



Early Literacy Matters






State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Hawaii'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.

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|  <p>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</p> | <p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</p> <p> ABOVE & BEYOND BADGE: This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</p> |
|  <p>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</p> | <p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</p> |
|  <p>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</p> | <p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</p> |
|  <p>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</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

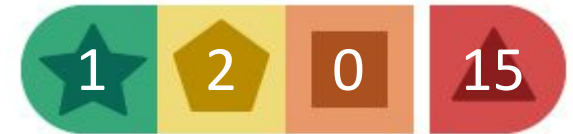
The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of states' implementation of K–3 reading policies aligned to ExcelinEd's [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy. It builds on an analysis of states' adoption of statutes and regulations establishing requirements for each component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

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STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [Hawaii State Board Policy 102-2 K–12 Literacy](#)
- [Hawaii State Literacy Plan 2020](#)
- [Hawaii State Department of Education, Literacy Levers](#)

Science of Reading (SOR) Training



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:

- Hawaii DOE’s Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design DOES currently offer [LETRS training](#) to teachers. Hawaii DOES NOT require K–3 teachers and administrators to participate in state-adopted science of reading training. Teacher participation in LETRS is voluntary.
- Hawaii IS offering all K–5 educators the opportunity to take the Cox Campus [structured literacy course](#) and this will be required for any teachers in schools that are awarded CLSD grant funding.
- Hawaii’s Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design WILL offer professional development for all instructional coaches, using funds from the [2024–2029 CLSD grant](#). This will be open to all literacy coaches in the state.
- The state identified Science of Reading Training as a key action in the state’s Literacy Levers – within this key action, the Department of Education DOES [commit](#) to training practicing teachers and principals in the science of reading for implementing structured literacy instruction; and to providing the statewide infrastructure needed for training of new teachers as they are hired.
- Hawaii HAS created a Multi-Tiered Support System to support students academically through evidence-based practices. AIM Institute IS an approved vendor for the state’s [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading and a Structured Approach to Literacy](#) – professional learning through AIM will support educators as they prepare to administer screening assessments and instruction.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should adopt policy to require all K–3 teachers and administrators to participate in state-adopted science of reading training.
- In adopting this policy, Hawaii should ensure there is an implementation plan for rollout that is clearly communicated to all educators.

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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT provide for literacy coaches in policy.
- The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design (OCID) IS offering [professional development](#) for all literacy coaches using funds from the 2024–2029 CLSD grant – this training is open to all coaches, not just those schools receiving grant funding. OCID WILL be offering the coaching academy again in school year 2026–2027.
- The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design HAS created resources to support literacy coaching, including the [Literacy Coaching Guide](#).
- The state identified Literacy Coaches as a key action in the state's Literacy Levers – within this key action, the Department of Education DOES [commit](#) to ensuring all schools have access to a highly trained coach. The Department also commits to developing a statewide Literacy Coach Academy to support professional development and promote job-embedded learning.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Alignment



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:

- Hawaii DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that list the core components of scientifically based reading; however, the standards DO NOT go into detail on the components. ([NCTQ, Hawaii Summary 2023](#))
- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES indicate education preparation providers must show evidence that their candidates are prepared to incorporate certain areas into their practice, such as “teaching of reading including working with students of reading difficulties.”

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should expand policy to require that EPP required coursework for elementary, early childhood, and special education candidates is aligned to the science of reading and prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
- Hawaii should further ensure coursework includes evidence-based literacy instruction, how to administer reading assessments, and how to identify students with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) 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:

- Hawaii DOES provide for a licensure test that addresses reading: Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects, Reading and Language Arts subtest; however, this licensure test DOES NOT adequately address all five core components of reading. ([NCTQ, Hawaii Summary 2023](#); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states' licensure tests don't signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction \(Nov. 2023\)](#))
- NCTQ DOES specify the licensure tests that address reading are optional. ([NCTQ, Hawaii Summary 2023](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should require elementary education candidates to pass an assessment that is *aligned to the science of reading* to obtain teacher licensure.

Funding for Literacy Efforts



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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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



Universal Reading Screener



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

States require districts to adopt a universal reading screener to be administered at least one time per year with optional mid-year and end-of-year screening.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES require all K–3 students to be assessed in reading at least three times per year (i.e., universal screeners) and be provided with targeted support based on reading needs.
- Hawaii DOES NOT provide a list of state-approved universal reading screeners.
- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES specify that schools should provide a balanced and comprehensive reading and writing program which should include ongoing diagnosis and assessment that ensures accountability for results.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should require a *state-approved universal reading screener* to be administered to all K–3 students three times per year to identify students at risk for reading failure.



