



# Early Literacy Matters

## State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Connecticut's adoption and implementation of the 18 Early Literacy Fundamental Principles.






CT

PRINCIPLE ADOPTION  
IMPLEMENTATION



# Early Literacy Policy Implementation Rubric

Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy establishes support and intensive reading interventions for all K–3 students to ensure they read on grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The policy also requires 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. For students severely below grade level and who do not qualify for a good cause exemption, retention provides struggling readers the additional time and intensive interventions they need to catch up with their peers.

 <p><b>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</p> <p> <b>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</b> This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</p>
 <p><b>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</p>
 <p><b>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</p>
 <p><b>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is not adopted in policy, does not meet minimum implementation requirements or is grant-based and not sustainable.</p>

# Early Literacy Policy Implementation Rubric

## PURPOSE

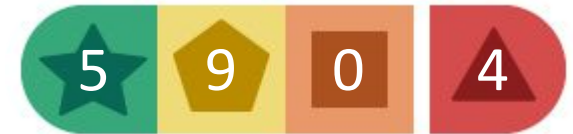
The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of states' implementation of K–3 reading policies aligned to ExcelinEd's [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy. It builds on an analysis of states' adoption of statutes and regulations establishing requirements for each component of the four fundamental principle areas, which are:

1. [Supports for Teachers & Policy](#)
2. [Assessment & Parent Notification](#)
3. [Instruction & Intervention](#)
4. [Retention & Intensive Intervention](#)

This report summarizes evidence of Connecticut's early literacy policy implementation using an implementation rubric designed to gauge state progress toward full implementation of early literacy policies. Each of the fundamental principles is addressed in a separate table.

## ADOPTION IMPLEMENTATION

14 out of 18



### STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [Connecticut Statutes Chapter 163c Education Evaluation and Remedial Assistance](#)
- [Connecticut Right to Read Act](#)
- [CSDE, Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success](#)
- [CSDE, Reading Leadership Implementation Council](#)
- [Connecticut's K–3 Literacy Strategy](#)

# Science of Reading (SOR) Training



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state offers science of reading professional development or requires districts to adopt a policy to identify science of reading training, providers of the training, and personnel who will be trained. Participation in science of reading training may be optional for teachers and/or administrators.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state’s policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut HAS designed a free professional learning series for K–3 teachers to support the comprehensive reading instruction in the state called [ReadConn](#), which focuses on instruction aligned to the science of reading and provides training for school teams, including administrators, literacy leaders, and educators in cohorts for one school year. (See also [CSDE, Professional Learning Opportunities: ReadCONN Professional Learning Series 2.0](#))
- Connecticut HAS created the [Science of Reading Masterclass](#) for statewide professional learning and coaching on the science of reading. ([Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Science of Reading](#))
- Connecticut DOES provide for Affinity Group meetings for district and school administrators, coaches, teachers, and specialists to help in navigating digital platforms and materials of Connecticut-approved K–3 literacy curriculum models or programs. According to the state, through these groups, participants “examine their scope and sequences, resources, instructional routines, and assessments through an evidence-aligned lens.” ([CSDE, Professional Learning Opportunities: RESC Alliance Science of Reading Affinity Groups](#))
- Connecticut DOES also offer professional learning opportunities through work with TNTP and WestEd. ([CSDE, Professional Learning Opportunities](#))

# Science of Reading (SOR) Training

**CONTINUED**

## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

#### NOTEWORTHY

The following aspects of the state’s work are particularly noteworthy:

- Since 2012, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) along with literacy partners (e.g., the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the Connecticut General Assembly, the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, HILL for Literacy, and Literacy How) have worked to implement and refine an [intensive reading intervention strategy](#) to serve as a model for use by schools. Connecticut’s Literacy Model (CTLM) Strategy, previously called the CT K–3 Intensive Reading Strategy, continues to be updated annually to include priority goals and actions that reading research has identified as effective for improving reading outcomes for Kindergarten–3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, including students with special needs and multilingual learners. During the 2022–23 school year, 117 schools across nine Alliance Districts received extensive support in implementing a district-wide, multi-tiered K–3 reading school improvement model in support of increasing students’ literacy achievement.

#### RESOURCES

- [CSDE, ReadConn: A K–3 Reading Skills Professional Learning Series – Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [CSDE, The Science of Reading: Literacy Look-Fors Walk Through Guide](#)
- [CSDE, Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, Professional Learning Opportunities](#)

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should expand policy to require that all K–3 teachers and administrators *must complete* state-adopted science of reading training.

