**Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)**

PLDs outline the knowledge, skills, and practices that students performing at any given level achieve in each content area at each grade level. They indicate if the students are academically prepared to engage successfully in further studies in each content area, the next grade’s material and, eventually at the high school level to verify that they are college and career ready.

### Why did we develop PLDs?

PLDs were developed to give educators and parents further framework to what students in a score range are able to do and know, and to show progression of skill development within and across grades.

### Who are they for?

PLDs are designed to be used by educators, students and parents. Because PLDs more clearly communicate the specific knowledge and skills that students demonstrate at different levels of proficiency within reporting categories, they can serve a number of purposes in guiding classroom instruction. They are the foundation of rich discussion around what students need to do to perform at higher levels and to explain the progression of learning within a subject area.

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### 3rd Grade Reading — Performance Level Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Categories</th>
<th>Needs Support</th>
<th>Close</th>
<th>Ready</th>
<th>Exceeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
<td>• reading basic facts and identifying similar and different elements</td>
<td>• reading basic facts and identifying similar and different elements</td>
<td>• reading and identifying explicitly stated claims</td>
<td>• reading and identifying explicitly stated claims and making connections to prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
<td>• identifying a simple purpose and basic sequence</td>
<td>• identifying a clear purpose and detailed sequence</td>
<td>• identifying a clear purpose and detailed sequence and character traits</td>
<td>• identifying a clear purpose and detailed sequence and character traits and making connections to prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>• identifying facts and distinguishing them from ideas</td>
<td>• identifying facts and distinguishing them from ideas and character traits</td>
<td>• identifying facts and distinguishing them from ideas, character traits, and concepts in literary and informational texts</td>
<td>• identifying facts and distinguishing them from ideas, character traits, and concepts in literary and informational texts and making connections to prior knowledge</td>
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How will PLDs be used?

PLDs are essential in setting standards. Standard setting panelists use PLDs to determine the threshold expectations for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to attain performance levels of "In Need of Support," "Close," "Ready," and "Exceeding." PLDs are also used to inform item development, as each test needs questions that distinguish performance all along the continuum.

We encourage the use of the PLDs for a variety of purposes, such as:

- Differentiating instruction to maximize individual student outcomes
- Completing assessments to help identify target performance levels for individuals or groups of students
- Tracking student growth along the proficiency continuum as described by the PLDs.

In order to facilitate the use of the PLDs in instruction, the skills differentiating performance levels have been identified using bold text.