Screeners for Characteristics of Dyslexia



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:

- Hawaii HAS NOT approved a screener for characteristics of dyslexia.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should adopt policy to require schools to administer a state-approved screener for characteristics of dyslexia that assess the following skills, as developmentally appropriate: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, rapid naming, encoding, and oral reading fluency.
- Hawaii should require the dyslexia screener to be administered, at a minimum, to all students at the end of Kindergarten and at the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.

Parental Notification



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:

- Hawaii HAS NOT established a policy relating to parental notification.
- The state identified parental notification as a key action in the state's Literacy Levers – within this key action, the Department of Education DOES [commit](#) to facilitating a statewide family notification system.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Following approval of a universal screener and dyslexia screener to be administered to students, Hawaii should further expand policy to require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of each administration of the state-approved universal reading screener and dyslexia screener.

District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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:

- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES require all schools to implement a K–3 research and/or evidence-based reading curriculum that is quality, aligned with the state’s reading standards, addresses the components of reading (phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension), and demonstrates evidence of student achievement and growth. (See also [Hawaii BOE Policy 105-4 Instructional Materials](#))
- Hawaii DOES expect schools to use the curriculum from the [English Language Arts Comprehensive Instructional Program list](#) based on Ed Reports Reviews – schools may go through an exemption process with approval from their Complex Area Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent. ([2023–2029 Strategic Plan Phase II Implementation Plan; Curriculum Management System & Instructional Materials Approval Process](#))
- The Hawaii State Department of Education DOES compile and publish a [list](#) of the instructional materials that are being used in each school in the state.

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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT, through policy, guidance, training, or other avenues, prohibit or discourage the use of instructional materials that include three-cueing.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing.

Individual Reading Plans



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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT require the creation of individual reading plans for students identified with a reading deficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- In addition to establishing policy relating to universal reading screeners, Hawaii should require 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.
- Further, Hawaii should establish a process for monitoring the implementation of those plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plan.

Regularly Monitor Student Progress



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires schools to monitor students' progress within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). 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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT track district/school monitoring of students' progress in reading within a MTSS.
- Hawaii HAS created a Multi-Tiered Support System to support students academically through evidence-based practices. AIM Institute IS an approved vendor for the state's [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading and a Structured Approach to Literacy](#).
- The state identified monitoring student progress as a key action in the state's Literacy Levers – within this key action, the Department of Education DOES [commit](#) to ensuring students will be progress monitored within the HMTSS-R system and closely monitored for “reasonable Rate of Improvement (ROI).”

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should expand policy to require schools to regularly monitor and document students' progress within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).
- Through the MTSS, Hawaii should require schools to use data to inform instruction and interventions as needed and in a timely manner. Note that monitoring can take many forms, including observations, screeners, assessments, and student work.

Evidence-Based Interventions



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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT have a policy relating to the use of evidence-based science of reading interventions for students who have been identified as having a reading deficiency.
- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES specify that schools should provide a balanced and comprehensive reading and writing program which should include timely intervention services to assist students who are at risk of failing attainment of literacy.
- The state identified evidence-based interventions as a key action in the state’s Literacy Levers – within this key action, the Department of Education DOES [commit](#) to providing students who are at risk with evidence-based, Tier 2, and/or Tier 3 interventions that are aligned to the literacy skill needs of the student within the HMTSS-R system.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should expand policy to require schools to target students’ needs by adopting interventions grounded in the science of reading from a vetted and approved list.

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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT have a policy requiring schools to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure.
- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES provide schools the option to offer summer programming for students.
- Hawaii DOES produce a Summer Learning Report which provides information on the total number of students enrolled in English language arts for the summer. (See [Hawaii State Department of Education, 2025 Summer Learning Dashboard](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should expand policy to require schools to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.
- Hawaii should further require all staff at summer reading camps to be trained in the science of reading.

Parent Read-At-Home Plan



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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should adopt policy to require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency.
- Further, Hawaii should require strategies that are shared with parents to target students' needs based on data and are aligned with the science of reading.

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:

- Hawaii 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.
- Hawaii [policy](#) DOES require the Department to establish a system of student promotion that is based on academic performance and successful progress toward identified benchmarks specified in applicable performance standards approved by the Board of Education.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii 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 4th 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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT have a retention policy and DOES NOT offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii should expand 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 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.

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:

- Hawaii DOES NOT have a retention policy and DOES NOT allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Hawaii 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 4th grade that recognize the special needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who were previously retained.
- Hawaii should further require intensive interventions to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause.

