



# Comprehensive How-To Guide:

Approaches to Implementing Early Literacy Policies



# Introduction

Reading is the key that unlocks everyone’s potential in life, and early literacy is a critical component to helping all students reach their full personal and academic potential. This guide to successful policy implementation is designed for policymakers and practitioners, because every student deserves every opportunity to read.

A comprehensive approach to improving literacy outcomes must include strategies for supporting teachers and administrators, students, and parents and families. This presents states with a complex challenge. Fortunately, there are scientific studies on policy implementation methods and strategies that have become known as *implementation science*. As described by researchers at the University of Washington, “the field of [implementation science](#) seeks to systematically close the gap between what we *know* and what we *do* (often referred to as the know-do gap).”

ExcelinEd’s *Comprehensive “How-To” Guide* supports the policy work needed to achieve student success. It

will help state policymakers understand the [critical elements](#) needed to adopt a comprehensive approach to improving literacy outcomes for students. For education leaders and practitioners, this *Guide* will support impactful implementation of reading policies by outlining best practices, including strategies that have been successful in other states, and by “unpacking” the [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy by translating those principles into action steps.

This resource was developed in collaboration with state literacy leaders who are responsible for providing guidance to districts and schools for implementing literacy efforts and who are also members of ExcelinEd’s [Early Literacy Network](#). This guide and the day-to-day work to better serve students would not be possible without their expertise, experience and participation.

For an analysis of early literacy policies nationwide, review ExcelinEd’s [Early Literacy Policy Toolkit: State-by-State Analysis](#).



## Purpose

Reading is the key to unlock one’s potential in life, and a strong foundation in early literacy skills is a critical component to helping all students unlock their full academic, social, and economic potential. This Guide is designed to support policymakers who seek to adopt or strengthen early literacy legislation and state agency leaders and practitioners as they guide early literacy implementation efforts.



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# Policy to Support Teachers and Administrators

Educators know that learning to read is a continuum of knowledge and skills, beginning at birth with oral language development and progressing to the development of written language skills and knowledge of the world that continues into adulthood. Teachers support that progress, although not all teachers are well prepared to teach reading. Policies to support four essential components—expanding teacher knowledge of early literacy skills; the quality of early literacy skills instruction; student engagement during early literacy skills instruction; and improving teaching competencies among educators—together can provide the foundation for ensuring all students become proficient readers.

## Science of Reading Training for Educators

It is critical that all teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively teach all students to read, including students with severe reading difficulties. States, schools and districts should consider establishing the *science of reading* as the common language for literacy instruction and then provide training to teachers to build their capacity to teach the foundational skills students need to become skilled readers.

## How to Identify and Implement Science of Reading Professional Development



### STATE SPOTLIGHT: NORTH CAROLINA

The Tarheel State passed the [Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021](#) that focuses on educator professional development and teacher preparation programs. This legislation named Lexia (formerly Voyager Sopris) as the [professional development provider](#) of [Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling \(LETRS\)](#). Cohorts will be trained over a two-year period to ensure that all Pre-K and elementary educators are trained with the appropriate LETRS program.





## STATE SPOTLIGHT: NEBRASKA

The Nebraska Department of Education, in partnership with The New Teacher Project, virtually hosted the [Science of Reading Professional Learning and Community of Practice Series](#). This collaborative learning experience, focused around reading science research for educators, allows for reflection on current practices and opportunities to discuss ways to take action to implement research-based instructional practices.

The four-part series features professional learning sessions and corresponding communities of practice for those interested in a deeper focus on implementation.

1

### Part 1:

Science of Reading: Phonological Awareness and Phonics

2

### Part 2:

Science of Reading: Knowledge and Vocabulary

3

### Part 3:

Science of Reading: Comprehension and Fluency

4

### Part 4:

Analyzing and Responding to Data in Foundational Literacy

The Nebraska Department of Education also offers SoR training opportunities to educators through [AIM Pathways™](#).



## On-Site Literacy/ Reading Coach Support

Literacy coaches are an important support mechanism for teachers in the classroom. School-based literacy coaches work closely with teachers to improve classroom practice and, ultimately, student reading achievement school-wide. As site-based personnel, literacy coaches provide the following supports: facilitate teacher training on evidence-based reading instruction and data-based decision making; demonstrate lessons; co-teach and/or observe teaching and provide immediate feedback. Literacy coaches serve as a stable resource for professional development throughout an elementary school, creating master teachers of reading to improve student reading achievement.



