Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Kentucky’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>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</td>
<td>This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</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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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 Kentucky’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
REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Read to Succeed Act, Senate Bill 9, Kentucky Legislature (2022)
- Kentucky Department of Education, Early Literacy
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:

- Kentucky HAS created Kentucky Reading Academies, a partnership that brings LETRS professional learning opportunities to educators.
- Kentucky DOES provide the Reading Academies for educators who teach reading or work with K–5 students in public schools in the state, including administrators.
- Kentucky HAS adopted the 2-year LETRS for educators professional learning course of study for the Reading Academies.
- Kentucky HAS adopted LETRS for administrators professional learning programs for the Reading Academies; Cohort 1 administrators completed the principal’s primer, and Cohort 2 now includes the new two-year license administrator’s course of study (Lexia LETRS for Administrators Program Overview)
- Kentucky DOES require schools and districts to report their literacy professional learning goals through the Literacy Plan that is submitted annually. (KDE, Literacy Plan Template)
- Kentucky HAS adopted a list of approved RTA professional learning providers.

RESOURCES

- [Lexia, Kentucky Reading Academies](#)
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:

- Kentucky DOES require through policy the creation of a literacy coaching program.
- Kentucky MAY establish coaching models for teachers of students in pre-kindergarten–3rd grade, which shall be related to evidence-based practices in instruction, instructional materials and assessment in reading, provided that funding is appropriated. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)
- Kentucky HAS hired 5 state regional coaching directors and 25 literacy coaches—the coaches will be placed in schools with the greatest need for 2024-25 (highest percentage of “Novice” level on 3rd grade reading).

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky 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:

- Kentucky DOES require EPPs offering courses for interdisciplinary early childhood education or elementary regular education to include evidence-based reading instructional programming relating to reading instruction in science of reading. ([Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022)](https://example.com))

- Kentucky DOES require EPPs offering courses for interdisciplinary early childhood education or elementary regular education to include how to administer assessments, the use of assessment data for designing instruction and interventions and instructional strategies to address student learning differences. ([Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022)](https://example.com))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should require EPP required coursework to prohibit the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: 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:

• By 2024, Kentucky WILL require the Educational Professional Standards Board to develop and maintain a list of approved EPP assessments. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022))

• By 2024–2025, Kentucky WILL require new teachers seeking certification in interdisciplinary early childhood education or elementary education to successfully pass an approved teacher preparation test that includes an evaluation of reading instruction knowledge and skills. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022))

• Kentucky currently DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading: Praxis Multiple Subjects test, Reading and Language Arts subtest; however this licensure test DOES NOT adequately address all required components of the science of reading. (NCTQ, Kentucky 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

• Kentucky should adopt a licensure test aligned to the science of reading and require elementary education candidates to pass this assessment to obtain teacher licensure.
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:

- Kentucky DOES direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of SOME early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  - Funds for reading diagnostic and intervention
  - Funds for LETRS training (Press Release, KDE Launches Phase I of the Kentucky Reading Academies LETRS professional learning course)
  - Sustainable funding through the Read to Succeed Fund, established in policy ($11 million per year for 2 years in most recent budget)
  - Funds may be appropriated for teacher academies or coaching models. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires a universal screener to be administered within the first 45 days of Kindergarten and within the first 30 days of the school year for 1st–3rd grade.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Kentucky DOES require schools to administer a universal reading screener within the first 45 days of the school year for Kindergarten and within the first 30 days of the school year for 1st–3rd grade. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022))
- Kentucky HAS created a list of approved early literacy screening assessments.
- Kentucky DOES NOT require schools to administer the universal reading screener to K–3 students three times per year.
- Kentucky DOES require the MTSS leadership team to ensure that students are screened “with fidelity on an on-going basis, typically three times during the school year.” (KDE, Early Literacy: Early Literacy Screening Assessments)
- Kentucky DOES specify that best practice is for schools to conduct universal screening three times per year. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)
- Kentucky DOES update the early literacy screening assessment approved list annually, through a standard review process to evaluate the technical adequacy of early literacy screening and diagnostic assessments. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should expand policy to require that the universal reading screener be administered to all K–3 students three times per year.
**Screener 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:**

- Kentucky DOES provide information on dyslexia screeners within the [KDE Approved Universal Screeners Comparison Chart](#).
- Kentucky HAS created a [Kindergarten to Grade 3 Dyslexia Toolkit](#). (See also [KDE, Dyslexia Toolkit](#))
- Kentucky HAS created district guidance on dyslexia policies, to assist districts when developing policies that address the implementation of a program for the identification of a student with dyslexia. ([KDE, District Guidance on Dyslexia Policies](#))

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- Kentucky should require schools to administer a dyslexia screener to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.
- Kentucky should adopt a list of dyslexia screeners that schools can use to screen students who may have characteristics of dyslexia that assess all of the following skills, as developmentally appropriate: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, encoding skills, rapid naming and oral reading fluency.
Parental Notification

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

State requires 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:

