APPENDIX A | **CONSIDERATION QUESTIONS**

(This is a standalone resource drawn from the Operating Principles in Section 3)

This resource is designed first and foremost for educators, whether district-based or school-based. Though many of these decisions are not in the hands of teachers, these considerations may provide a useful frame for teachers as well.

Another audience that should tap into these consideration questions are product designers and those who invest in product and instructional materials development. Though educator-facing, this set of considerations is also intended to help designers focus on the crucial research base for what accelerates literacy growth in an equitable way as they think about creating personalized tools and approaches for student and teacher use.

This series of questions is designed to support you as you work to strengthen your students' literacy capacities in an equitable, research-grounded way. Before you adopt any new approach or program to support strengthening the five literacy accelerators in your setting, we recommend you follow these three steps:

STEP 1

Assess your students' current literacy needs and strengths vis-a-vis grade-level work: What gaps in instruction are you trying to close by adopting or using a personalized product or approach?

- **What is your shared view on how the current core ELA program (and daily schedule) is meeting the learning needs of students?**

- **What are the current literacy capabilities of your students?**
  - On which accelerators are they performing well?
  - What do you want to strengthen? (Remember the accelerators lean on one other. In other words, strengthening one often strengthens others. But don't make the mistake of concentrating on one to the exclusion of others!)

- **Are you collecting quantitative and qualitative student data?**
  - Are there any disparities in student data at the whole school or sub-group level, paying particular attention to students who have frequently been marginalized and chronically underserved such as Black students, students experiencing economic insecurity, and English learners?

[Use this space to answer the questions.]

What are the best ways to strengthen the core ELA instructional program so students' needs are better met?

Once you've taken a hard and honest look at your students' progress, it's time to decide if you need to improve the implementation of your current ELA program, adjust or modify the current ELA program, supplement your ELA program with additional products or approaches, or adopt a new core ELA program that will do a better job with the literacy accelerators.

- **Improve implementation of your core ELA program:**
  - Does your current core ELA program address all five literacy accelerators?
  - Are all current critical core ELA program elements being implemented with fidelity?
  - Can school leaders and teachers articulate, in detail, the instructional vision?
  - Could better implementation or prioritization better meet the student needs identified in Step 1?

- **Eliminate from instruction what isn't serving students:**
  - Are there core ELA program initiatives that are not aligned and not mission critical? They need to go to focus time and energy on what matters most.

- **Adjust the current core ELA program:**
  - In what ways is the core ELA program not doing the job?
  - Do the approaches to the literacy accelerators in the core ELA program reflect the research contained in this report (in sections 4–8)?
  - Could it meet your (and students') needs through strategic adjustments or modifications?

- **Find a new core ELA program:**[1]
  - Have you engaged stakeholder groups for equitable representation for materials selection?
  - Has the group tasked with adoption been trained in the literacy accelerators and their implications for what should be in core materials?
  - Do you have an easy-to-use checklist or rubric for comparing different programs consistently?
  - Have you asked all publishers you are considering to provide evidence for the research base of their program?
  - Does it match what you know of the literacy accelerators?
  - Are the materials—particularly the text selections—representative of different groups, including students who have frequently been marginalized and chronically underserved such as Black students, students experiencing economic insecurity, and English learners?

- **Supplement your current core ELA program via personalization tools or approaches: If you've replaced, improved, or adjusted your core program, then it's time to consider personalization to enhance outcomes across the literacy accelerators.**
  - How does the proposed personalized product or approach address the identified need(s) not yet met (note: we strongly caution educators not to rush immediately to add a new supplemental product or tool as a solution)?

[Use this space to answer the questions.]

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[1] See additional questions in Step 3 to utilize for core program selection.

Evaluate potential personalized products or approaches.

As you evaluate new or existing programs, use these questions to consider whether or not the product or approach is consistent with the Operating Principles for accelerating literacy outcomes.

- **Does the product or approach advance the right content?**
  - Does this product or approach address the specific program gap(s) or literacy needs you identified in Step 1? Which specific literacy accelerator(s) does the product target?
  - Does the product or approach address these needs in ways that are consistent with the research?
  - Is the product or approach consistent with your vision and instructional approach to literacy? How is this approach intimately tied to what students are learning in class?

- **Does the product or approach promote equity and counteract bias?[2]**
  - Do the personalization strategies equitably provide improvement in the literacy accelerator(s) being targeted?
  - Is there disaggregated data demonstrating this?
  - Does the product or approach track students by current skill level or require that teachers track students? On what basis are students assigned to personalized work?
  - How do students move between skill-based groups?
  - Does the product or approach support all students to access grade-level work in literacy? If not readily apparent, ask for specific detail about how it does that.
  - Are there claims and evidence to support students for skill gains over a school year? Are these gains disaggregated in any way for different student populations? Ask for them if they are not provided.
  - Can students articulate what it takes to move up or why they are being assigned or grouped as they are?
  - Does the product or approach affirm multiple identities?
  - Does the product or approach represent the lives and identities of diverse students without relying on cultural stereotypes?
  - Were the products or approaches designed with equity right from the beginning and throughout the iterative process?
  - Does the product or approach prioritize understanding the knowledge, experiences and other assets that diverse students bring to the learning process?
  - Could you visit/observe this product or approach in action with students who reflect your own students' identities?

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[2] Several of these questions are inspired by the EF+Math, Developing Education Products with Equity at the Center framework (Angevine et al., 2019). We recommend that product designers and product consumers read the entire piece for a fulsome understanding of equity considerations.

- **How will students experience this approach or product?** (Does the product promote student agency and interest?)
  - Is there evidence that students are engaged by and satisfied with their experience with this product or approach?
  - Is there evidence that the product or approach motivates students who have been historically marginalized?
  - Will students see a clear link between their whole class work and their individualized experiences?
  - Did the team who conceived of the product or approach include students?
  - Were students engaged meaningfully and brought fully into the design and development process?
  - Does using this approach or product increase student agency and sense of control over their learning?
    - How do you know?
    - Will this product or approach help students respond with a stronger yes to these statements[3]?
      - I belong to this academic community.
      - I believe I can succeed.
      - My ability grows with the effort I put in.
      - This work has value.

- **Is this approach or product easy enough to use that we can build and sustain the change?**
  - What things are you going to stop doing so there is time to include the personalized approach?
  - What training and support will teachers need to make the planning and instructional shifts necessary to support use of this product or approach?
  - Can teachers reasonably implement the program given their other responsibilities and district priorities?
  - If something you introduce is potentially more complex (for example, a concerted effort to provide culturally relevant content and approaches into student experience), have you done the change management work you need to so teachers embrace the change?

[Use this space to answer the questions above.]

REFERENCES

Angevine, C., Cator, K., Liberman, B., Smith, K., Young, V. (2019). *Designing a Process for Inclusive Innovation: A Radical Commitment to Equity.* Digital Promise.

Farrington, C.A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T.S., Johnson, D.W., & Beechum, N.O. (2012). *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners. The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance: A Critical Literature Review.* Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

[3] Grateful to the work of the Chicago Consortium for articulating these four questions (Farrington et al., 2012).