 2020) and the family's literacy practices. Assessment should be capable of screening for early language delays in child's home language. Finally, parent-child interactive literacy practices could be assessed formally, as with the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI), or informally through interview (Parecki & Gear, 2013). Programs' individual assessments should be capable of producing results/findings that are able to be fully explored and discussed with

the family and tied to goal development including recommendations and resources.

b. *Prerequisite of Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Activities (ILAs) & Parent Education/Advocacy*

From birth to five, parents and caregivers are the primary adults in a child’s life and their best teachers. Any program attempting to incorporate family literacy components should create positive, goal-oriented relationships between families and educators/program staff utilizing the individual data collected from families (Anderson, 2010, Anderson et al., 2015). The families’ culture(s), language(s), and current language/literacy practices should be affirmed and drive all programming and intergenerational literacy activities (Anderson et al., 2015, Boyce et al., 2010). For example, families’ home language use and funds of knowledge should be incorporated into the programmatic content and materials (He et al., 2019; Mesa & Restrepo, 2019).

Programs should provide/ensure access to many different, high-quality, culturally sustaining books and writing materials and opportunities to authentically read and write across all settings (community, educational, health, home) in both families’ home language and English (Celano & Neuman, 2019; Chao et al., 2015; Farver, 2013; Hannon et al., 2020; Levesque, 2013; McNair, 2011; Neumann, 2014; Neumann et al., 2017; Neumann et al., 2020; Schick, 2013). Programs should be specific about how to utilize multimodal resources and environmental print available that develop intergenerational activities/moments for language and literacy development — like online educational programs/apps for digital storytelling and other rich literacy activities and educational television programs like PBS (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; Flint et al., 2020; Marsh et al., 2017; Neumann, 2018; Ozturk & Ohi, 2018; Rivera-Amezola, 2020, Snell et al., 2020, Stacy & Aguilar, 2018). The lack of community level access to culturally sustaining family literacy programs and early childhood materials was identified as a concern by focus group participants and local literacy experts.

“At first, well, we was going to the library, but that didn’t work out. Then, I was in this little program, and they gave books. During the summertime, their grandmother had them in this little program and they get books and clothes. It helps to be able to keep the books.” — Family Literacy Focus Group Participant

“We don’t have enough books in the home. We need to give kids their own books based on their interest. Many students we work with don’t know how to [engage in reading for pleasure] because they haven’t had their own books.”
 — **Debora Johnson Ross, Director of Mayor’s Scholars Program at BCCC**

“Families need access to books which are culturally sensitive, bilingual, and reflective of the population served. Books should be upbeat and positive – focused around everyday life things. Wordless picture books, books about empowerment, and resilience are all also important. Access to the library can be challenging due to time and transportation issues. How can we get books to the homes – book mobile, have books mailed to homes?” — **Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department**

The literature supports five practices that are critical to young children’s literacy development: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing (Neuman et al., 2017). Programs focused on including family literacy components should encourage all family members and caregivers to communicate (read, write, sing, play, speak) with their child in their home language (ILA, 2017). These practices support the maintenance of children’s home language and culture, which is important for their socioemotional and educational development (Anderson et al., 2015, Beckett et al., 2012, Katsiaficas et al., 2016). Research reiterates the importance of home language development as student learn new languages and academic literacy practices (Friedrich et al., 2014; Kibler et al., 2020, Kim & Song, 2019; Nogueron-Liu., 2020, Nogueron-Liu et al., 2020). Children’s ability to translanguage or use multiple linguistic resources across literacy skills and tasks including knowledge of codeswitching and approximation is a complex asset that is an under identified practice and skill and, therefore, underutilized in much family literacy programming (Borre et al., 2019; Kibler et al., 2020, Kim & Jennerjohn, 2020; Song, 2019, Nogueron-Liu., 2020, Nogueron-Liu et al., 2020). Being multilingual in the U.S. is a significant asset, which should be communicated and encouraged directly and clearly with parents in Baltimore (Katsiaficas et al., 2016). In speaking with local literacy experts, they reiterated that these assets are underutilized across programs.

“Our children are excellent at code switching. They recognize and understand the linguistic registers and vocabulary that they have and how to shift them. This is an opportunity for us to draw from their life circumstances to make connections to their funds of knowledge in their academic literacy skill development.” — **Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools**

Relatedly, any program attempting to incorporate family literacy components should encourage and expand on things families (all members) already do that support their child's language, literacy, and numeracy. Many parents and caregivers already implement their culturally preferred print based and digital literacy activities and practices in their everyday life with their child (Boyce et al., 2010; Schick, 2013, Turner, 2019). For example, families' digital literacy practices, in particular, can be a rich resource for extension of both literacy skill and advocacy in family literacy programs (Lewis Ellison, 2014, 2016, 2019, Lewis Ellison & Toliver, 2019, Lewis Ellison & Wang, 2018, Lewis Ellison & Solomon, 2019, Prins, 2017). These strengths and existing multimodal practices were reiterated by family literacy focus group participants.