- Kentucky DOES require parental notification for students who have been identified as having a reading deficiency. (KDE, Reading Improvement Plan Template)
- Kentucky DOES require the parent to be part of the reading improvement team that oversees the progress of the reading improvement plan.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should require parent notification of a student identified as having a reading deficiency within 30 days of the identification.
District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state provides guidance and resources to assist districts in the identification and selection of high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading and state standards.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Kentucky HAS released general guidance on high-quality instructional resources.
- Kentucky HAS created a consumer guide to aid in local selection of high-quality instructional resources, focusing on green-rated resources on EdReports reviews, and provides for public participation in the process.
- Kentucky DOES provide further guidance by recommending that districts consider an explicit, systematic, cumulative, multisensory reading foundational skills supplemental resource and a rich, knowledge-building curriculum.
- Kentucky HAS created Reading & Writing Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics for each grade band, which is meant to guide districts and schools in assessing existing or purchasing new instructional resources.
- Kentucky HAS created a Model Curriculum Framework to guide the curriculum development process.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should consider expanding policy to require the Department to establish a vetted and approved list of high-quality instructional materials that districts could choose from.
- Kentucky should consider requiring 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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Kentucky 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:

• Kentucky DOES require schools to develop reading improvement plans, which are created by reading improvement teams for any student in K–3 who has been identified as needing accelerated interventions in reading. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022))

• Kentucky DOES require the reading improvement team to include evidence-based reading strategies and instructional materials that are aligned with the student’s area(s) of need. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)

• Kentucky HAS created a process to monitor the implementation of the plan – the reading improvement team meets after the plan is developed and implemented to review student progress monitoring data and monitor fidelity of implementation. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)

• Kentucky HAS created a Reading Improvement Plan Template to guide districts in creating these plans.

• Kentucky DOES require schools to notify parents of the intervention and creation of the plan. (KDE, Reading Improvement Plan Template)
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

RESOURCES
• KDE, Kentucky Multi-Tiered System of Supports (KyMTSS)
• KDE, KyMTSS

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Kentucky should require the school to develop the reading improvement plan within 30 days of receiving screening results.
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:

- Kentucky DOES require superintendents to select at least one reliable and valid reading diagnostic assessment to be administered as part of a multi-tiered system of supports for students in Kindergarten–3rd grade. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022))

- Kentucky DOES require MTSS teams to use universal screening results, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring measures to make decisions about instruction, interventions, and supports. (KDE, Early Literacy Assessment within Kentucky’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (KyMTSS))

- Kentucky DOES require, through the KyMTSS, student-level intervention teams to focus on developing, implementing and monitoring the impact of the intervention for individual students. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)

- Kentucky DOES require the frequency of progress monitoring to be matched to the intensity of the instruction. (KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions)
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:

- Kentucky DOES require schools to provide accelerated interventions for students identified with reading difficulties, which must include enrichment programs using evidence-based reading intervention, intensive instructional services, progress monitoring measures and support. ([Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022)](#))

- Kentucky DOES require schools to enter Read to Achieve students on the Intervention Tab in Infinite Campus.

- Through the Intervention Tab, Kentucky DOES collect data about intervention services provided to students and their outcomes. ([KDE, Data Standard Intervention for MAF or RTA Grant(s) (2023)](#))

RESOURCES

- [KDE, Read to Succeed KRS 158.305 Implementation: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should create a vetted and approved list that includes interventions that are grounded in the science of reading.
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:

- Kentucky DOES NOT have a policy that requires districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st through 4th grade students at risk of reading failure.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should establish a policy that requires districts 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.
- Further, Kentucky should require all staff at the summer camps to be trained in the science of reading.
**Parent Read-At-Home Plan**

**IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

**FULL IMPLEMENTATION**

The state requires schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency. Strategies shared with parents target students’ needs based on data and are aligned with the science of reading.

**EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE**

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

- Kentucky DOES require schools to provide parents with read-at-home plans when a student has been identified as having a reading deficiency. ([Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022)](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/content/getdoc.pdf))


- Kentucky HAS created guidance for administrators on read-at-home plans.

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

This principle currently meets full implementation.
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:

- Kentucky DOES NOT have a policy requiring students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained.

- In 2024–2025, Kentucky WILL require students who do not score in the proficient performance level or higher in reading on the 3rd grade reading assessment to receive enrichment programs in 4th grade using evidence-based reading instruction, intensive instructional services, progress monitoring and support. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should establish a policy that would require students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained.
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:

- Kentucky DOES NOT provide for 3rd grade retention and does not have a policy that would provide for at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Kentucky should establish a policy that would require students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained and provide for at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade.
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:

• Kentucky DOES NOT provide for 3rd grade retention and does not have a policy that provides for good cause exemptions for promotion.

• In 2024–2025, Kentucky WILL require students who do not score in the proficient performance level or higher in reading on the 3rd grade reading assessment to receive enrichment programs in 4th grade using evidence-based reading instruction, intensive instructional services, progress monitoring and supports. (Senate Bill 9 Guidance on the Read to Succeed Act (2022)).

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Kentucky should establish a policy that would require students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options to be retained and provide for specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade.