Explore Georgia’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>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<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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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 Georgia’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.

ADOPITION IMPLEMENTATION

15 out of 18

STATE POLICY ADOPTION
REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Georgia Code (through Lexis) (see 20-2-153.1 Georgia Early Literacy)
- Georgia Department of Education, Literacy
- Georgia Department of Education, Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading (L4GA)
- Georgia Department of Education, Literacy and Striving Readers Grant
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: State-adopted science of reading training is required for all K–3 teachers and administrators, and an implementation plan for rollout is clearly communicated to all educators.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• By July 1, 2025, Georgia WILL require all K–3 teachers to complete a state-approved literacy training program. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

• Georgia HAS partnered with the Rollins Center to provide a free professional learning opportunity for educators focused on structured literacy. (GADOE, Professional Learning Opportunities)

NOTEWORTHY

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

• Through statute, Georgia created a Council on Literacy tasked with making recommendations for the professional development needed for current teachers for improving literacy instruction in the state.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Georgia should expand its policy to require that all K–3 administrators complete a state-approved literacy training program.
Literacy Coaches

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:

- Georgia HAS NOT established a literacy coach position in policy.
- Georgia regulations DO establish the Literacy Specialist designation that can be added to certificates through the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, which allows individuals to support and work collaboratively to implement effective literacy strategies and quality literacy programs in PreKindergarten–12th grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Georgia should provide for literacy coaches in policy and 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:

- Georgia regulations relating to program content and curriculum requirements DO require GaPSC-approved EPPs to ensure that candidates seeking certification demonstrate the appropriate level of competence in the teaching of reading, described in regulations relating to the Foundations of Reading, Literacy and Language.

- By Fall 2024, Georgia regulations relating to the Foundations of Reading, Literacy and Language WILL require EPPs preparing candidates to teach early childhood, elementary students and students with disabilities to incorporate standards aligned to the science of reading for programs leading to initial teacher certifications.

- Georgia regulations DO require GaPSC-approved EPPs to require candidates to demonstrate knowledge of dyslexia and other related disorders, competence in the use of evidence-based instruction, structured multisensory approaches to teaching language and reading skills, accommodations for students displaying characteristics of dyslexia, and competence in the use of multi-tiered system of supports framework addressing reading, writing, mathematics and behavior, which includes universal screening, scientific, research-based interventions and progress monitoring.

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- Georgia should expand the coursework it requires of EPPs to prohibit the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
**Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Assessment**

**IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

**FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION**

**EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE**

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

- By July 1, 2025, GaPSC WILL require that the GACE align with developmentally appropriate evidence-based literacy instruction. ([GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices](https://www.gadoe.org))

- Georgia currently DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading: Georgia’s Assessments for the Certifications of Educators (GACE) Elementary Education Assessment, Test 1; however this licensure test DOES NOT adequately address all required components of the science of reading. ([NCTQ, Georgia Summary 2023](https://www.nctq.org) ; [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023)](https://www.nctq.org))

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
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:

• Georgia DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of SOME early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  • Funds for costs of the dyslexia screening requirement in the FY24 budget ($3.5 million)
  • Grant funds have been awarded to improve literacy through the Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading Grant (L4GA) ($179,174,766 over five years)
  • Contracts between the Georgia Department of Education and Regional Service Agencies to provide literacy professional learning (LETRS, Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading) for rural school districts

RESOURCES

• GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Georgia should determine the adequate funding level to ensure implementation of the fundamental principles are fully funded.
Universal Reading Screener

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Beginning in the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia WILL require in newly adopted regulations all students in Kindergarten–3rd grade to be screened three times per year using the state-adopted universal reading screener.

• Georgia HAS adopted a list of universal reading screener providers.

RESOURCES

• GADOE, Literacy
• GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Beginning in 2024–2025, Georgia WILL require LEAs to annually conduct universal screening of all students in Kindergarten–3rd grade for characteristics of dyslexia.
- The Georgia State Board HAS adopted a list of qualified dyslexia screening tools to be used by school districts for the identification of students with characteristics of dyslexia.
- Georgia DOES require each of the dyslexia screeners on the state’s adopted list screen for the following: phonological awareness and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, encoding skills, rapid naming, accuracy of word reading on grade-level text and sight word reading efficiency skills.
- By June 2025, Georgia WILL monitor district compliance with dyslexia screenings as school districts will be required to provide data to the Department relating to dyslexia screenings. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

RESOURCES

- GADOE, Dyslexia
- GADOE, Literacy
- GADOE, Georgia Reading and Dyslexia Screening Process (August 2023)
- GADOE, Characteristics of Dyslexia Rubric
- GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
Parental Notification

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Beginning in the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia policy WILL require schools and districts to report the results of the administration of the universal screener to parents and guardians of students who participated in the administration.

