



Early Literacy Matters

State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

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






AZ

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 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.

 <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 Arizona'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

- [Arizona Revised Statutes Title 15 Education](#)
 - See [ARS 15-701](#), [ARS 15-704](#), [ARS 15-211](#)
- [Arizona Department of Education, Move on When Reading](#)
- [Read On Arizona](#)

Science of Reading (SOR) Training



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Arizona DOES offer and provide guidance on free training opportunities through the [Arizona Reading Fundamentals OnDemand Academy](#) – this includes various ELA professional learning opportunities and LETRS instruction.
- Arizona DOES require schools and districts to provide ongoing teacher training on evidence-based reading research. ([ADE, Move on When Reading, Professional Development](#))
- Arizona DOES offer a [K–5 literacy endorsement](#), requiring literacy teachers in K–5 to participate in additional training in reading instruction and intervention and passing a score on the Foundations of Reading Assessment by Pearson.
- Beginning in 2025, all pre-service teachers exiting teacher prep programs will need to have the K–5 literacy endorsement. ([ADE, Move on When reading Annual Report 2022](#))
- Beginning in 2028, all current K–5 teachers who teach literacy must acquire the K–5 literacy endorsement. ([ADE, Move on When reading Annual Report 2022](#))

Science of Reading (SOR) Training

CONTINUED

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

NOTEWORTHY

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

- Each required school literacy plan must include information on one designated [Dyslexia Training Designee](#) on each campus. This individual is a resource for other educators for reading instruction, intensifying instruction or intervention strategies and the characteristics of dyslexia. ([ADE, MOWR: FAQ – Dyslexia Training Designee](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona should adopt science of reading training for K–3 administrators and require all K–3 administrators to participate in the training.

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:

- Arizona IS creating a statewide coaching model, with funds provided by the Governor’s office, which includes 25 coaches in 9 districts with high needs; currently 8 coaching positions have been filled, impacting 19 schools, 160 teachers, and over 3,600 students. ([ADE, Move on When Reading Annual Report 2022](#))
- Arizona DOES require monthly training for the MOWR literacy coaching through WestEd, which includes how to support the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction aligned with the science of reading. ([ADE, Move on When Reading Annual Report 2022](#))
- Arizona DOES mention literacy coaches in various documents. (See, for example, [ADE, MOWR: Dyslexia](#) (K–3 Literacy Coaches may be trained to be a Dyslexia Training Designee))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona 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

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:

- Arizona law DOES require EPPs to provide coursework for elementary education and early childhood education that is aligned to the science of reading and includes evidence-based literacy instruction.
- Arizona standards for EPPs that address scientifically based reading only partially address the components of science of reading (phonics only). ([NCTQ, Arizona Summary \(2023\)](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona EPP requirements relating to literacy should prohibit the use of course materials that use three-cueing.
- For implementation purposes, Arizona should consider providing guidance and information on the state’s educator preparation program coursework requirements for literacy instruction.

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:

- Arizona DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading: Foundations of Reading. ([NCTQ, Arizona Summary \(2023\)](#); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction \(Nov. 2023\)](#))
- Arizona DOES offer a [K–5 literacy endorsement](#), requiring literacy teachers in K–5 to participate in additional training in reading instruction and intervention and passing a score on the Foundations of Reading Assessment by Pearson, but this is not required of all educators.

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:

- Arizona DOES direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of SOME early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
 - \$45 million annually to elementary schools to support effective reading instruction in Kindergarten–3rd grade. ([ADE, Move On When Reading: MOWR Submissions](#))
 - \$1 million to offset cost of training educators in the Dyslexia Training Designee program. ([ADE, MOWR: Dyslexia](#))

NOTEWORTHY

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

- Through the LEA Literacy Plan, each district must report the amount of funding received for K–3 literacy for the previous school year and estimate the amount that will be received for the current school year. ([ADE, Move on When Reading: Administrators – Final Requirements \(Budget\)](#); [ADE, All K–03 Schools and FY23/24 MOWR Funds](#); [ADE, Optional K–3 Literacy Plan Checklist](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

Universal Reading Screener



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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:

- Arizona DOES require schools to use state-approved universal reading screeners to assess students in K–3. ([Annual MOWR K–3 School Literacy Plan](#))
- Arizona DOES require the universal literacy screener to be administered three times per year – in the fall, winter, and spring. ([Annual MOWR K–3 School Literacy Plan](#))
- Arizona HAS created a [vetted and approved list](#) of universal literacy screeners.
- Arizona DOES monitor schools’ assessment plans and data, by requiring schools to submit information on the assessment plans and data through the [Annual MOWR K–3 School Literacy Plan](#). ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener](#))

RESOURCES

- [ADE, Optional K–3 Literacy Plan Checklist](#)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

Screeners for Characteristics of Dyslexia



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:

- Arizona HAS approved a [list of screeners](#) for characteristics of dyslexia. ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener](#))
- Arizona’s approved screeners for characteristics of dyslexia DO assess these identified skills: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, rapid naming skills, nonsense word fluency, and correspondence between sounds and letters. ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide for Arizona’s K–3 Schools](#))
- Arizona’s approved screener IS administered to all students three times per year in Kindergarten–3rd grade. ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide for Arizona’s K–3 Schools](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona should ensure screeners for characteristics of dyslexia *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.
- Arizona should administer this screener to all students, at a minimum, at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade, not just to those students identified as at risk on the universal reading screener.

