



# Aspire Professional Learning

## Description and Overview for Minnesota Educators

Lexia® Aspire™ Professional Learning, grounded in the science of reading, is a flexible, self-paced, digital solution that empowers educators to accelerate literacy skills among students in grades 4–8.

Aspire offers professional learning solutions for all upper elementary and middle school educators, including content area teachers, classroom teachers, interventionists, and ELA educators. It also gives them the agency to choose content that is most relevant to improving their students' literacy outcomes.

## Benefits of Aspire Professional Learning

Aspire Professional Learning is designed and developed specifically for educators of adolescent students, where the focus is on reading to learn. Aspire equips educators with the knowledge and skills they need to apply science-based strategies to a classroom that has varying levels of literacy competencies.

The program provides six key benefits for educators:



### 1. Choice, agency, and flexibility

Aspire is on-demand. After setting the foundation for educators with a few prerequisite courses, based on their interests and needs, educators can choose which domains they engage with and the sequence in which they complete the courses. Educators can also revisit the courses as many times as they would like to.



### 2. Personalized continuous learning

Educators receive personalized content in response to their performance. This way, users who master concepts can progress, while those who need additional, scaffolded support receive it.



### 3. Practical and transferable

These courses support upper elementary and middle school educators with meaningful research as well as “Bridge to Application” opportunities that apply evidence-based concepts and best practices in daily classroom instruction with ready-to-use classroom resources.



### 4. Evidence-based pedagogy

Aspire uses evidence-based findings from the science of reading, which solidifies an understanding of how language and writing systems work for adolescent students by informing the why, what, and how of effective and comprehensive instruction for better student outcomes.



### 5. Progress monitoring for school leaders

School leaders can see the progress of their educators through data on completion rates, time spent, “Check for Understanding” quiz scores, and assessments that are conducted throughout and at the end of the program to check educators’ growth and progress.



### 6. Alignment and accreditation

The courses are aligned with the International Dyslexia Association’s (IDA) *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*, and “Bridge to Application” resources are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Participants have the opportunity to earn graduate-level credits from ACE.

## Flow and Structure

Aspire is based on the principles of the science of reading and Lexia’s expertise in literacy for K–12. The program is designed to address educators’ needs for improving student achievement by helping educators support learners in how to read, comprehend, and articulate their ideas across various subjects.

To accommodate educators’ busy schedules, Aspire provides an on-demand, self-paced digital professional learning program that focuses on training for Word Recognition, Language Comprehension, Reading Comprehension and Writing. To start, all participants complete the prerequisite requirements, educators can then select the domains and course sequence they’d like to attempt.

There are a total of 3 domains, with 29 courses that have 138 bite-size modules, collectively. The program takes approximately 40 hours to complete.

The program is structured as follows:

- Pretest
- Prerequisite courses
- Three domains with nine courses each
- “Check for Understanding” quizzes at the end of each course
- Classroom resources in each course
- Assessments throughout to check progress

Scoring 80% or higher on the “Check for Understanding” quizzes earns participant educators a mastery certificate for that course while scores below 80% receive a completion certificate. As mentioned, users can return to courses in the future, and each license is valid for one user for one year.



## Why Aspire Professional Learning?

### An opportunity to accelerate student learning

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, over 66% of students in eighth grade were below or at basic literacy proficiency level, and 71% of educators felt that students wouldn't be prepared for grade-level content. To alleviate this trend, it's critical that schools and educators focus on deliberate literacy skill-building through middle school to give learners a substantial chance of succeeding in college and the workforce.

### Professional learning in literacy is vital to student success in all subjects

85% of the public-school curriculum is delivered via reading text. Literacy is a cornerstone of success across all core classes and students must read well and do well. So, it's vital that schools continue integrating reading best practices across the curriculum beyond early elementary grades. In the years that follow, reading requires explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction that is diagnostic and responsive. Therefore, training educators in literacy skills across subjects is essential for student success.

### The challenge of preparing educators to teach literacy skills to adolescents

Through no fault of their own, many educators teaching in grades 4-8 have not had the opportunity to learn how to teach literacy skills. Until now, there was limited evidence-backed content designed for content area teachers working with adolescent learners in classrooms that may include students of varying levels of literacy competencies. Though literacy skills are highly critical, educators are busy, and reading isn't their primary focus area for this age group.

Accordingly, a solution for those who work with adolescent learners shouldn't be a long, intensive certification course. Instead, they require a resource that understands the depth of skills the educator needs and provides it in a continuous, flexible, less time-consuming manner.

### Aspire enables educators to help students succeed by powering the learners' literacy capabilities

Aspire is designed by Lexia Learning's team of literacy experts using the science of reading as its foundation. Lexia has been in the literacy field for over 35 years and, leveraging Lexia's expertise in developing evidence-based literacy and professional learning solutions, Aspire aligns with the needs of educators who work with adolescent students.

The program helps all upper elementary and middle school educators build literacy skills among their students. We're cognizant that educators have limited time even to cover their core coursework, so we train educators to weave in literacy skills and strategies in their areas of expertise.

Our content and execution are unique. The course is backed by solid pedagogy and designed deliberately to benefit educators and learners in upper elementary grades and middle school. That way, literacy skills are no longer a barrier to learning content and skills across disciplines and instead influence significant, overall improvement in learners' academics.