We envision a Pennsylvania with one of the highest literacy rates in the country, a trained and skilled workforce, and a growing economy, tax base, and population.

Rationale

- Only 48% of parents read to their preschoolers daily.
- Eighty-five percent of all juveniles interfacing with the court system are functionally illiterate.
- The majority of children with functionally illiterate parents become illiterate themselves.
- A child’s library use raises his or her fourth grade assessment scores.
- Thirteen percent of Pennsylvanians lack basic literacy skills such as the ability to read a newspaper or brochure. This percentage of Pennsylvanians who struggle with basic literacy remains unchanged from 1992.
- Children have watched 5,000 hours of TV before they get to kindergarten. By the end of sixth grade, children will have watched 100,000 acts of televised violence.
- If 50 first-graders have trouble reading, 44 of them will have reading problems in the fourth grade.
- By age three, children from privileged families have heard 30 million more words than children from underprivileged families. The three-year-old measure predicts third grade school achievement.
- More than 75% of jobs in Pennsylvania – three jobs out of four – demand education beyond high school. And yet, nearly 120,000 Pennsylvania youth ages 16-24 have dropped out of high school.
- Postsecondary institutions provided remedial coursework for nearly a third of entering freshmen in 2007-2008; public two-year colleges provided such coursework for 42% of their entering students.
- Fifty percent of the nation’s unemployed youth ages 16-21 are functional illiterates with virtually no prospects of obtaining good jobs.

High Tech

PRE-K

Tumblebooks: an animated online library of more than 100 talking picture books in five languages

Storyline Online: videos of noted actors reading popular picture books

Read the Books: a dynamic website of animated book reviews with direct links to library holdings for convenience

K-12 AND BEYOND

Elementary, middle, and high school real-time, online, one-on-one tutoring with expert tutors

POWER Library databases

Online science and math resources

Learning Express Library’s Online Campus

High Touch

Baby library cards and promotional messages to parents distributed at birthplaces

Collections of age-appropriate, engaging materials with outreach collections in offsite locations

Statewide “One Book, Every Young Child” initiative

Baby and toddler storytimes

Kindergarten Readiness programs

Family Place/Preschool Connection programs

“Every Child Ready to Read” workshops

Family literacy programs

Curriculum-based early learning computer labs

Summer Reading programs

Career collections and workshops

Youth volunteer programs

Book clubs and discussion groups

“Boys Read” programs

Literacy tutor recruitment

Literacy and GED classes

New reader collections

Spanish language/other language collections