"I downloaded some games off of the App store. So, they can grab his attention. He follow the directions on there. We do flashcards and old maid cards. Those are the learning activities we do together." — Family Literacy Focus Group Participant

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, much family literacy instruction has been forced to move to an online context. Emergency remote instruction has presented unprecedented challenges, like digital access for families in socioeconomically marginalized communities and redesigning a curriculum where adults and children can learn online together. However, there have also been affordances, like decreased transportation challenges and scheduling conflicts and opportunities for playful learning in everyday digital and "real" spaces (CLASP, 2020; Hadani & Vey, 2020, Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020). The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of family literacy programs as resource brokers and supports systems for low-income and immigrant families (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020). Many formal family literacy programs only offer print-based interactive literacy learning activities for parents and children (Neuman et al., 2017). Given the changing nature of literacy learning in the 21st century and systemic access challenges, programs facilitating family literacy must shift and new ways of operating (like blended or hybrid models inclusive of online and face-to-face modalities) must be incorporated into delivery models based on family's needs.

In a local example, new programs like "Books for Me" offered by the Pratt Library system that started in November of 2020 hold promise. According to Kelli Shimabukuro, Chief of Programs and Outreach, Books for Me, coordinated through the Head Start Centers, will provide young parents two books per month, a tablet, and a hotspot to engage with their child and attend programmatic activities. A social worker helps to coordinate the program, and if

families meet benchmarks for attendance and participation, they will receive the tablet as an incentive.

Researchers at the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy also converted their face-to-face family literacy program *Family Pathways* and corresponding classes into online remote instruction with synchronous and asynchronous components for interactive literacy activities (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020). Each 2.25 hour class was divided by 1.5 hours of adult education and 45 min. of parent education/ILA time. In the ILA segment, the parents and children listened to stories, engaged in conversations about the stories, and reviewed book extension activities to do at home (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020). At first, the ILA component was offered synchronously through video conferencing software, but the researchers moved it to an asynchronous activity to address the need for increased flexibility around families fluctuating schedules (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020).

Programs that incorporate evidence based interactive literacy activities not only emphasize and support the practices that parents are already doing, but they intentionally build on them and connect them to their child's literacy development (Bennett, 2020; Sommer et al., 2020; Teepe et al., 2019). For example, asking questions and intentional play around young children's interests helps to build concept knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension (Colliver & Arguel, 2018; O'Fallon et al., 2020). Developmentally appropriate interactive reading, writing, and math activities and games with young children help to build awareness of oddity and various forms of sounds and print in alphabetic languages (Baker, 2013; Borre et al., 2019, Parnak et al., 2007; Sim et al., 2014). Therefore, any program attempting to incorporate family literacy components should provide explicit instruction and materials on culturally sustaining interactive parent-child literacy activities (ILAs) inclusive of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing.

Showing families how they can explore and play with objects, talk, and use gestures during existing everyday routines with child to facilitate academic literacy and numeracy development is key to creating programs that serve as a bridge between home and school/academic literacy practices/skills (Colliver, & Arguel, 2018; Diamant-Cohen, 2020; Flint et al, 2020; Kitsaras, et al., 2020; Payne & Ralli, 2020; Sheridan et al., 2011). Therefore, showcasing how shared reading and print referencing techniques can be explored and expanded upon to develop young children's emergent print skills and phonological awareness is a vital component for many ILAs (Aram, 2006; Celano & Neuman, 2019; Derby

et al., 2020; Dowdall et al., 2020; Farver, 2013; Hannon et al., 2020; Levesque, 2013; Neumann, 2014; Neumann et al., 2017; Neumann et al., 2020; Schick, 2013).

Research reinforces inviting parents into the center/school/library environment to actively participate in emergent reading and writing activities for academic literacy development and extending these to home sessions (Barone, 2011; Campana et al., 2016; Mills et al., 2018; Parecki & Gear, 2013, Turner, 2019). Apps or video recorded reading sessions have been identified as successful coaching parents and care givers in the literacy strategies they could practice with their children like interactive reading or labeling pictures show consistent efficacy in building related academic literacies (Buchholz & Riley, 2020, Parecki & Gear, 2013, Payne & Ralli, 2020, Sim et al, 2014,).

For programs that include parent education/advocacy and/or interactive family literacy activity components, information/instruction on language and literacy developmental milestones and markers in home language and English (where appropriate) is vital (AHSa, 2021; Dowling et al, 2020, Shaia et al, 2020, Thomas et al., 2020). Interactive literacy activities and supplemental parent education/advocacy can and should demystify the developmental milestones of typical childhood development (particularly for language and literacy in their home language) (ASHA, 2021; Kaiper-Marques et al., 2020, Swain & Cara, 2019). When parents continue to develop a stronger understanding of where their child's developmental patterns fall within this range, they are better able to identify strengths and needs for their families' language and literacy development and prioritize how these strengths may be extended or needs may be met in the home or through the use of available community and government resources (ASHA, 2021).