• Beginning in the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia policy WILL require schools to provide notice to parents when students are identified as having a significant reading deficiency within 15 days of identification.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: 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 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:

• By January 1, 2024, the Georgia State Board MUST adopt a list of high-quality instructional materials for K–3 reading. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

• Georgia HAS established a partnership with the Georgia Language Arts Supervisors (GLAS) to vet instructional materials. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

• Beginning in the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia WILL require all school districts to use instructional programs and interventions aligned to foundational literacy skills and the science of reading. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

• Georgia WILL require each public school and system to annually certify they are using high-quality instructional materials (details not yet provided). (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

• Georgia DOES encourage schools and districts to align supplemental materials for K–3 reading to the definition of high-quality instructional materials to ensure a more cohesive instructional program. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Georgia should expand policy to require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.
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:
- Georgia HAS NOT adopted a policy that bans three-cueing instructional materials.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Georgia should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing as part of their comprehensive literacy policy.
Full implementation of this principle requires the following: The state requires schools to develop and implement an individual reading plan for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency within 30 days of receiving screening results. There is an established process for monitoring the implementation of those plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plan.

Evidence/Guidance

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

- In the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia WILL require schools to implement tiered reading intervention plans for K–3 students who exhibit a significant reading deficiency on a screener within 30 days of a student being identified. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

- Georgia WILL require the reading intervention plan to describe the evidence-based interventions that will be used. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)

- Georgia WILL allow LEAs to use existing MTSS frameworks and processes. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)
Regularly Monitor Student Progress

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- When Georgia implements the reading interventions plans in the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia WILL allow LEAs to use existing MTSS frameworks and processes in providing evidence-based interventions to students per the students’ reading intervention plans. (GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices)
- Georgia HAS adopted a list of universal reading screener providers which law requires each to be capable of progress monitoring.

RESOURCES

- GADOE, Characteristics of Dyslexia Rubric
- GADOE, Links to Key GaDOE Resources for Dyslexia and MTSS at a Glance

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
Evidence-Based Interventions

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- By the 2024–2025 school year, Georgia WILL require LEAs to use interventions aligned to foundational literacy skills and the science of reading. ([GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices](#))

- Georgia WILL monitor this requirement for interventions by requiring LEAs to use interventions aligned to the science of reading in order to receive early intervention program funding. ([GADOE, Aligning State Literacy Policies & Practices](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
Summer Reading Camps

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:

- Georgia DOES NOT have a policy requiring districts to offer summer reading camps for students in 1st–4th grade who are at risk of reading failure.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Georgia should expand policy to require districts to offer summer reading camps for students in 1st–4th grade at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills. Further, any staff for these summer reading camps should be trained in the science of reading.
Parent Read-At-Home Plan

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Beginning August 1, 2024, Georgia WILL require that notice to parents of students who exhibit a significant reading deficiency must include strategies for parents to use at home to help their child succeed in reading.

• Georgia DOES provide resources to parents and families through the Get Georgia Reading At Home page.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
Initial Determinant Retention at 3rd Grade Based on State Assessment

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires that a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided – and does not meet a good cause exemption – to be retained.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Georgia law and rules DO require students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided to be retained. (GADOE, Promotion and Retention Guidance)

- Georgia policy DOES provide that principals or designees may retain students who perform satisfactorily on the state-adopted assessment but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established by the local board of education.

RESOURCES

- GADOE, Model Policy: Promotion and Retention of Students in Grades 1-8

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
Multiple Options for Promotion

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state offers at least three pathways to promotion to 4th grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or successfully demonstrating sufficient 3rd grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Georgia law DOES offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade, including by achieving a predetermined level on the state assessment; the retest of an end-of-grade assessment or alternative assessment; the opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• While Georgia does meet full implementation of this principle, the state should consider allowing 3rd grade students to successfully demonstrate sufficient reading skills through a portfolio of student work.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state permits districts to determine good cause exemptions for some students who do not demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state-based option for promotion to 4th grade.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Georgia policy DOES establish a placement committee, comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s) and principal or designee, which must come to a unanimous decision to promote students during a meeting. Discussion during this meeting may include the possibility of promotion through good cause exemptions. (State Contact Review (2023))

• Georgia policy DOES specify that the unanimous decision of promotion by the placement committee must include a determination that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the school year.

• Georgia policy DOES require the placement committee to provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent year in order to monitor the progress of the student.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Georgia should expand policy and specifically provide for good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade, including exemptions that recognize the special needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners and students who were previously retained.