### How to Define the Roles/Responsibilities of Literacy/Reading Coaches



#### STATE SPOTLIGHT: FLORIDA

In the Sunshine State, a regional structure has been established to support districts and schools with improving literacy outcomes with 18 state regional literacy directors. All [literacy coaches](#) are required to be endorsed or certified in reading. The state's department of education has created professional development for literacy coaches to include:

- Literacy Coach Boot Camps provided by the Florida Department of Education to launch the Literacy Coach Certification Program established under the CARES ACT.
- Coaching professional development around the new Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) English Language Arts Standards is also provided by the department.
- Additional professional development for literacy coaches is determined locally.
- Districts and school administrators determine the frequency and format of coaches' documentation of their support.



**18**  
state regional  
literacy directors





## STATE SPOTLIGHT: MISSISSIPPI

Literacy coaching support is provided each year to identified literacy support schools throughout the Magnolia State. Schools receive varying levels of support based on data and sustainable achievement over time. Coaching staff includes literacy coaches, regional literacy coordinators (RCs) and assistant state literacy coordinators (ASCs). Literacy coaches are assigned to a region and an RC who serves as a thought partner and provides additional support to the literacy coach (typically 4-5 literacy coaches per RC). Regional coordinators are supported by

an ASC (typically 3-4 RCs for each ASC). Regional meetings are held monthly to collaborate and support school-based coaching efforts. Statewide literacy coach meetings are also held monthly; coaching staff receive professional development during this time. Literacy coaches submit monthly reports detailing coaching support to school administrators and RCs.



# Educator Preparation Program Alignment and Science of Reading Assessment for Certification

Aligning educator preparation programs to the science of reading ensures that elementary education, early childhood and special education educators licensed in a state have been provided with pre-service preparation that delivers a strong foundation in evidence-based literacy instruction. It also ensures that educator preparation programs provide specific and objective evidence that attest to the quality of their preparation in early literacy.

To achieve these goals, educator preparation programs must:

- 1 provide in-depth coursework on current state standards and evidence-based reading instruction
- 2 give teacher candidates opportunities to apply such instruction in real classrooms with real students
- 3 prepare teacher candidates to interpret reading assessment data to identify students with reading difficulties and inform instruction

## How to Align Educator Preparation Programs to the Science of Reading



### STATE SPOTLIGHT: OHIO

In 2018, the Ohio Deans Compact established the Higher Education Literacy Steering Committee. The goal was to support teacher preparation programs in Ohio colleges and universities as well as school district partners by strengthening core reading course content to focus on the science of reading. In 2019, the [P20 Literacy Collaborative](#), a peer-to-peer learning group, was formed to promote and sustain university-school district partnerships; improve access to high-quality literacy instruction; and fund development efforts that support common problems of practice related to improving literacy for all learners. Specifically, the P20 Collaborative strives to achieve these goals:

- Identify possible alignments and gaps between pre-service preparation and in-district practice on the use of evidence-based early language and literacy instruction.
- Foster shared understanding among higher education and school district faculty on curricular improvement processes plus shared ownership of curricula developed through the project.
- Identify strategies for bridging the preparation-to-practice continuum, i.e., the transition between what educators are able to do upon leaving pre-service programs and what teaching reading to diverse learners asks of them.
- Provide a forum for shared learning and greater mutual understanding and appreciation among representatives from higher education, school districts, regional entities and other partner groups.





## STATE SPOTLIGHT: ALABAMA

Educator preparation programs (EPPs) that lead to an initial elementary teaching state certification require at least nine hours of reading or literacy coursework. The courses are based on the science of learning to read, including multisensory strategies in foundational reading skills.

To ensure that educator preparation programs integrate the science of reading (SOR) into their syllabi, as well as into field practice, the Alabama State Department of Education established and implemented a series of steps to initiate conversations and action steps regarding implementing the science of reading.

### Steps implemented to date include:

- Requiring EPPs to submit syllabi to the Alabama State Department of Education for state and regional reading specialists to review and provide feedback regarding components of the Science of Reading that were visible and to provide suggestions for further implementation.
- Requiring EPPs to self-report compliance to the (SOR) requirement to the ALSDE utilizing the evidence in the revised syllabi and confirming compliance to the nine hours of instruction in the SOR.
- The department has contracted with the [Barksdale Reading Institute](#) to provide external evaluation of early literacy course offerings in Alabama's 26 educator preparation programs to ensure that they are aligned with the requirements of the Alabama Reading Act.