Family driven early identification and intervention for language and literacy delay is key to meeting the needs of young learners in Baltimore and to supporting the concerns, priorities, and needs of their families. Awareness around these developmental milestones and supplemental supports is a significant area of racial and socioeconomic inequity for Baltimore's families. The communication of developmental milestones and parent identification of associated needs were identified by local language and literacy experts in both the city's health and education departments.

“People don’t know what they don’t know. Early screening and assessment isn’t happening to the level it should be. We are incredibly underfunded. We are not reaching the prevalence we should - as only 3% of the population is referred. 15% is closer to where we should be. We need to be examining the cultural and linguistic appropriateness of our systems and outreach. Early intervention systems are dominated by white, middle-class people.” — Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department

“Parents know a lot about their student, and they want their child to learn. But parents don’t know what they don’t know. Developmental milestones are not something most parents know. Kids are getting diagnosed [with disabilities and delays] too late because people have not recognized that there is an issue. Even if some do, they don’t know the supports that are available or, what, if anything, to do about it.” — Rachel Pfeifer, Executive Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools

c. *Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, and Retention*

Parents, especially young parents, may feel particularly disenfranchised from educational and health programs due to their own recent experiences that may make them less motivated to engage with these systems (Parecki & Gear, 2013). One of the local literacy experts additionally outlined the stigma that can come from program participation saying,

“In terms of family literacy, we would like to see more families getting involved across the lifespan. Some learners are very secretive about needing supports or participating in family literacy services. We need to destigmatize low literacy. We need to communicate that there is no age limit to learning. — Brandy Carter, Assistant Executive Director of Literacy Education, South Baltimore Learning Center

The literature and associated experts identify several strategies for increasing motivation, persistence, and retention of participants in intergenerational family literacy programming. These include (1) a focus on inquiry-based learning, (2) the use of peer mentors/educators, (3) the use of multimodal communication technologies to reinforce language and literacy development concepts/routines, and (4) the importance of communicating parents’ rights and advocacy avenues.

First, inquiry or project-based instruction and programming, like the National Center for Families Learning family service-learning program, is one method to

increase motivation by honoring families' authentic interests (Cramer & National Center for Families Learning, 2016; Cramer, et al., 2015). NCFL developed a structure for service-learning that incorporates learning content, use of technology, and problem solving as a multi-generational approach to reciprocal learning in both physical and digital environments (Cramer, et al., 2015). This Parent and Child Together (PACT) time, an intergenerational interactive literacy activity (Levesque, 2013), includes a six-step model of learning (planning, preparation, experience, debriefing, and transfer to home, community, and school) (Cramer, et al., 2015). Family service-learning has the capability to build socioeconomically disadvantaged families' academic and socioemotional skills including literacy and workplace skills while also supporting and expanding social capital, network development and civic engagement (Cramer, et al., 2015, Toso et al., 2016)

Programs working to include family literacy components could also improve program retention and persistence by developing peer mentors/educators drawn from the community.

“Young parents, in particular, need more direct support groups. They need peer mentors and peer groups who can help each other and help their children.”
 — *Dr. Carol Dawn Clymer, Co-Director, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy and Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Penn State University*

These peer mentors/educators should be utilized for their funds of knowledge and expertise in marketing programming to the community through community sanctioned/utilized methods and media. Peer mentors/educators can also be utilized as educators/co-educators to facilitate family literacy programming (e.g., All Our Kin, Toberman Neighborhood Center, and Village of Promise) or as intentional one-to-one family unit pairs where families can “work on school activities, serve as advisory resources, and extend school relationships beyond the classroom” (Toso & Krupar, 2016, p. 2). Peer educators were also identified as an explicit need by local literacy experts.

“We have a real need for Mom’s clubs to be able to talk about thing like baby basics, prenatal care, and mental health. We need to intentionally create social networks where we have peer mentoring and role modeling. This is a BIG need.” — *Rebecca Dineen, Assistant Commissioner for Health, Baltimore City Health Department*

All three data sources reiterated the importance of communication technologies (especially texting and app-based message systems) to reinforce key, differentiated language and literacy concepts or routines with families and caregivers of young children. Some, like Parent University, sent daily text messages (Monday-Friday) that included parent-child interactive literacy, numeracy, and science activities for children 0-5 (3 per week) or words of encouragement (2 per week) to program participants (Hurwitz et al., 2015). The service was positively received by parents and was especially impactful on increasing engagement around language and literacy learning of fathers and parents of boys (Hurwitz et al., 2015).

Similarly, studies featuring READY4K! sent parents texts three times per week for eight months about supporting the literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional development of their children (York et al., 2019). On Mondays, they received a "FACT" text that was designed to inform parents about a specific academic literacy or socioemotional skill and describe why it was important as a method of increasing motivation (York et al., 2019). On Wednesdays, parents received a "TIP" text that included a highly specific activity for parents to do with their children and was designed to extend their existing routines (York et al., 2019). Finally, on Fridays, parents received a "GROWTH" text that provided encouragement as well as extensions designed to expand the Wednesday "TIP" (York et al., 2019). Studies showed that READY4K! was able to be adapted to provide differentiated texts based on the child's literacy level and progress (Doss et al., 2019). While increases in engagement in parent-child literacy activities were associated with both versions, the children whose parents received the differentiated and personalized texts were 63% more likely to read at a higher level compared to the control group at the end of the study (Doss et al., 2019).

