Early Literacy Matters

State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Connecticut’s adoption and implementation of the 18 Early Literacy Fundamental Principles.
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 3rd grade. The policy also requires 3rd grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to 4th 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.

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

**STATE POLICY ADOPTION**

- 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. (CSDE, ReadConn: K–3 Reading Skills Professional Development Series)

- Connecticut HAS partnered with the Region 2 Comprehensive Center to provide professional learning and site-based coaching on evidence-based literacy structures and practices in a cohort of five small districts in the state. (CSDE, Professional Learning Opportunities: Region 2 Comprehensive Center (R2CC) Networked Improvement Community)

- 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 require all districts and charter schools receiving funds from the ARPA Right to Read Grant to establish leadership literacy teams that attend and complete 10 days of professional learning provided by the Connecticut Literacy Model team that is aligned to the science of reading and includes training relating to the creation of a district literacy plan. (CSDE, Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, Information for ARPA Right to Read Grant Recipients)
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–3rd grade students, including students with special needs and multilingual learners (MLs). 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)

- Connecticut DOES require all districts who are in the ARPA-Right to Read Leadership training to be provided with professional learning specifically focused on supporting literacy coaches. (CSDE, Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, Information for ARPA Right to Read Grant Recipients)

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](https://www.nctq.org/research-reports/ct-022023))
- 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 prohibit the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
- 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.
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.
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:
  - $20 million in federal funds (ARPA) to support scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning in Kindergarten–3rd grade. CSDE, Connecticut’s Approved K–3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs Guidance provides that funding may be used for:
    - Universal screening reading assessments, curriculum models and programs, professional learning;
    - Establishing a district leadership literacy team;
    - Establishing a school-based literacy leadership team; and
    - Creating a district literacy plan and other supports.
  - $2,215,782 for FY24 and FY25 to support early literacy Connecticut literacy model work
  - Funds for the ARP ESSER Small Town - Right to Read Grant to assist in the establishment of Kindergarten–3rd grade scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning aligned to Connecticut’s Grades K–3 Literacy Strategy (small towns are those districts with total enrollment in 2022-23 less than 1,000 students)
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 approved universal reading screeners for K–3 students. (CSDE, Literacy/English Language Arts)
- 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, Literacy/English Language Arts)
- Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, the state MAY begin collecting universal screening assessment data; the state encourages local and regional boards of education to retain assessment data at the district and school level until such time as the CSDE begins to collect assessment data. (CSDE, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions)
**Screener 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; CSDE, Literacy/English Language Arts)

- 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 measure phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and rapid automatic naming or letter name fluency. (CSDE, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions)

- 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, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions)
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, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions)
  • 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.
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 (note that the implementation timeline for these requirements for some schools and districts is adoption by 2025). (CSDE, Connecticut’s Approved K–3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs)

• 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.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION: Above & Beyond

RESOURCES

• CSDE, 2022 Guidelines for Open Review Period for Grades Pre-Kindergarten to Three Reading Curricula and/or Programs

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.
Individually 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, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions)

  - 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, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions](#))

• 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](#))
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, Grades K–3: Universal Screening Reading Assessments Frequently Asked Questions](#))
  - 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 1st–4th 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 minimal online resources for parents. (See also CSDE, CT Learning Hub, Connecticut Partnership for Literacy Success, CSDE, Literacy/English Language Arts: Related Resources)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Connecticut should provide a dedicated website for resources for parents to support reading at home.
- 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 3rd 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 HAS NOT established policy, in statute or regulation, relating to 3rd grade retention.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Connecticut should establish retention policies in 3rd grade for students who are not able to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options.
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 HAS NOT established policy, in statute or regulation, relating to 3rd grade retention.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Connecticut should consider establishing retention policies for students who are not able to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options, which would also include establishing multiple options for promotion.
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 HAS NOT established policy, in statute or regulation, relating to 3rd grade retention.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Connecticut should consider establishing retention policies for students who are not able to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options, which would also include establishing good cause exemptions for some students.