# Literacy Coaches



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Literacy coaches are present in policy and trained in the science of reading, and they may provide job-embedded professional development and coaching to K–3 teachers based on student data or other models.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state’s policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES provide for literacy leaders and coaches through the ReadConn program, Masterclass, and CTLM professional learning programs. Literacy leaders are school-based individuals with a formal literacy role, responsible for supporting K–3 teachers in their professional learning in reading skills and knowledge. ([CSDE, ReadConn: A K–3 Reading Skills Professional Learning Series – Frequently Asked Questions](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should ensure that a literacy coach that is trained in the science of reading is *assigned to each elementary school* to provide job-embedded professional development and coaching to K–3 teachers.

# Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Alignment



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

EPP required coursework is aligned to the science of reading and includes evidence-based literacy instruction.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that align to the science of reading. ([NCTQ Connecticut Summary 2023](#))
- Connecticut DOES require, through [law](#), the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success to serve as a collaborative center for institutions of higher education and make available to faculty of teacher preparation programs the science of teaching reading, the intensive reading instruction program, and samples of recommended curriculum models or programs.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should mandate that EPP required coursework be aligned to the science of reading and prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing instructional strategies.
- Connecticut should expand policy to specify that EPP required coursework must include evidence-based literacy instruction, as well as how to administer reading assessments, and how to identify students with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

# Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Assessment



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

Elementary education candidates *must pass a science of reading aligned assessment to obtain teacher licensure.*

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut DOES require candidates to pass a licensure test that addresses reading: Foundations of Reading. ([NCTQ Connecticut Summary 2023](#); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states' licensure tests don't signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction \(Nov. 2023\)](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Funding for Literacy Efforts



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Funding is dedicated to some but not all early literacy fundamental principles and may be temporary or grant based.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of SOME early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  - \$2,215,782 for FY24 and FY25 to support early literacy Connecticut literacy model work

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should determine the adequate funding level to ensure implementation of the fundamental principles are fully funded.



# Universal Reading Screener



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

A state-approved universal reading screener is administered to K–3 students three times per year to identify students at risk for reading failure.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state’s policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut HAS created a vetted and approved list of research-based reading assessments that must be used for districts for K–3 students. ([CSDE, Literacy/English Language Arts](#))
- Connecticut DOES require schools to administer the universal literacy screener three times per year – in the fall, winter, and spring of each school year. For Priority Districts, K–3 reading assessment results must be submitted to the state multiple times per year. ([CSDE, K–3 Literacy Assessment](#))
- Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, the state WILL begin collecting universal screening assessment data. ([EdSight, Kindergarten–Grade 3 Assessments](#); see also [CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.



# Screeners for Characteristics of Dyslexia



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

A state-approved screener for characteristics of dyslexia assesses the following skills as developmentally appropriate: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, rapid naming, encoding and oral reading fluency.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state’s policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut HAS adopted approved screeners to “assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities”. ([Special Considerations for Dyslexia](#))
- Connecticut HAS created a vetted and approved list of research-based reading assessments that must be used for districts for K–3 students. ([CSDE, Literacy/English Language Arts](#))
- The approved screeners DO measure oral language, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and rapid automatic naming or letter name fluency. ([CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))
- Universal screening and progress monitoring of all students MUST occur on a regular basis, using the same universal screening measures, to assist in the identification of those experiencing reading difficulties, on a routine basis (i.e., fall, winter, and spring). ([CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Question \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Parental Notification



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

States require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties based on the state-approved universal reading screener and/or dyslexia screener results. Timeline and frequency of parental notification may vary.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES require parent notification for local and regional boards of education designated as Priority School Districts. ([CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))
  - Connecticut explains that [Priority School District](#) grant programs help school districts improve student achievement and enhance educational opportunities, including early reading intervention programs.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should require schools to notify parents when a student has been identified as having a reading deficiency within 30 days of identification.

# District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION: Above & Beyond

The *state requires* school districts to adopt high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading and state standards *from a vetted and approved list*. *Districts and/or state must post their adopted materials on the district website*.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state’s policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut DOES require schools and districts to adopt high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading and state standards. ([CSDE, Connecticut’s Approved K–3 Reading Curriculum Models, Programs, and Compendiums](#))
- Connecticut HAS created a [vetted and approved](#) list of high-quality curriculum models or programs for use by districts until 2027, which was created through the [PreK–3 Reading Connecticut Review Process to Evaluate Curricula and Programs](#) (Reading CORE).
- Connecticut DOES require, pursuant to [law](#), each local and regional board of education to notify the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success which reading curriculum model or program that the board is implementing.
- Connecticut HAS created a [waiver process](#) to allow local and regional boards of education to implement a reading curriculum model or program other than the model or program that has been vetted and approved by the state. The program for which the waiver is requested must be evidence-based and scientifically based and aligned with the science of reading. (See [CSDE, Guidance Regarding the 2022 Application Requesting a Waiver of Connecticut Approved K–3 Reading Curriculum Model or Program \(Waiver\)](#)).
- By 2025 and biennially thereafter, Connecticut [policy](#) WILL require the CSDE to receive and publicly report the reading curriculum model or program being implemented by each local and regional board of education.