In an additional example, instructors for the Family Pathways program organized and utilized a WhatsApp chat group to send parent participants information and updates about family literacy classes and invite learners to share pictures, recipes, questions, and resources with the instructor and one another (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020). As a result, participants reported increasing their digital literacy skills (learning new apps, smartphones, computers, and other digital tools) because they wanted to continue to participate in the class and with each other (Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020).

A few strategies were identified in the literature to assist parents and guardians of young children in navigating the sometimes complex systems of literacy and language services and educational opportunities/resources (Breit-Smith, et al., 2010). Parents and guardians, particularly young parents, often need

information and instruction on the roles and structures of applicable health and educational systems. Family literacy programs, especially those in community or library spaces can serve as resource brokers (Neuman et al., 2017). These programs can provide information about direct services and information about health, dental care, and various kinds of government assistance as well as demystify how these systems support one another. For example, they can explain how early childhood educational centers work with the health department and/or the education system. The literature encourages embedding community literacy services and programs in spaces families already traverse, like laundromats or hair salons/barber shops, is one strategy that shows promise in reaching families (Celano & Neuman, 2019, Neuman et al., 2020).

In a local example, the Pratt Library System utilizes a Social Worker in the Library and a Lawyer in the Library program. The Social Worker in the Library assist with accessing housing, food, substance abuse support, and financial resources. The Lawyer in the Library program assists with legal needs especially expungement. Particularly, there is an ongoing strategic partnership with University of Maryland to put both full and intern social workers at every location. However, at some locations, there is greater need than can be met. At busy sites, there could use at least two social workers. The Lawyer in the Library functions in six branches based on volunteers. According to our local literacy experts at the Pratt, there is a documented need to expand both of these programs.

Finally, the importance of communicating parents' rights and advocacy avenues is key to increasing families motivation, persistence, and retention in programming. Parent/guardian advocacy on behalf of themselves and their children is crucial. This advocacy is critical at transition points for young children – like the transition from home to center-based care or center to K-12 school. Programs should articulate and provide information about parent/guardian's choices and rights across health and education systems (Smith et al., 2014) as they advocate for their child or their own needs. For example, if a parent suspects their child has a developmental delay, parents should be apprised of their possible next steps, successive levels of intervention, and what they should expect from service providers (Carta et al., 2015). Programs should provide opportunities to facilitate and guide families' exploration, navigation, engagement, and advocacy with health and educational providers and systems. For example, one of the local experts identified the need for programs to assist parents/families with paperwork and documentation requirements for services.

“Paperwork – it is a little more difficult to see adults’ struggles. Sometimes [for these paperwork processes], it is necessary to go step-by-step, hand over hand to get adults to understand [the requirements].”— Gloria Valentine, Director of Early Intervention, Baltimore City Health Department

d. *Utility of Wrap-around Service Models*

Research, national experts, and local literacy experts all identified that parents, caregivers, and guardians of young children can/do experience many barriers to family literacy. Many of these barriers are associated with economic disadvantage – particularly in Baltimore. Some of these barriers include low levels of education, multiple jobs, access to reliable transportation or digital tools, lack of quality childcare, homelessness, addiction, food insecurity, and physical and mental health challenges (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2014, 2019; Medina et al., 2020; Popkin et al., 2019). The presence of any of these barriers may make it more difficult for parents to support their own or their children’s academic literacy learning.

In order to address the complexities of motivation, participation, and persistence in family literacy and the associated barriers articulated above, some of the most successful family literacy programs also employ a “wraparound” service model. First, education program advisors or professionals meet with the family to establish a “need-driven” approach to program participation. Families are guided to identify their own goals, needs and strengths. Proactive supports and services are provided that both fit the families’ needs and cultural preferences. Common components of a wrap-around models are academic supports (such as access to academic advising, peer mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and language) and health/wellbeing supports (such as access to mental health counseling, employment support, childcare, and transportation). Finally, wrap-around models leverage the community-based health services provided by governments and non-profits by making intentional connections and assisting learners with navigating these systems. These models offer delivery across multiple sites including families’ homes, community or learning centers, and K-12 schools.

Several promising national programs that employ wrap-around models for family literacy include: CAP Tulsa, East Side House, Family Futures Downeast, the Jeremiah Program, the Toberman Neighborhood Center, the Village of Promise, and the Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham. Locally, the United Way Ben Franklin Center and the Pratt Library System (among others) are examples of

programs with wrap-around models. Program models include in-house (solo) models, where one program runs all associated services and supports, and partner models, where groups of programs provide associated services and supports.

