



# Early Literacy Matters

## State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

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






**MD**

PRINCIPLE ADOPTION  
IMPLEMENTATION



# Early Literacy Policy Implementation Rubric

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

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

# Early Literacy Policy Implementation Rubric

## PURPOSE

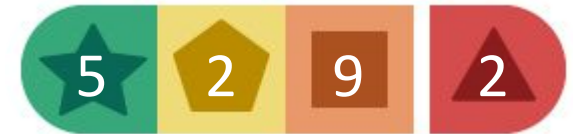
The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of states' implementation of K–3 reading policies aligned to ExcelinEd's [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy. It builds on an analysis of states' adoption of statutes and regulations establishing requirements for each component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

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

This report summarizes evidence of Maryland'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

16 out of 18



## STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy \(2024\)](#)
- [COMAR 13A.03.08 Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties](#)
- [Resolution of the Maryland State Board of Education, 24-01 Statewide Adoption and Implementation of the Science of Reading](#)
- [Maryland State Department of Education, Ready to Read Act](#)
- [Maryland's Keys to Comprehensive Literacy](#)

# Science of Reading (SOR) Training



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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:

- The [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) DOES require the Department to provide professional learning for teachers and administrators and other staff who support literacy instruction for students in PreK–3<sup>rd</sup> grade. (See also [Resolution of the Maryland State Board of Education, 24-01 Statewide Adoption and Implementation of the Science of Reading](#))
- The [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) DOES require general education teachers, special education teachers, teachers of multilingual learners, and administrators in grades PreK–3 to participate in science of reading training. LEAs must annually report the number of teachers who participate in the state’s approved science of reading professional learning programs.
- Maryland HAS created a webpage dedicated to science of reading micro-credential courses that are available to educators and administrators. ([MSDE, MSDE Offered Science of Reading Micro-Credential Courses](#))

# Science of Reading (SOR) Training

**CONTINUED**

## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

#### NOTEWORTHY

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

- Maryland established learning labs that allowed educators to visit schools, learn about successes and challenges relating to literacy, work with subject matter experts, and collaborate on strategies and best practices in early literacy. ([Memo: The State of Science of Reading in Maryland and the State Board and MSDE's Leadership in that Work \(2023\)](#))

#### RESOURCES

- [MSDE, Maryland Momentum: Strategic Plan 2025](#)

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# 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:**

- The [Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) DOES require coaching to be provided to support educators with the implementation of the science of reading, through school-based teaching training, co-planning, co-teaching, and non-evaluative coaching observations.
- The Maryland State Department of Education HAS launched the Early Literacy Coaching Network to provide statewide professional learning, collaboration, and technical assistance for district literacy coaches and leaders. This is led by the Assistant Director of Literacy Coaching and supported by two CLSD Coaches, who provide professional learning and implementation support to participating district and school-based coaches.
- Maryland IS developing the Academic Excellence Program as a statewide model to hire instructional coaches using a Loaned Educator structure. Initial pilot work is taking place in 2025 and is funded through philanthropic funds, including a \$1.735 million State Implementation Partnership Grant that supports literacy and math coaching.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

# Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Alignment



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL 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:

- Maryland DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that address all components of scientifically based reading. ([NCTQ, Maryland Summary 2023](#))
- A [Maryland State Board Resolution](#) requires the Superintendent of Schools to “establish strategic partnerships with institutions of higher education to improve the alignment of teacher preparation and professional development to the Science of Reading.”
- Maryland policy DOES require educator preparation programs to provide a curriculum aligned to the science of reading and instruction that must include training on the system of assessments. ([Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy \(2024\)](#); [Memo: The State of Science of Reading in Maryland and the State Board and MSDE’s Leadership in that Work \(2023\)](#))
- Training and instruction in Maryland educator preparation programs MUST provide candidates with training and instruction related to the use of HQIM, which [policy](#) makes clear that this does not include the three-cueing systems model or leveled readers.

# Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Alignment

**CONTINUED**

## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

- Maryland HAS created a [list](#) of state-approved reading and literacy courses offered by Maryland colleges and universities, including courses in foundations of reading, assessment for reading instruction, and others.
- Maryland [policy](#) DOES require approved educator preparation programs leading to certifications in early childhood education, elementary education, special education, and English for speakers of other languages to post information on their website describing the program used to prepare teachers to “teach reading using evidence-based practices in literacy programming and instruction aligned to the science of reading.”