## Funding

The key to financial viability of a Comprehensive K-3 Reading Policy is making better use of existing local, state and federal funds. If needed, new funding can be provided to effectively implement the policy. The primary focus of kindergarten through grade 3 is teaching young students how to read. States should therefore look for ways to reprioritize existing local, state and federal funds to support reading instruction and intervention statewide. The primary grades are the least expensive and most timely opportunity to ensure each student is a successful reader.



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# How to Allocate Funding to Support Literacy Implementation Efforts



## STATE SPOTLIGHT: TENNESSEE

The Volunteer State utilized the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund and Comprehensive Literacy State Development program and ongoing state funds totaling \$120 million to support literacy efforts including:

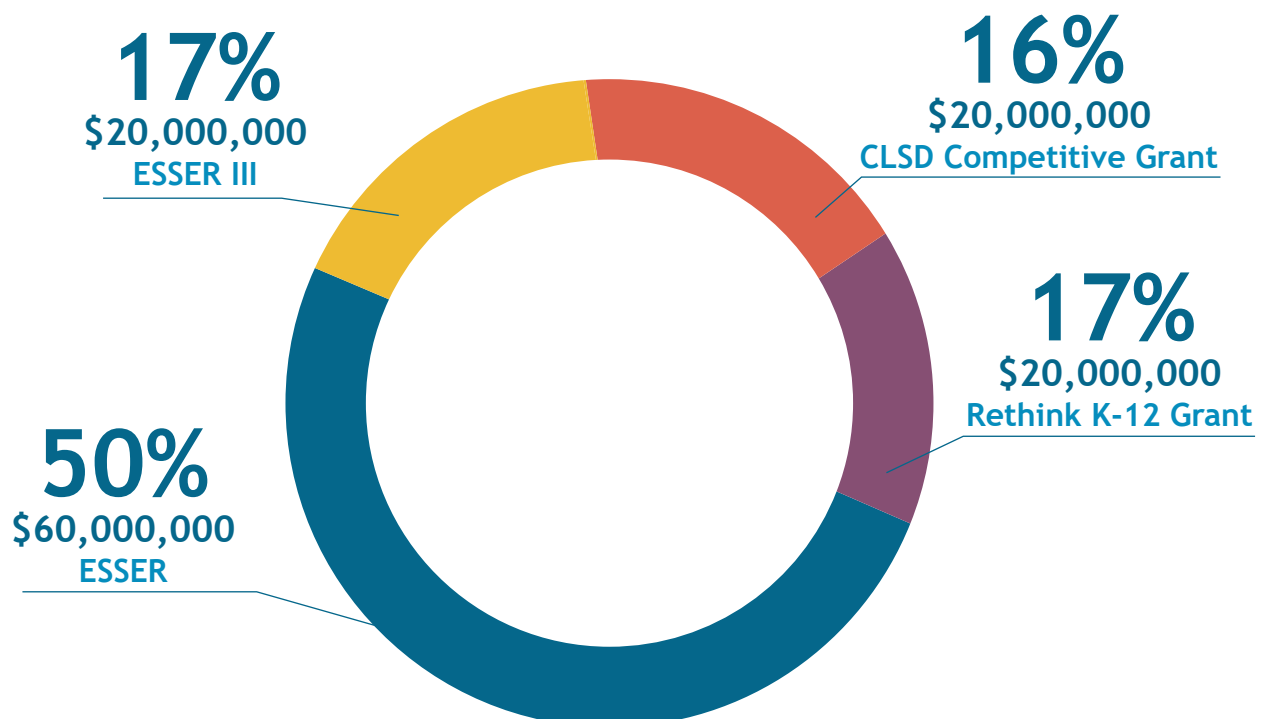
- TN Early Reading Training
- Early Literacy Networks for follow-up post-training support
- Literacy Implementation Network to support High-Quality Instructional Materials
- Connected Literacy and TN All Corps literacy tutoring support
- Family literacy events, resources, and supports
- Reading Summit Professional Development
- Reading Research Center



**\$120  
MILLION**

support literacy efforts

## Tennessee Early Literacy Funding



# Assessment and Parent Notification

Early literacy screenings help to identify students that may have a reading deficiency. A screening assessment is a “first alert” that a student may need extra help to make adequate progress in reading during the year. It also helps teachers tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. The screening should occur as soon as the school year begins to ensure students immediately receive the instruction and interventions they need.