Exemplary programs provide families with one-on-one coaches, program administrators, or professional mental health or educational counselors who aid families in identifying their strengths and barriers to program participation and success and collaborate with families to create a proactive system of supports and services. These professionals are responsible for meeting with program participants regularly to assess goal progress and address ancillary barriers that arise.

Exemplary programs also offer specific services and supports in a wrap-around model based on the needs and culture of the specific community where they are located. The adaptation of wrap-around model for different contexts is one of its most promising features and greatest strengths. This specificity leads to a vast diversity of services across programs that include: –immigration support/services, legal aid, job/workforce training/placement, college/career education programming, early childhood education/care, tutoring services, financial literacy, digital literacy/safety, tax preparation services, residential housing, food distribution, addiction recovery services, mental health services, gang violence prevention programming, and many more.

IV. Appendices

A. Interview Questions for Data Collection

1. Questions for Local Literacy Experts

Based on your role at [organization],

- what do you believe are the cultural or linguistic resources of the learners/ families you serve have to expand or support literacy/numeracy practices?
- what do you believe you are the resources of the learners/families you serve need to expand or support literacy/numeracy practices?
- what do you believe you are the barriers learners/families you serve face in order to expand or support literacy/numeracy practices?
- what programs, strategies, or interventions do you believe serve as a bridge to expand or support literacy/numeracy practices?
- what other comments, questions, or suggestions do you believe may be helpful as we work to construct a literacy landscape for Baltimore?

2. Questions for Family Literacy Focus Groups

- What kind of reading, writing, and/or math activities or traditions do you and/or your family participate in?
 - What are your favorites? How do you typically do these activities?
Online/Digitally or Face to Face?
- What kinds of resources or programs do you use to help you support your and your families' reading, writing, or math activities in the past or right now?
- What kinds of resources or programs would help you to support your and your families reading, writing, or math activities or traditions?
- What do you do at home to help young children in your family learn to read, write, or do math?
- Are there things you think teachers or other educational providers could be doing to support your children's literacy growth?
- Do you have any other comments or information you think we should know as we work to support families' learning in Baltimore?

B. Database Directions and Coding

Each database can be used to generate custom reports based on the area of interest and selected codes. To query the Zotero database, based on your area of interest:

1. Select your database (Advancing Literacy for Older Youth and Young Adult Learners or Advancing Family Literacy)
2. Use the search box provided to select or type one (or more) of the codes from the three sets below to find all associated literature.
3. Review citations and, where provided, read associated summary notes pages for further information.

Initial Categories & Codes

Category	Code Options
Locale	Urban; Suburban; Rural
Setting	In-School; Community-based
Administration Schedule	School Day; Before/After School; Summer; Year-Round
Domain of Literacy	Emergent Literacy (Concepts of Print, Alphabets, Retelling); Phonemic Awareness; Phonics/Decoding (Single or Multisyllabic); Vocabulary; Comprehension (Reading, Listening); Writing; Spelling; Digital; Metacognition; Visual; Critical
Domains of Numeracy	Numbers and operations; Geometry and spatial sense; Patterns and measurement
Domains of Socio-Emotional Learning	Self-Management; Self-Awareness; Responsible Decision Making; Relationship Skill; Social Awareness
Workforce Development	Workforce Development
Evidence Criteria	Criteria 1; Criteria 2; Criteria 3

Advancing Academic Literacy for Older Youth and Young Adults Codes

Collaborative Planning and Visioning
Continuity of Services and Supports
Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition
Individualized Assessment
Targeted Differentiated Learning
Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, and Retention
Wraparound Service Models

Advancing Intergenerational Family Literacy Codes

Collaborative Planning and Visioning
Continuity of Services and Supports
Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition
Individualized Assessment
Interactive Literacy Activities (ILAs)
Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, and Retention
Wraparound Service Models

C. Initial System Level Recommendations for Advancing Academic Literacy and Numeracy for Older Youth and Young Adult Learners in Baltimore

1. Focus on Collaborative (Community and District) Strategic Planning and Visioning for Equitable Academic Literacy Development of Learners

Some essential components for exploration/inclusion:

- a. Audit the existing curriculum and assessment structures (across disciplines) for equity and culturally sustaining practices and texts. Revise/replace existing protocols with equitable texts and practices aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines.
- b. Provide access to high quality, high interest, multimodal texts, and engage/support students (and all community members) in wide-reading, writing, and creating during curricular and non-curricular tasks and activities.
- c. Integrate the teaching and learning of digital literacy skills and safety as a non-negotiable component of all disciplinary literacy instruction along with print-based literacies.
- d. Address lack of literacy instructional knowledge in schools and programs with system/schoolwide inquiry- based professional learning on disciplinary and intermediate literacy for all educational professionals inclusive of administration, faculty, and support staff.
- e. Address lack of literacy leadership by hiring/placing full time literacy and language professionals/coaches (Reading/Math Specialists/Coaches, ESOL Specialists, and Speech Language Pathologists) in schools and programs to: 1) provide extensive/intensive instruction/intervention for students in literacy and language, and 2) serve as professional literacy and language resources and advocates for building level instructional teams, families, and community members.
- f. Identify and target the individual needs and assets for students across the scope of literacy continuum (basic, intermediate, and disciplinary literacies) for explicit instruction/intervention/enrichment in literacy.
- g. Create new instructional schedules that prioritize and provide time for professional development around literacy for educational staff and provide dedicated time to meet students' needs for explicit instruction/intervention/enrichment in literacy.

2. Focus on Continuity of Services and Supports Across K-12 and Adult, Family, and Workforce Education Systems/Programming
 - a. Explore opportunities to increase alignments and remove redundancy across systems including assessment, curricular structures, and program supports.
 - b. Create strategic partnerships for learner services (like dual enrollment) across the K-12 system and adult, family, and workforce education providers and agencies (labor, health, library systems) beginning with Career and Technical Education Programming.
 - c. Create strategic partnerships for professional development on literacy learning for older youth and young adults across the K-12 education system and adult, family, and workforce education providers and agencies (labor, health, library systems).
3. Focus on Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition
 - a. Complete asset mapping of literacy resources and programming in Baltimore and surrounding area.
 - b. Create interagency or interdepartmental council for literacy charged with creating, coordinating, and evaluating culturally and linguistically appropriate methods for navigating systems of delivery across literacy resources and programming.
 - c. Investigate the cultural and linguistic resources individual neighborhoods and local social networks use to consume and disseminate information about resources. Use these resources and channels for formal and informal communication on literacy resources and programming.
 - d. Utilize plain language strategies and tools when communicating about available literacy resources and programming.
 - e. Mitigate barriers to access literacy resources and programming like transportation, lack of necessary personal or material resources, fee-based literacy services and programming, and lack of trust.

D. Recommended Practices for Programs Supporting Academic Literacy Development for Older Youth and Young Adults

*Recommended Practices	Description in Implementation
Individualized Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with intentional building of rapport including assessing learner’s interests, insights on their own learning process and progress, attitudes toward literacy, and aspirations for college and/or career. • Includes developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate formative and summative battery of assessments for placement and monitoring progress. • Determines discrete literacy assets and needs across basic, intermediate, and disciplinary skill sets. • Produces results/findings that are explored and discussed with the learner and tied to instructional/intervention or extension recommendations and goal development. • Informs individualized instruction, intervention, or extension and learner’s goal evaluation in an iterative manner.
Targeted Differentiated Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit, sequential, and intensive instruction, intervention, and extension based on ongoing assessment data. • Strategy focused, multi-strategic, and flexible intensive instruction, intervention, and extension that support transfer of learning. • Prioritizes and provides equitable, culturally sustaining practices across instruction, intervention, and extension. • Prioritizes and provides digital literacy learning across instruction, intervention, and extension. • Prioritizes and provides authentic/contextual learning across instruction, intervention, and extension. • Guided and provided by highly qualified literacy and language professionals
Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build authentic and meaningful relationships where learner’s culture and interests are supported and fostered. • Evaluate school, classroom, and program cultures to determine how they support or hinder the literacy learning environment and make appropriate changes. • Utilize learner-centered inquiry or project-based instruction and programming (like service-learning).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a community of learners through the use of cohorts and other opportunities for creating belonging and connection among learners who share similar program goals and provide opportunities for small group or peer mentoring. Develop and utilize learner advisory boards. • Can include proactive/intrusive advising and tutoring as part of instructional programming. • Provide incentives/rewards for learners who meet individualized learning goals or accomplish learning specific skills. • Provide information/instruction on roles and structures of applicable health and educational systems. • Provide information/instruction on learner’s rights across health and educational systems. • Provide opportunities to facilitate learner’s exploration, navigation, engagement, and advocacy with/in health and educational providers and systems.
<p>Wraparound Service Models</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize program advisors or other educational or mental health professionals (social workers, counselors) to meet and collaborate with each learner to establish need-driven, evidence-based approach to program participation. • Encourage/guide learners to identify their own goals, needs, and strengths. • Provide proactive supports and services targeted to both fit the learner’s needs and the communities cultural preferences. • Leverage the community-based health services provided by governments and non-profits by making intentional connections and assisting learners with navigating these systems. • Commonly include components of academic supports (like access to academic advising, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and/or English language development). • Commonly include components of health/wellbeing supports (like access to mental health counseling, health programming, employment support, childcare, and transportation support). • Include programs like Career Pathway Models, Community Schools (high schools), Adult Charter Schools, student support service models in higher education, and individual case management programs in community-based adult education programs like the National External Diploma Program.

*The practices listed can be used across a variety of overall approaches to literacy education and within many different educational structures. This document does not specify one particular program or approach to literacy education. We have highlighted these practices based on our review of research and literature available in December of 2020. There may be other practices worthy of attention but not yet available in the public domain. New literacy research could alter or add to the practices recommended here. For these reasons, choosing to enact these practices would leave agency and choice for individual schools, programs, educators, and administrators.