# District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

CONTINUED



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION: Above & Beyond

#### RESOURCES

- [CSDE, Guidance for Selecting, Piloting, or Implementing a CT-Approved K–3 Reading Model, Program, or Compendium](#)

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

The state has not adopted policy (statute or regulation) that meets the fundamental principle for this area.

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut HAS NOT adopted a policy that bans three-cueing instructional materials.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing as part of their comprehensive literacy policy.

# Individual Reading Plans



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires schools to develop and implement an individual reading plan for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency based upon screening results. Timeline and monitoring may vary.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES require schools to establish individual reading plans where a student is identified as having a reading deficiency and where the local and regional boards of education are designated as Priority School Districts. ([CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))
  - Connecticut explains that [Priority School District](#) grant programs help school districts improve student achievement and enhance educational opportunities, including early reading intervention programs.
- Connecticut DOES provide a template and guidance on considerations for the individual reading plan. ([CSDE, Individual Reading Plan Template for Grades K–5](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should make clear that the individual reading plans that are required for students identified as having reading deficiencies, must be created *within 30 days* of receiving results from the literacy screeners.
- Connecticut should establish a timeline for parent notifications of the development of the plan.

# Regularly Monitor Student Progress



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires schools to regularly monitor and document students' progress within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and utilize the data to inform instruction and interventions as needed and in a timely manner. Monitoring can take many forms (i.e., observations, screeners, assessments, and student work).

### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut DOES require progress monitoring of students to occur on a regular basis, using progress monitoring tools that are relatively quick assessments and administered frequently to inform further instruction and interventions. ([CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))
- Connecticut DOES provide a template and guidance on considerations for the individual reading plan, which includes information on progress monitoring for each student. ([CSDE, Individual Reading Plan Template for Grades K–5](#))

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Evidence-Based Interventions



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires school districts to target students' needs by adopting evidence-based interventions grounded in the science of reading and may provide guidance in the selection of the interventions. Interventions are provided before, during, or after school.

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut DOES require school districts to adopt interventions for students who have an individual reading plan. ([CSDE, Individual Reading Plan Template for Grades K-5](#))

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should establish a vetted and approved list of interventions to be used before, during, or after school to target student needs.

# Summer Reading Camps



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires districts to offer summer reading camps to students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.

### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

**Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:**

- Connecticut DOES require *Priority School Districts* to provide summer school, based on the end-of-the-year assessment. ([CSDE, Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) \(Revised 11/24/2025\)](#))
  - Connecticut explains that [Priority School District](#) grant programs help school districts improve student achievement and enhance educational opportunities, including early reading intervention programs.
- Connecticut [law](#) DOES require the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success to oversee the intensive reading instruction program that includes an intensive summer school reading program.

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should require the intensive summer school reading instruction programs to be offered to *any* student in 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> grade who have been identified as having a reading deficiency to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills, not just to those students who are in Priority School Districts.

# Parent Read-At-Home Plan



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state or district provides online resources to parents to support reading at home.

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

##### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES provide [online resources](#) for parents, including videos for parents and other resources and guidance focused on literacy. (See also [CSDE, CT Learning Hub, Connecticut Partnership for Literacy Success, CSDE, Literacy/English Language Arts: Related Resources](#))
- The Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success DID [partner](#) with the State Education Resource Center to provide families with literacy training and informational opportunities, which include high-quality multilingual materials to support reading at home, workshops, and support to meet families' needs.
- Connecticut DOES provide [literacy tips](#) for families, including resources on how to support reading at home and a guide to help parents communicate with teachers about reading.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should require read-at-home plans to be implemented in students' individual reading plans when a student has been identified as having a reading deficiency.

## Initial Determinant Retention at 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Based on State Assessment



### IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

#### PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

The state has not adopted policy (statute or regulation) that meets the fundamental principle for this area.

### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

#### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES NOT have a policy that requires a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options be retained.

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should adopt policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills (on the state test-based options provided) be retained. Policy should include multiple pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment or qualifying for a good cause exemption.

# Multiple Options for Promotion



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

The state has not adopted policy (statute or regulation) that meets the fundamental principle for this area.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES NOT have a retention policy and DOES NOT offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should adopt policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills (on the state test-based options provided) be retained. Policy should include at least three pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or successfully demonstrating sufficient 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work.

# Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

The state has not adopted policy (statute or regulation) that meets the fundamental principle for this area.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

### Evidence of the state's policy implementation and/or guidance in this area includes:

- Connecticut DOES NOT have a retention policy and DOES NOT allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should adopt policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills (on the state test-based options provided) be retained. Policy should include specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade that recognize the special needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who were previously retained.
- Connecticut should further require intensive interventions to continue in 4<sup>th</sup> grade for students promoted for good cause.