## Universal and Dyslexia Screening Administration

The importance of early interventions for students with reading difficulties is critical. For early interventions to target areas of need, a student must first be identified as at-risk for a reading difficulty. This includes students who may have characteristics consistent with dyslexia. An approved universal literacy and dyslexia screener is a key step and integral part of identifying students at-risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.





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## How to Identify and Administer Universal and Dyslexia Screeners

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### STATE SPOTLIGHT: ARIZONA

In Arizona, dyslexia-specific legislation was married with previous literacy legislation, [Move on When Reading](#), for a comprehensive system that works seamlessly together. Through a request for information process, the Arizona Department of Education created an [approved list of tools](#) that met the [legislative requirements](#) for literacy and dyslexia screening. Schools may choose one of the approved tools for screening all K-3 students three times per year (fall, winter and spring). Each school shall use the diagnostic information to plan evidence-based, appropriate and effective instruction and intervention for all students.



### STATE SPOTLIGHT: SOUTH CAROLINA

To better serve students with dyslexia, the South Carolina Learning Disorders Task Force recommended the development of a statewide dyslexia handbook. In March 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education assembled a committee of representatives from the educational, medical and research fields to begin writing the handbook using a framework provided by the task force. The result is the [South Carolina Dyslexia Handbook: A Guide to Early Literacy Development and Reading](#),

which serves as a resource for educators on effective reading instruction and interventions for students. The handbook covers areas such as the qualities of effective Tier 1 (core) reading instruction; how to screen students for reading difficulties and progress monitor; and how educators can best serve students identified as having dyslexia or other reading difficulties. It also contains resources for parents as well as teacher professional development information.

# Parent Notification of Reading Deficiency

Involving parents from the beginning is critical to student success. Parents should be notified immediately if their child has been identified with a reading deficiency. Those parents will need to be part of instructional decisions for their child and also provided with support on how to help their child with literacy skills at home. Schools can continue to engage parents by communicating the student's progress with each progress report.



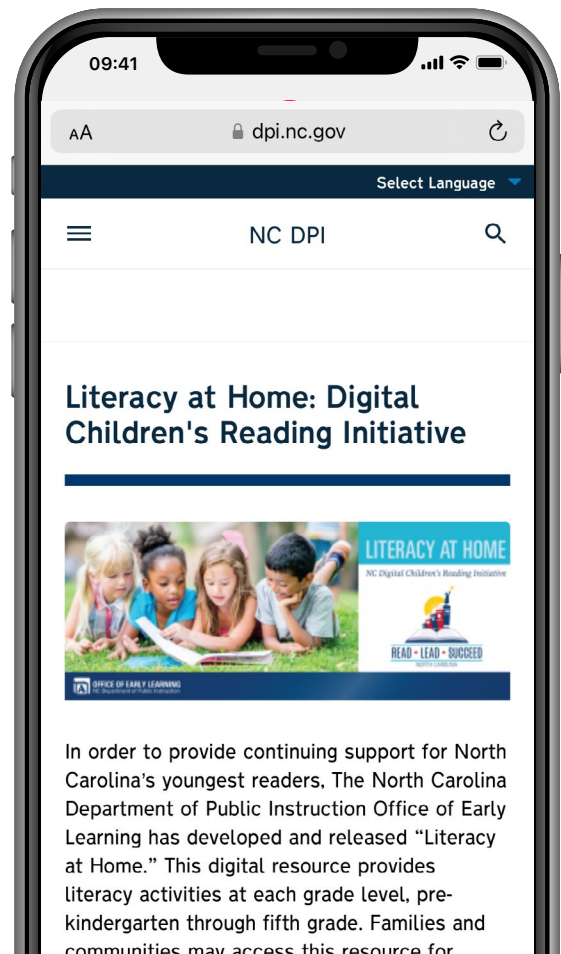
## How to Notify Parents/Guardians of a Child's Reading Deficiency and Available Supports



### STATE SPOTLIGHT: NORTH CAROLINA

In North Carolina, after a parent or guardian is given notice that his or her child has been identified as having difficulty with reading, the teacher develops an Individual Improvement Plan. The notice provides the following:

- Specific strategies that can be easily understood and implemented to assist the student in reading at grade level.
- Encouragement to select one or more strategies for use at home that build on the student's interests and are most likely to engage the student and result in reading improvement.
- Direction to the [Digital Children's Reading Initiative](#) for free online resources or to hard-copy literacy resources that are found on the school district's website.





