Creating Georgia's Evidence-Based Literacy Ecosystem

The pace of automation and the switch to high-tech jobs is accelerating. 60% of jobs are STEM related, and 60% of those job holders do not need a bachelor's degree. **Georgia needs a literate workforce** that can up-skill, re-skill, and grow the skilled workforce as the economy changes.

Current Situation in Georgia

There are many programs and people working at all parts of the literacy pipeline. DFACS, DOE, TCSG, USG, Deal Center, Libraries, GA Family Connection Partnership, Cox Campus, Reach Out and Read, Decoding for Dyslexia, Literacy for All, Learn for Life, Share the Magic, Voices for Georgia Children, GEEARS, Leap Year, etc. They are vital parts of an ecosystem where reading is a life-long, multi-generational, effort. We must address the entire ecosystem.

There is also 50+ years of evidence-based literacy instruction practices that show if done right, the first time, a large majority of children will not need expensive, time-consuming, interventions. When evidence-based approaches are used, essentially every-child, except those with severe cognitive difficulties, can become a fluent reader. **Every child can become fully literate**.

Literacy Skills Pipeline & Growth

Read To	Learn to Read	Read to Learn	Up-Skill
0-3	3-8	8+	Graduate

Promote literacy in next generation
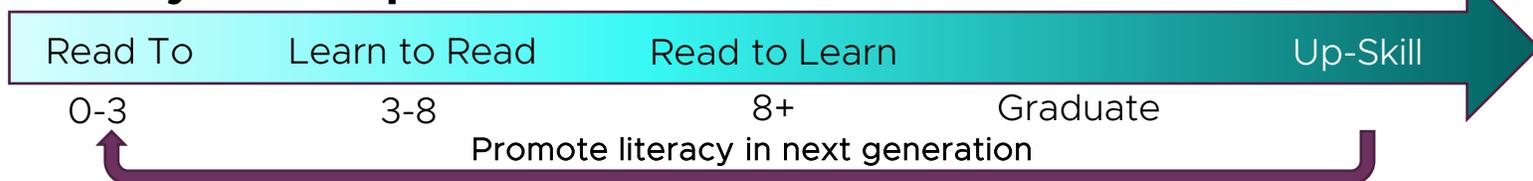
As people learn to read, they are building mental muscle that enables them to read words and sentences with speed, accuracy, and comprehension. Evidence-based literacy instruction utilizes the "muscle building" techniques: building from letter sounds, to combination sounds, to whole words, to entire sentences. At the same time, it builds a library of defined words. Thus, evidence-based literacy instruction spends time on both sounding out words and understanding the words (this is termed the _simple view of reading_). By the end of third-grade, when given a block of text, proficient readers have the mental muscle to easily read the words and know what those words mean; therefore, they can comprehend the block of text to learn.

HR 650 Study Committee Goals:
1. Define evidence-based literacy instruction
2. Understand impact of low-literacy on Georgia's workforce competitiveness
3. Identify all the programs that exist along the pipeline and understand how they can work together
4. Examine how changes can be made to education standards to support evidence-based instruction and enable adaption as new science emerges
5. Determine how Georgia can best support and expand local ecosystems to maximize potential and while enabling local flexibility
6. Recommend actions and legislation as needed

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), two thirds of Georgia 4th graders are below _proficient_ reading levels.

Definitions:
Low Literacy / At Grade Level (basic)- Understand the words, answer simple questions, read through material in a certain amount of time.
Literate / Proficient - Make _Reasonable Inferences_ from the material.

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