Parental Notification



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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:

- Arizona DOES require parent notification of a reading deficiency within three weeks after identification on the universal reading screener or dyslexia screener. ([ADE, Move on When Reading: Administrators – Final Requirements 2 \(Parent Letters\)](#))
- Arizona DOES provide guidance on notification letters for students who are at-risk.

NOTEWORTHY

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

- Arizona requires schools and districts to provide annual written notification to parents of students in Kindergarten–3rd grade informing them of Arizona’s Move on When Reading laws, including third grade retention policies and legislative exemptions to retention. ([ADE, Move on When Reading: Administrators – Final Requirements 2 \(Parent Letters\); Entry Parent Letter](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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:

- Arizona DOES provide [guidance and resources](#) to support the identification and selection of curriculum and instructional materials aligned to science of reading and state standards.
- Arizona DOES provide districts with a [vetted list](#) of core reading programs with instructional materials that meet the state’s legislative requirements.
- Arizona DOES monitor compliance with adoption of instructional materials aligned to science of reading and state standards through the [LEA Literacy Plans](#).

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona should expand policy to require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.

Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

The state has not adopted policy (statute or regulation) that meets the fundamental principle for this area.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona 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

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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:

- Arizona DOES require schools to develop a plan for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency, which includes information on the student’s current needs, the interventions available to remediate the deficiencies, and parental strategies. ([ADE, Move on When Reading: Administrators – Final Requirements 2 \(Parent Letters\)](#))
- The plan is provided to the parent of the student within 3 weeks of identification of the deficiency through the [parent letter](#). (See also [At-risk Parent Letter Strategies](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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:

- Arizona DOES track district/school monitoring of students' progress within a [MTSS](#), which is outlined in every school's K–3 Move on When Reading Literacy Plan. ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide for Arizona's K–3 Schools](#))
- Arizona DOES use data as part of the progress monitoring to inform when changes are made to a student's interventions. ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide for Arizona's K–3 Schools](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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:

- Arizona DOES require districts to adopt interventions that are [ESSA evidence-based](#) at one of the top three tiers.
- Arizona HAS created a [list of intervention/supplemental reading programs](#) that meet the evidence-based requirements established in law.
- Arizona DOES monitor districts' adoption and use of evidence-based science of reading interventions in targeting student supports through the [LEA Literacy Plans](#). (See also [Annual MOWR K–3 School Literacy Plan](#))

RESOURCES

- [ADE, Optional K–3 Literacy Plan Checklist](#)

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:

- Arizona DOES NOT 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.
- Arizona DOES provide that summer school reading instruction is one intensive intervention that may be offered for students who are retained. ([ADE, Move on When Reading Overview 2023–2024](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Arizona should require districts to offer summer reading camps to all rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure, that includes staff that are all 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:

- Arizona DOES require schools to provide read-at-home plans, through the parent strategies that are included within the second parent notification letter, sent home after a student is identified as having a reading deficiency. ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide for Arizona's K-3 Schools](#))
- Arizona DOES target the strategies to the students' needs, which are sectioned into specific skill sets within the [parental notification letter](#). ([ADE, Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide for Arizona's K-3 Schools](#))
- Arizona DOES provide guidance to schools and districts relating to [at-risk parent letter strategies](#) to be used at home.
- Arizona DOES provide [guidance](#) to parents regarding understanding the law and literacy for parents and families.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

Initial Determinant Retention at 3rd Grade Based on State Assessment



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Arizona policy DOES require students be retained if they are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided. ([ADE, Move on When Reading Overview 2023–2024](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

Multiple Options for Promotion



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state offers at least three pathways 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.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Arizona DOES offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade, including through passing the literacy assessment, by demonstrating sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of reading assessments, or by receiving intervention and remedial services during the summer or subsequent year and demonstrating sufficient reading progress. ([ADE, Move on When Reading: MOWR FAQs](#))
- While Arizona does meet this principle, the state may want to consider allowing students to promote to 4th grade by successfully demonstrating sufficient reading skills through a portfolio of student work.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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:

- Arizona DOES allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade, including exemptions for English learners, as well as students in the process of special education referrals or evaluations for placement. ([ADE, Move on When Reading Overview 2023–2024](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