## STATE SPOTLIGHT: CONNECTICUT

In Connecticut, schools regularly communicate with parents on reading instruction strategies and student reading performance goals. This includes opportunities for parents and guardians to partner with teachers and school administrators to improve reading at home and at school.

Alliance districts are required to create a reading plan, developed by a reading specialist, for each student in kindergarten through grade three who has been identified as reading below proficiency, with the goal to address and correct the reading deficiency.

The plan includes instructional strategies that utilize research-based reading instructional materials. It also includes teachers

trained in reading instruction, parental involvement in the implementation of the remediation plan and regular progress reports on the student.

The principal of each elementary school has the responsibility of notifying the parent or guardian of any student in kindergarten through grade three who has been identified as being below proficiency in reading. The notice includes:

- An explanation of why their student is below proficiency in reading.
- An explanation of how a plan will be developed for their student to provide supplemental reading instruction, including strategies for the parent or guardian to use at home.





# Instruction and Intervention

Increasing teachers' knowledge in the science of reading is a critical first step to ensuring that all children learn to read. Teachers must also be equipped with the tools and resources needed to prevent reading difficulties and to provide interventions for students who may be struggling in reading. Adopting a high-quality curriculum to guide Tier-I instruction, monitoring students' progress, providing opportunities for tutoring and/or summer programs, and engaging with parents and families early and often work together to provide a comprehensive support system for students.

## Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

The materials or core curricula that districts choose for reading instruction greatly impact student learning and teacher practice. High-quality instructional materials (HQIM) are aligned to the science of reading and to the respective state's standards. Investing in and adopting HQIM gives teachers access to quality content and quality assignments, significantly reducing the need for teachers to search for lower quality, and sometimes disconnected, assignments online (Opfer et al., 2016). The adoption must be accompanied by professional development that allows teachers to explore the materials, learn about the shifts in practice and increase their knowledge of high-leverage best practices for using HQIM.



# How to Identify and Adopt High-Quality Instructional Materials



## STATE SPOTLIGHT: NEBRASKA

Nebraska developed the [Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative](#) with the goal to increase the capacity of districts by highlighting high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials. The collaborative also creates opportunities for aligned professional development that ensures teachers can use the materials effectively. Through a clearly defined selection process, districts can determine how strongly instructional materials for English Language Arts are aligned to Nebraska's English

Language Arts (ELA) standards and how the materials support the instructional shifts. The collaborative also developed [Navigating the ELA Instructional Materials Process Guide](#), which provides key actions and considerations that can be adapted to meet local needs as districts navigate selection, adoption and implementation stages of high-quality instructional materials for English Language Arts.

## Individual Reading Plan/ Intervention for Students with a Reading Deficiency

Individual reading plans are created, in collaboration with the parent, for any student identified with a reading deficiency. The plan includes the intervention services the student will receive above and beyond regular reading instruction. It should also include strategies for parents to use at home with their child. This provides a tangible document that can and should be adjusted as the student makes progress.





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# How to Develop the Individual Reading Plan as an Intervention Strategy

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## STATE SPOTLIGHT: MICHIGAN

Michigan's Read by Grade Three law [requires](#) an [Individual Reading Intervention Plan \(IRIP\)](#) for all K-3 students who are behind in reading, prepared within 30 days after the identification of the reading deficiency. The IRIP is created in partnership with the student's teacher, school principal, parent or legal guardian and other

pertinent school personnel. The plan describes the reading intervention services and supports that the student will receive to remedy the reading deficiency. Teachers may use the [MiRead Tool](#), an online dashboard to collect data and create and track IRIP information.

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## Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring helps teachers track student progress in reading and adjust instruction to meet student needs in a timely manner. Students identified with a reading deficiency should be monitored more regularly to ensure interventions are working and the student is progressing at an accelerated rate to catch up with their peers. Monitoring the progress of students can take many forms and can be embedded in classroom instruction. If a student is not making progress, then the teacher adjusts instruction based on the data collected.



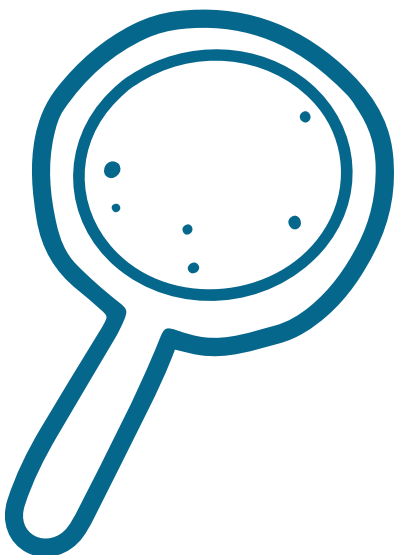


# How to Implement a Progress Monitoring System



## STATE SPOTLIGHT: CONNECTICUT

In 2021, the Connecticut Department of Education realized that no one assessment can meet the needs of all stakeholders. As a result, the state shifted their progress monitoring to a Sensible Assessment approach, with the goal of making high-quality instruction accessible to all students and involving parents and guardians in all phases of student learning and engagement. The Department of Education created a [Sensible Assessment Practices in Action](#) document and video series to offer guidance on how to “assess” incoming students without necessarily having to “test” using formal assessments. The resources are targeted for a diverse set of educators, including general and special education teachers, interventionists, instructional specialists and related service providers.



Below is the four-step process designed to reduce testing time, maximize instructional time and help accelerate student learning.

1

### REVIEW AVAILABLE INFORMATION

In lieu of conducting a separate assessment, educator teams review students’ existing data/information over the summer.

2

### BUILD NEW COMMUNITY AND ESTABLISH NORMS

At the start of the new school year, classroom teachers utilize a unit that is engaging and has a high probability of success. During this time, formative assessments are used to adjust instruction.

3

### SHIFT FULLY TO ON-GRADE INSTRUCTION WITH SCAFFOLDS AND SUPPORTS

Classroom teachers start this process with diagnostic assessments. Moving through the school year, differentiated instruction is provided so that all students are learning on grade level with the supports they need to be successful.

4

### ADMINISTER ON-GRADE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

The end of year assessment is administered to measure a student’s overall achievement on state standards.

## Interventions Before, During and/or After School

Research conducted by the National Academy Press and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement points to the importance of instructional time with a highly effective teacher. Learning is most likely to occur when students can work with reading materials through a mixture of

different learning environments and media. These interactions require additional instructional time, which schools must find ways to create. Providing interventions before/after school gives struggling readers the time they need, with targeted instruction to catch up with their peers.

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### How to Facilitate Interventions, Before, During and/After School

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#### STATE SPOTLIGHT: MICHIGAN

When a student is identified as needing an IRIP, the student must be provided [supplemental evidence-based reading intervention](#) delivered by a teacher, tutor or volunteer with specialized reading training. The intervention support can be provided before school, after school, during school hours (but outside of regular English language arts classroom time) or any combination of these.

Separate from Michigan's Read by Grade Three law, the State School Aid Act Section 35a(5) provides funding to districts through an [application process](#) to provide before, during and after school intervention for Pre-K to 3 students who are identified as having a reading deficiency.

These funds can be used for staffing, assessment costs, technology purchases, reading materials, professional development (up to 10%) and summer school.

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## Summer Reading Camps and Innovative Summer Reading Programs

Research shows that while academic gaps are relatively constant during the school year, they widen dramatically during the summer. Every summer, children in low-income families lose one to three months of reading skills and two months of math skills, while peers from higher income

families make slight gains. The cumulative, disproportionate impact of these losses can leave lower-income children more than two years behind by fifth grade. Reading skills that are lost during the summer slows progress toward reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

# How to Facilitate Summer Reading Camps



## STATE SPOTLIGHT: TENNESSEE

In 2021, Tennessee passed the [Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act](#), which established summer and after-school learning opportunities for students entering 1st-5th grade in 2021 and 2022. The law also created a summer bridge camp for students entering 6-8th grade in 2021 and 2022. The bridge

camp includes students entering 4-8th grade beginning in 2023 with a focus on students who do not score proficient in English language arts and mathematics. A “[Summer Learning Camp](#)” is a six-week summer educational program that is designed to support student academic needs and remediate student learning loss.

## Parent Resources/Parent Read-at-Home Plan

Home reading strategies and programs help parents support their child’s literacy skill development at home. These strategies/programs and resources can include a “Read-at-Home” plan outlined in a parental contract, an Individual Reading Plan, participation in parent training workshops and/or regular parent-guided home reading activities. These home reading strategies/programs should be provided to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading difficulty and to parents of students who may face retention in third grade.





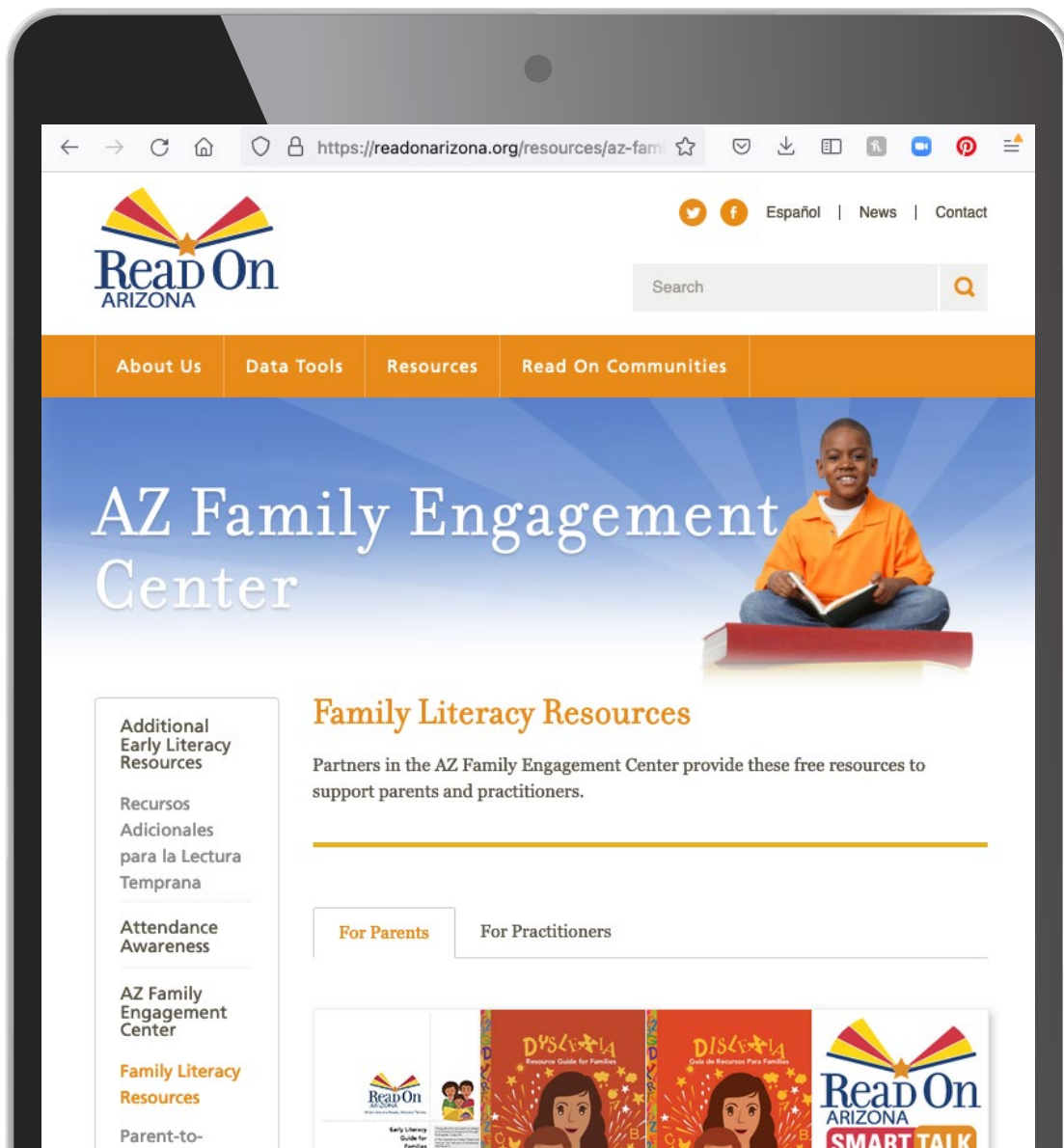


## STATE SPOTLIGHT: ARIZONA

### Parent Resources & Parent Read-at-Home Plan

Arizona believes that families play a crucial role in helping support foundational early reading skills and have developed activities and resources that can be utilized at home year round.

[Building Blocks to Becoming a Better Reader](#)  
[Early Literacy Guide for Families](#)  
[Dyslexia Guide for Families](#)  
[Virtual Statewide Family Engagement Center](#)



# Retention and Intensive Intervention

Retention provides struggling readers the additional time and intensive interventions they need to catch up with their peers. Any student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided—and does not meet a good cause exemption—is retained. These students have been identified as severely below grade level (scoring at the lowest achievement level on the statewide assessment) and would greatly benefit from an additional year of more intensive interventions with a highly effective teacher.

## 3rd Grade Promotion/Retention Policy

Students who are retained in third grade need more time, with more intensive interventions provided by a highly effective teacher, to catch up with their peers. Such interventions include more dedicated time for daily reading intervention, before and after-school tutoring, summer reading camps, more frequent progress monitoring, a reading mentor and a parent home reading plan. Together, a combination of these interventions can help every student become a successful lifelong reader. Retention coupled with intensive support is the last intervention at the end of the K-3 intervention pipeline to ensure students are on the path to learn, graduate and succeed.



# How to Implement a Third Grade Promotion/Retention Component of a Comprehensive Literacy Policy



## STATE SPOTLIGHT: FLORIDA

In Florida, no student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion. If a student scores in the lowest performance level on the state assessment, the parent or guardian will be notified by the school that their child will not be promoted to grade 4 until they achieve the required reading level.

Students who are retained must be given intensive instruction in reading to help them catch up. Families are provided information about the intensive instruction that will help their student make progress in reading. The school district provides schools and teachers with additional supports for implementation of those reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students with reading difficulties. Intensive reading intervention should continue until the deficiency is remedied as determined by assessment data.

The district school board may only exempt students from mandatory retention for good cause. A student who is promoted to grade 4 with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention. This should include specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student. Further, the school district provides supports to schools and teachers with implementation of explicit, systematic and multisensory reading instruction and intervention strategies for these students. The instruction and strategies are based on research showing them to be successful in improving reading among students who have reading difficulties.







## STATE SPOTLIGHT: MISSISSIPPI

In 2013, Mississippi implemented the [Literacy Based Promotion Act](#) (LBPA) with the goal to improve the reading skills of all Kindergarten through third grade students so that every child reads at or above grade level by the end of third grade. The Magnolia State begins this process early with a Kindergarten readiness assessment given in the beginning of the year and the end of the year to measure growth. A universal screener is administered to first, second, and third grade students three times per year to track progress. If a child is identified with a reading deficiency at any time, the family is immediately notified and support, such as an individualized reading plan, is created. Families are also given strategies and resources to support reading at home. In third grade, all students take the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) ELA Assessment. Those who do not score proficient or above the lowest two achievement levels (level 3, 4, or 5) are retained.

Retention is not a simple repeat of the third grade. Students receive intensive supports like 90 minutes of core reading instruction from a teacher trained in the science of reading, intensive interventions, progress monitoring, small group instruction and Summer Reading Camps.

For students who do not pass the assessment at or above the level for promotion, the school district can promote a student for meeting one of the following Good Cause Exemptions:

- 1 Limited English proficient students who have had less than two years of instruction in an English Learner program;
- 2 Students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law;
- 3 Students with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who have an IEP or a Section 504 Plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading or previously was retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade;
- 4 Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education; and
- 5 Students who have received intensive intervention in reading for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who previously were retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade for a total of two (2) years and have not met exceptional education criteria.

# Research on the Promotion/Retention Component of a Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy.

## Key Findings from Paul Perrault & Marcus Winters, Test-Based Promotion and Student Performance in Florida and Arizona, 2020:

Introducing third-grade test-based promotion policies in Florida and Arizona led to statistically significant and meaningful average test-score improvements within the third grade before the policy retained any students.



## Key Findings from Marcus A. Winters, The Costs and Benefits of Test-Based Promotion, 2018:

- The threat of retention led to statistically significant and substantial increases in student math and reading performance within the third grade, prior to the retention decision.
- On average, treatment under the policy led to significant and substantial gains in eighth grade math and reading test scores, and it increased the probability that students earn a regular diploma.
- The cost of test-based promotion for both taxpayers and treated students is substantially less than suggested in prior research.
- For treated students, the expected later increase in earnings due to the policy is greater than the lost earnings due to foregone time in the labor market.
- The statewide net increase in the expected present value of lifetime earnings associated with the policy far exceeds its costs to taxpayers.

## Key Findings from Guido Schwerdt, Martin West & Marcus Winters, The Effects of Test-based Retention on Student Outcomes Over Time: Regression Discontinuity Evidence from Florida, 2017:

- Retention in third grade reduced retention probabilities in future years.
- After six years, the achievement gains from retention remain substantial when compared to peers in the same grade.
- Retention in third grade increased students' high school GPAs and led them to take fewer remedial courses.
- Retention under Florida's third grade policy has no negative impact on graduation.