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Assessment



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Maryland DOES require elementary education candidates to pass a science of reading aligned assessment to obtain teacher licensure: Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary Education. ([NCTQ, Maryland Summary 2023](#); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction \(Nov. 2023\)](#))
- The [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) DOES confirm that elementary education candidates must pass a State Board-approved assessment for initial licensure which assesses the candidates’ knowledge of the science of reading.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Funding for Literacy Efforts



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

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

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Maryland DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  - Grant funds through [Maryland Leads](#), which includes the opportunity to use funds for programs focused on the science of reading [\$53,252,654 for programs related to the science of reading at 22 districts]
  - Funds to implement the Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy, strengthen literacy instruction, and expand local coaching capacity [\$50 million – federal and philanthropic funding]

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

# Universal Reading Screener



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation requires the following:* 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:**

- Beginning in 2025–2026, the [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) WILL require the Department to create a vetted and approved list of universal screeners.
- Beginning in 2026–2027, the [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) WILL require schools to administer universal screeners three times per year (fall, winter, and spring: beginning of year, middle of year, and end of year).
- Currently, Maryland DOES allow districts to choose the universal reading screener that will be used to screen students. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland HAS created a [list](#) of assessments that focus on K–3 reading screening measures that are aligned to evidence-based practices and have been vetted by the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Maryland DOES provide guidance on screening models for schools and selection of universal screeners. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland DOES require all students to be screened for reading deficiencies in Kindergarten. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))

# Universal Reading Screener

CONTINUED



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

- Maryland DOES specify the screening schedule is to be established by the school district – guidance specifies that best practice is to screen students within the first month of school and then students should receive additional screening in accordance with the guidance of the selected screener. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland currently DOES recommend screening to occur at least three times per year through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, in accordance with the recommendations or requirements that accompany the screener used by the school. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland DOES NOT require screening of students in 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> grade if the district can demonstrate that the student who entered or transferred to a public elementary school has already been screened and demonstrates mastery of grade-level reading. ([MSDE, Maryland Ready to Read Act Students with Reading Difficulties – Screenings and Interventions FAQs](#))
- Maryland DOES require students in 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> grade to be screened if they were previously identified as at risk, were not previously screened, demonstrate difficulty mastering grade-level reading, or entered or transferred to a public elementary school. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland DOES monitor schools’ use of universal screeners through [annual data collections](#), which are reported to the state and posted on the state’s website – data collected includes the number of students screened and number of students identified as at risk for reading difficulties.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

# 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:

- Beginning in 2026–2027, the [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) WILL require administration of universal screeners three times per year to students in grades K–3, which will be used to identify students with early warning signs of reading difficulties which MAY include dyslexia. The screener must measure, at a minimum, phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, decoding, fluency, and rapid automatic naming.
- Maryland HAS NOT approved a screener for characteristics of dyslexia.
- Maryland HAS created a [checklist](#) of early warning signs of reading difficulty and dyslexia by age.
- Maryland HAS created a [list](#) of assessments that focus on K–3 reading screening measures, and SOME include dyslexia screeners.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Maryland should approve a screener for characteristics of dyslexia that assesses all of the following skills, as developmentally appropriate: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, rapid naming, encoding, and oral reading fluency.
- The approved dyslexia screener should be administered, at a minimum, to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

# Parental Notification



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation requires the following:* The state requires parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of each administration of the state-approved universal reading screener and/or dyslexia screener.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Maryland [policy](#) DOES require schools to notify parents within 30 days of identification of a reading deficiency, with a description of the screening results and the supplemental instruction the student will receive. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Beginning in 2026–2027, Maryland [policy](#) WILL require schools to administer universal reading screeners to K–3 students three times per year. This policy requires LEAs to develop a process and procedures to notify parents of PreK–3 students who exhibit deficiencies in reading at any time during the school year in writing.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this policy.

# District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation 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 2025–2026, Maryland [policy](#) WILL require the Department to create a vetted and approved list of high-quality instructional materials for LEAs to adopt. The materials must align with the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and be based on scientifically grounded reading research.
- Maryland HAS developed State Frameworks to support districts in providing high quality instructional programs in English language arts/Literacy – these include supporting documents and guidance for implementing Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards. ([MSDE, Maryland College and Career Ready Standards Framework English Language Arts/Literacy](#))
- Maryland districts ARE adopting and integrating high-quality instructional materials, through funding provided in the [Maryland Leads](#) program. ([MSDE, Maryland Leads: Grant Opportunity Guidance Document](#))
- Maryland DOES encourage support for leaders in the state’s [Keys to Comprehensive Literacy](#), which can occur by supporting the “identification of evidence-based high-quality literacy curriculum to be implemented with fidelity.”

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Maryland should require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.

# Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state has *adopted a policy to eliminate* the use of all instructional materials that include the *three-cueing systems* model for teaching word reading *with a clear timeline for the elimination* of the use of these materials.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- In the state’s [Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#), Maryland DOES prohibit instruction from including the three-cueing systems model of instruction.
- Maryland [policy](#) DOES prohibit instructional materials that are based on scientifically grounded reading research to not include the three-cueing systems model.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# Individual Reading Plans



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation 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:

- Currently, Maryland [policy](#) DOES require the development of a supplemental reading instructional plan for students identified as having a reading deficiency.
- Beginning in 2026–2027, student reading improvement plans (SRIP) MUST be developed for any student in grades PreK–3 who has been identified as demonstrating difficulties in reading, based on the state’s vetted and approved assessment system. The development of these plans MUST occur within 30 days of identifying the reading difficulty. ([Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy \(2024\)](#))
- Maryland DOES require schools to notify parents of students identified with reading deficiencies, which includes a description of the supplemental reading instruction that will be provided to the student. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

# Regularly Monitor Student Progress



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation requires the following:* 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:

- Beginning in 2026–2027, Maryland [policy](#) WILL require LEAs to implement PreK–5 MTSS Models, with Department support, which will include the use of student reading improvement plans that are developed for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency based on the administration of the universal screeners. The MTSS must include “program-specific monitoring tools” that will be used to collect and analyze intervention data to make instructional decisions.
- Maryland DOES require educators to use a progress monitoring system to determine if supplemental instruction is working for those students identified as having a deficiency. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland DOES require districts to establish individualized review schedules of supplemental reading instruction for each student at intervals of not more than 30 days for progress monitoring. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))



# Regularly Monitor Student Progress

**CONTINUED**

## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

## FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

- Maryland DOES require parents to be provided with regular written progress reports – these must occur quarterly or upon revisions to supplemental instruction. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Maryland DOES monitor student progress through an MTSS. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

# Evidence-Based Interventions



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires school districts to target students’ needs by adopting interventions grounded in the science of reading from a vetted and approved list. Interventions are provided before, during or after school.

### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Maryland HAS created a [Tier II list](#) of supplemental reading programs, and a [Tier III list](#), compiled using research from other state Departments of Education, Education Commission of the States, and other curriculum rating databases.
- The Maryland [Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) DOES require reading intervention programs provided to PreK–3 students who exhibit difficulties in reading to be implemented during regular school hours and not impede access to Tier I, grade-level aligned instruction; and be provided in an explicit, systematic, sequential manner, and support a student’s needs with “varying intensity and duration across the three tiers.”

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# 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:**

- Maryland DOES NOT have a policy requiring summer reading camps for rising 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> graders at risk of reading failure.
- The [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) DOES suggest that summer school programs may be included on the Department-approved list of supplemental reading support program options that are available at no cost for students who are not designated for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Maryland should require districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> grade students at risk of reading failure. This policy should also require all staff to be trained in the science of reading.

# Parent Read-At-Home Plan



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation of this principle requires the following:* 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:

- Maryland DOES provide some online resources to parents to support reading at home. ([MSDE, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties: Implementation Guide \(2022\)](#))
- Beginning 2027–2028, Maryland [policy](#) WILL require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents, which includes parent-guided home reading activities that are aligned to scientifically based reading research to students who are retained in grade 3, as part of the student's continued intensive reading intervention.

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Maryland should require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents of *all K–3 students that* are identified with a reading deficiency.

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



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation of this principle requires the following:* 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 – be retained.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Currently, Maryland policy DOES require students who do not meet the minimum reading level as required by the State Board for the previous grade or has not met a minimum grade level competency to be kept in the current grade OR enrolled in an appropriate reading assistance program.
- Beginning in 2027–2028, the [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) WILL require 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who do not demonstrate adequate reading proficiency on the MSDE-adopted state English language arts assessments to be retained, unless they qualify for a good cause exemption.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

# Multiple Options for Promotion



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation of this principle requires the following:* The state offers at least three pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or successfully demonstrating sufficient 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Beginning in 2027–2028, Maryland [policy](#) WILL provide for at least two pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, including:
  - Scoring at or above the required performance level, indicating adequate reading proficiency on the grade 3 MSDE-adopted state English language arts assessment; or
  - Scoring at or above the required performance level on an MSDE-approved reassessment; and
  - Triangulated data from valid and reliable multiple measures, such as curriculum-based measures (CBMs), diagnostic assessments, and benchmarks assessments, or others identified by MSDE.
  - Maryland DOES specify that screener data and/or benchmarks should not be used in isolation for promotion purposes.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- In establishing a retention policy, Maryland should offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The state should consider adding successful demonstration of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work as an option for promotion.

# Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation of this principle requires the following:* The state allows specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade that recognize the special needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who were previously retained. Intensive interventions are required to continue in 4<sup>th</sup> grade for students promoted for good cause.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Beginning in 2027–2028, the [Maryland Comprehensive PreK–3 Literacy Policy](#) WILL allow for specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, including exemptions for students with disabilities, students with less than 2 years of instruction aligned to WIDA standards, and students who were previously retained.
- Beginning in 2027–2028, [policy](#) WILL require students who are designated for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade with a good cause exemption to continue to receive intensive reading intervention, which includes reading strategies outlined in the student reading improvement plan, until the student no longer demonstrates reading difficulty.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

