Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Ohio’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>Full Implementation</th>
<th>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AboVEx BEYOND BADGE:</strong></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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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 Ohio’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**

- Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.608 Third-grade reading guarantee
- Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Read Ohio
- Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement
Science of Reading (SOR) Training

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION: Above & Beyond

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:

- Under Ohio law (Section 265.330.), Ohio districts and schools must require all teachers and administrators to complete the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s Science of Reading Professional Development course by June 30th, 2025. Teachers will receive a stipend for completing the course.

- Ohio’s Dyslexia Support Laws require all K–3 teachers, as well as teachers providing special education instruction to children in Kindergarten–12th grade, to complete professional development on identifying characteristics of dyslexia and understanding pedagogy for instruction of students with dyslexia.

- Ohio DOES offer science of reading training through the Literacy Academy On Demand.

- Ohio DOES offer science of reading training through All Ohio Literacy which provides access to professional learning resources on evidence-based language and literacy instruction.

- Ohio DOES require teachers of students who have been retained in 3rd grade in their classroom to meet certain requirements, which includes one year of teaching experience. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Third Grade Reading Guarantee: Teacher Qualification Requirements)
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION: Above & Beyond

NOTEWORTHY

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

- Ohio hosts an annual, in-person Literacy Academy that focuses on the science of reading.
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 training 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:

- Ohio DOES include coaches in the state’s suggested Structured Literacy Certification Process.
- Ohio DOES provide funding for literacy coaches. (Ohio Legislature, House Bill 33 [2023])
- Ohio DOES provide guidance for evaluating the coaching system. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Tool 5: Systems Coaching Self-Assessment)
- For districts and schools required to submit Reading Achievement Plans, Ohio DOES monitor use of coaches within those districts and schools.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Ohio 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.
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:

- Ohio DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that address all components of scientifically based reading. (NCTQ, Ohio Summary 2023)

- Ohio law DOES require the Chancellor of Higher Education, in consultation with the Director of the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, to establish metrics related to coursework for the preparation of educators and other school personnel and the institutions of higher education that are engaged in their preparation. The coursework must include evidence-based strategies for effective literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading.

- Ohio policy DOES require candidates for early childhood licenses and primary licenses to teach in PreKindergarten–5th grade as well as other licenses to complete specific semester hours in the teaching of reading. This includes coursework in teaching reading, the assessment of reading skills and the diagnosis and remediation of reading difficulties.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

NOTEWORTHY

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

• The established metrics must also ensure that clinical preparation for all educators who are responsible for teaching reading only occur in the classrooms where the local education agency has verified that the practicing teachers have training in literacy instruction strategies aligned to the science of reading, use instructional materials aligned to the science of reading from the Department’s approved list and actively implement a structured literacy approach.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Ohio should expand policy to require candidates to participate in coursework that prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
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:

- Ohio DOES require licensure tests that address reading and are aligned to the science of reading: Foundations of Reading. (NCTQ, Ohio Summary 2023; NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
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:

- Ohio DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  - Educator training
  - Curriculum and instructional materials
  - Literacy coaches
  - Model Demonstration Projects for Early Identification of Students with Dyslexia Grant
  - Each Child Reads Grant
  - Reaching All Students Through Language and Literacy
  - Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid and Student Wellness and Success Funds

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

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:

• Ohio HAS created a state-developed diagnostic and adopted an approved list of reading diagnostic assessments that schools can use. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Ohio Diagnostic Assessments; Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Reading Diagnostic and Tier 1 Dyslexia Screener Approved Use List)

• Ohio DOES require schools to administer the reading diagnostic to K–3 students only one time per year. (Ohio Department of Education & the Workforce, Read Ohio: Read Ohio Implementation Timeline)

RESOURCES

• Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Reading Diagnostic and Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (2022)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Ohio should expand policy to require the 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.
**IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

**PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

A state-approved screener for characteristics of dyslexia assesses the following skills as developmentally appropriate: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, rapid naming, encoding and oral reading fluency. The screener is administered only to students who are flagged as at risk on the universal reading screener or upon teacher or parent request.

**EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE**

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

- Ohio HAS approved a list of screeners for characteristics of dyslexia. *(See also Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Reading Diagnostic and Tier 1 Dyslexia Screener Approved Use List)*
- Ohio DOES monitor the administration of dyslexia screeners, as the state requires schools and districts to report Tier 1 and Tier 2 dyslexia screening measure results to the Department. *(Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Approved Assessments List FAQ)*
- Ohio DOES require schools to administer a Tier 1 dyslexia screening measure to all Kindergarten students. *(Ohio’s Dyslexia Guidebook)*
- Ohio DOES require schools to administer a Tier 1 dyslexia screening measure to students in 1st–6th grade if a parent, guardian or teacher requests the screener to be used. *(Ohio’s Dyslexia Guidebook)*
- Ohio policy DOES define dyslexia as characterized by unexpected difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the person’s intelligence, motivation and sensory capabilities. Difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language. *(Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Dyslexia Intervention and Support Frequently Asked Questions)*

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- Ohio should expand policy to require schools to administer the screener for dyslexia to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.
- Ohio should ensure dyslexia screeners assess 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.
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:

- Ohio does require parents to be involved in the creation of students’ Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans. ([Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan Template](#))

- Ohio policy does require notification to a parent of any student in K–3rd grade who are not reading on grade level according to the reading diagnostic as soon as possible and in writing. ([Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023](#))

- Ohio policy does require notification to a parent within 30 days of administration of a dyslexia screener.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- By strengthening policy through requiring administration of the universal reading screener three times per year for all K–3 students, Ohio should then expand policy further to require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of each administration of the state-approved universal reading screener.
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:

• Ohio HAS created a High Quality Instructional (HQIM) District Survey about the core literacy curriculum and interventions materials that are currently being used to guide the resources and supports offered to Ohio schools and districts to ensure all students have access to high-quality instructional materials.

• By 2024–2025, Ohio WILL require schools and districts to use high-quality instructional materials. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Read Ohio: Read Ohio Implementation Timeline)

• By 2024–2025, Ohio WILL establish a list of English language arts core curriculum and instructional materials that are aligned with the science of reading from which districts must adopt their instructional materials. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, High-Quality Instructional Materials in English Language Arts)

• Ohio DOES provide guidance on reviewing, selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials. (See Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Using HQIM: Reviewing, Selecting and Implementing Materials)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Ohio should expand policy to require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.
Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: 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:

- Ohio policy DOES prohibit the use of all instructional materials in PreKindergarten–5th grade that include three-cueing systems model for teaching word reading.

- Ohio policy DOES have a clear timeline for elimination of these materials and specifies that instructional materials that include the three-cueing systems model for teaching word reading will be prohibited beginning in the 2024–2025 school year.

- Ohio DOES allow for waivers on an individual student basis to use curriculum, instructional materials or intervention programs in PreKindergarten–5th grade that include the three-cueing systems model to teach students to read. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, High-Quality Instructional Materials in English Language Arts)

- Ohio DOES allow for students with individualized education programs (IEPs) that explicitly indicate the three-cueing approach is appropriate for the student’s learning needs to use instructional materials that include the three-cueing systems model. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, High-Quality Instructional Materials in English Language Arts)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Ohio should expand policy to require the elimination of the use of all instructional materials that include the three-cueing systems model for teaching word reading. This would include removing the option to apply for a waiver to use the three-cueing approach and removing the exception for students with IEPs.
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:

• Ohio DOES require schools to establish Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMPs) for students who are not on-track (reading below grade level) within 60 days of receiving the reading diagnostic results.

• Ohio DOES provide guidance to schools relating to the Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans through templates on the state’s website.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Ohio should strengthen policy by requiring the creation and implementation of Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMPs) within 30 days of identification of a reading deficiency.
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:

• Ohio DOES require schools to regularly monitor students’ progress, through the student’s Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan Template)

• Ohio DOES require progress monitoring within the state’s multi-tiered system of supports, which uses student data to inform instruction and interventions. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)
Evidence-Based Interventions

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Beginning no later than the 2024–2025 school year, Ohio will require each Ohio district and school to use evidence-based reading intervention programs in PreKindergarten–12th grade only from the approved lists established by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

- Ohio law will require districts and schools to report the types of reading intervention services provided during the school year to students in Kindergarten–3rd grade in the Department’s Education Management Information System.

- Ohio policy does require intervention services provided to students to be aligned to the science of reading.

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:

- Ohio DOES NOT require districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss.
- Ohio DOES require districts to provide intensive intervention to students who have reading difficulties, which MAY include summer reading camps, but this IS NOT required. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Ohio should expand policy to require 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.
- In expanding this policy, Ohio should require all staff at the summer camps to be trained in the science of reading.
Parent Read-At-Home Plan

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state or district provides online resources to parents to support reading at home.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Ohio DOES provide online resources to parents to support reading at home. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Read Ohio: Tips for Families; Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Third Grade Reading Guarantee Family Resources; Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Early and Conventional Literacy: Supporting Learners in Kindergarten-Grade 5)

- Ohio DOES involve parents in the creation of students’ Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan Template)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Ohio should expand policy to require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency. The strategies shared should target students’ needs based on data and be aligned with the science of reading.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires that a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options be promoted to 4th grade with provisions for additional support through transitional classes, tutoring and/or intensive interventions.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Ohio DOES require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided, and do not meet a good cause exemption, be retained. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)

- Ohio law DOES require schools that would have retained students who did not meet the promotion score on Ohio’s State Test for Grade 3 English Language Arts during the 2022-2023 school year to promote those students to 4th grade unless a parent or guardian requests otherwise. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)

- Ohio law DOES allow a student’s parent or guardian to request that the student be promoted to 4th grade, with intensive reading interventions, regardless of the student’s score on Ohio’s State Test for Grade 3 English Language Arts. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Ohio should expand policy to eliminate the parent request exemption which allows parents to request that students be promoted to 4th grade, regardless of the student’s score on Ohio’s State Test for Grade 3 English Language Arts.
Multiple Options for Promotion

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state allows the school-based team, in consultation with the parent, to determine the student’s promotion to 4th grade or 3rd grade retention. Students may also be promoted if they attend a summer reading program.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Ohio DOES offer 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 parent request. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)

- Ohio DOES provide that a student’s parent may request that a student be promoted to 4th grade, regardless of the student’s score on Ohio’s State Test for Grade 3 English Language Arts. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Third Grade Reading Guarantee)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Ohio could strengthen policy by eliminating the parent exemption for retention and providing three clear pathways for promotion to 4th grade.

- Ohio could consider adding to the state’s promotion options to include successfully demonstrating sufficient 3rd grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work.
Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state allows 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. Intensive interventions are required to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Ohio DOES allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade, including recognizing the special needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners and students who were previously retained. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)

- Ohio DOES require intensive interventions to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause due to previous retentions. (Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, Guidance Manual on the Third Grade Reading Guarantee School Year 2022-2023)