E. Initial System Level Recommendations for Advancing Intergenerational Family Literacy in Baltimore

1. Focus on Collaborative (Community and Government) Strategic Planning and Visioning for Advancing Intergenerational Family Literacy in Baltimore
 - a. Collaborate with families in Baltimore to learn more about their family literacy assets and needs for programming with intentional focus on families who have been or are: young parents, newcomers (both immigrants and refugees), justice involved, experiencing homelessness, and/or those impacted by addiction.
 - b. Create shared definitions and operationalizing of intergenerational family literacy in Baltimore inclusive of a four-component model:
 - Early childhood education programming and services
 - Adult education/workforce development programming and services
 - Parent-child interactive literacy activity (ILA) programming and services
 - Parent education/advocacy programming and services
 - c. Collaborate across government departments (education, health, library) and community programs to create ecosystem of networks focused on four-component model of intergenerational family literacy.
 - d. Identify all major stakeholders and providers in each component of model.
 - Early childhood education – Head Start - Maryland Family Network, Catholic Charities, etc.
 - Adult education/workforce development – BCCC, SBLC, Strong City, Adult Charter School, etc.

- Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Activities/Parent Education – Library, Home visiting programs like family/nurse partnerships, early intervention, early head start, etc.
 - Parent Education – Home visiting programs like family/nurse partnerships, early intervention, early head start, etc.
- e. Create shared definitions and operationalizing of culturally and linguistically appropriate, asset driven family literacy networks in Baltimore.
2. Focus on Continuity of Services and Supports Across Government (Health, Education, Library) and Community Programming
 - a. Explore opportunities to increase alignments and remove redundancy across systems including assessment, curricular structures, and program supports in the four-component model.
 - b. Create strategic partnerships for services and professional development across and between government systems and community-based systems in the four-component model beginning with the Pratt Library System.
 3. Focus on Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition
 - a. Complete asset mapping of literacy resources and programming in Baltimore and surrounding area.
 - b. Create interagency or interdepartmental council for literacy charged with creating, coordinating, and evaluating culturally and linguistically appropriate methods for navigating systems of delivery across family literacy resources and programming.
 - c. Investigate the cultural and linguistic resources individual neighborhoods and local social networks use to consume and disseminate information about resources. Use these local social networks for formal and informal communication on literacy resources and programming.
 - d. Utilize plain language strategies and tools when communicating about available literacy resources and programming.
 - e. Mitigate barriers to access literacy resources and programming like transportation, lack of necessary personal or material resources, fee-based services and programming, and lack of trust.

F. Recommended Practices for Programs Supporting Intergenerational Family Literacy Development

*Recommended Practices	Description in Implementation
Individualized Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with acknowledging family's expert role in their child's development and learning. • Asks about and prioritizes the family's' goals for their and their child's development and learning. • Asks for parent/family insights about their child's interests, developmental history, attitudes/behaviors, and needs. • Includes Funds of Knowledge assessment. • Includes interdisciplinary developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate formative educational, language, and literacy assessments in child's home language. • Capable of screening for early language delays in child's home language. • Produces results/findings that are explored and discussed with the family and tied to recommendations and goal development.
Targeted, Culturally Sustaining, and Developmentally Appropriate Parent/Child Interactive Literacy Activities (ILAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create positive, goal-oriented relationships between families and program staff. • Encourage family to communicate with their child in their home language. Incorporate family's culture and language(s) in all programming and activities. • Provide/ensure access to many different, high-quality, culturally sustaining books and writing materials and opportunities to read and write across all settings (community, educational, health, home). • Provide explicit instruction, and materials, on culturally sustaining interactive parent-child literacy activities (ILAs) inclusive of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing. • Encourage and expand on things family (all members) already does that support their child's language, literacy, and numeracy. • Show how family can explore and play with objects, talk, and use gestures during existing everyday routines (print and digital) with child to facilitate literacy and numeracy development. • Consider hybrid (online/face-to-face) models of service delivery (based on community need).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information/instruction on language and literacy developmental milestones and markers in home language and English (where appropriate).
Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, and Retention in (and beyond) Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize learner-centered inquiry or project-based instruction and programming (like service-learning). • Create peer mentor/educator development programs and utilize peer mentors/educators drawn from the community as educators/co-educators family literacy programming. • Utilize multimodal communication technologies to reinforce language and literacy concepts/routines. • Provide information/instruction on roles and structures of applicable health and educational systems, parent/guardian’s rights across systems, and opportunities to facilitate family exploration, navigation, engagement, and advocacy with health and educational providers and systems.
Wraparound Services Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize program advisors or other educational and/or health professionals (nurses, social workers, counselors) to meet and collaborate with each family to establish need-driven, evidence-based approach to program participation. • Encourage/guide family to identify their own goals, needs, and strengths. • Provide proactive supports and services targeted to both fit the family’s needs and the communities cultural preferences. • Co-enroll families across needed educational programming (early childhood education and adult/continuing education). • Leverage the community-based health services provided by governments and non-profits by making intentional connections and assisting learners with navigating these systems. • Commonly include community-need driven components of academic supports (like access to academic advising, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and/or English language development). • Commonly include community-need components of health/wellbeing supports (like access to mental health counseling, health programming, employment support, childcare, and transportation support).

*The practices listed can be used across a variety of overall approaches to literacy and language education and within many different educational structures. This document does not specify one particular program or approach to literacy/language education. We have

highlighted these practices based on our review of research and literature available in December of 2020. There may be other practices worthy of attention but not yet available in the public domain. New literacy research could alter or add to the practices recommended here. For these reasons, choosing to enact these practices would leave agency and choice for individual schools, programs, educators, and administrators.

G. Recommended Reading for Additional Exploration

Advancing Academic Literacy for Older Youth and Young Adults

System Level Recommendations	Recommended Reading for Further Exploration
Collaborative Strategic Planning and Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yosso, 2005 • CAST, 2018 • Haddix, 2013; 2018 • Kinloch, et al., 2017 • Muhammad, 2020 • Paris & Alim, 2017 • ILA, 2017a, 2018b, 2019f, 2019b, 2019c, 2019f, 2019g, 2019h, 2020a • Ziemke & Muhtaris, 2020 • Ippolito et al., 2019 • Bean & Ippolito, 2016 • Wexler et al., 2019
Continuity of Services and Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pimentel, 2013 • Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards • Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 • Policy Studies Associates, 2020

<p>Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors, 2017 • Dunsmore et al., 2013 • Fox, 2014 • McCarty et al., 2007 • Lopez, 2020 • Ordonez-Jasis & Jasis, 2011 • Sacramento Literacy Foundation, 2020 • VISTA Campus; Americorp, 2021
<p>Individualized Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILA, 2017d • Duke et al., 2012 • Gunning, 2018 • Stahl et al., 2020 • NRC, 2012
<p>Targeted, Differentiated Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRC, 2012 • Moje, et al., 2010 • Vaughn et al., 2015, 2018 • Saal, 2015 • Anderson et al., 2020 • Ziemke & Muhtaris, 2020
<p>Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, Retention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson et al., 2020 • NRC, 2012 • Casey, 2008 • Stahl et al., 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILA, 2019f • Gunning, 2018 • Chase-Lansdale et al., 2019; Sabol et al., 2015; Sommer et al., 2020 • Drago-Severson et al., 2001 • Burt et al., 2013; Rodgers et al., 2014, Mairs, 2019
Wrap-around Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Couch, et al., 2018 • Wachern et al., 2010; 2011 • Fries et al., 2012; Policy Studies Associates, 2020 • Adelman & Taylor, 2010 • Figlio, 2015 • LINCS, 2015 • Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (Washington, D. C) and YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School (YBPhilly)

Advancing Intergenerational Family Literacy

System Level Recommendations	Recommended Reading for Further Exploration
Collaborative Strategic Planning and Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campano et al, 2013 • Clymer et al., 2017 • Compton-Lilly et al., 2019 • Katsiaficas et al., 2016 • Levesque, 2013
Continuity of Services and Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clymer et al., 2017 • Levesque, 2013 • National Human Services Assembly, 2016 • National Governors Association, 2018 • State Materials (Connecticut, Colorado, Illinois, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah)
Literacy Resource Identification, Access, and Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors, 2017 • Dunsmore et al., 2013 • Fox, 2014 • McCarty et al., 2007 • Lopez, 2020 • Ordonez-Jasis & Jasis, 2011 • Sacramento Literacy Foundation, 2020 • VISTA Campus; Americorp, 2021

Program Level Recommendations	Recommended Reading for Further Exploration
Individualized Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compton-Lilly et al., 2019 • Katsiaficas et al., 2016 • Levesque, 2013 • National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2015 • Nogueron-Liu et al., 2020 • Parecki & Gear, 2013
Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Activities (ILAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson et al., 2015 • ASHA, 2021 • Compton-Lilly et al., 2019 • Neumann et al., 2017; Neumann et al., 2020 • Nogueron-Liu et al., 2020 • Levesque, 2013 • Lewis Ellison, 2016; Lewis Ellison & Wang, 2018; Lewis Ellison & Solomon, 2019 • Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020 • Parecki & Gear, 2013 • Turner, 2019
Strategies for Increasing Motivation, Persistence, and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cramer & Toso, 2015; Toso et al., 2016 • Hurwitz et al., 2015; York et al., 2019; Doss et al., 2019 • Kaiper-Marquez et al., 2020 • Program Materials (All Our Kin, Toberman Neighborhood Center, Village of Promise)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celano & Neuman, 2019; Neuman et al., 2017; Neuman et al., 2020
Wraparound Service Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Materials (East Side House, Family Futures Downeast, the Jeremiah Program, the Toberman Neighborhood Center, the Village of Promise, and the Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham)

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