Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Minnesota’s adoption and implementation of the 18 Early Literacy Fundamental Principles.
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.

| FULL IMPLEMENTATION | The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation. |
| PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION | The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation. |
| FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION | The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation. |
| PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED | The fundamental principle is not adopted in policy, does not meet minimum implementation requirements or is grant-based and not sustainable. |
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 Minnesota’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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STATE POLICY ADOPTION

REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Minnesota Statutes 120B.12 Read Act Goal and Interventions
- Minnesota Department of Education, READ Act
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:

- By 2024 and through 2027, Minnesota policy DOES require each district to provide teachers and instructional support staff with responsibility for teaching reading with training on evidence-based reading instruction that is approved by the state’s Department of Education.

- By July 2024, Minnesota policy DOES require each district to provide access to the training to all classroom teachers of students in Kindergarten–3rd grade and special education teachers, as well as instructional support staff who provide reading instruction and employees who select literacy instructional materials for a district.

- By July 2027, Minnesota policy DOES require all other teachers and instructional staff required to receive training under the act to complete the training.

- Minnesota HAS approved several options for professional development that will satisfy the READ Act requirements. (MDE, READ Act; MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Minnesota should expand policy to require all K–3 teachers and administrators to participate in state-adopted science of reading training.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Minnesota DOES NOT require literacy coaches that are trained in the science of reading to be assigned to each elementary school to provide job-embedded professional development and coaching to K–3 teachers.

• By August 2025, Minnesota policy WILL require each district to employ a literacy lead to collaborate with administrators and staff to implement the requirements under the READ Act.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Minnesota 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.
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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Minnesota should expand policy to ensure that EPP required coursework that is aligned to the science of reading also prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing.

• Minnesota should further require that coursework includes evidence-based literacy instruction, how to administer reading assessments, and how to identify students with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.
**IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

**FULL IMPLEMENTATION**

Elementary education candidates must take an assessment that is aligned to the science of reading, but the results may not impact licensure.

**EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE**

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

- Minnesota DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading that has an acceptable alignment to the science of reading: Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) Elementary Education (K–3 grade) Subtest 1. ([NCTQ, Minnesota Summary 2023; NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023)](https://www.nationalcenterfor教师quality.org/summarystatesparticipation/Minnesota?participation=1&topic=Reading)
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:

- Minnesota DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  - Funds for implementation of the READ Act
  - Literacy Incentive Aid
  - Funding for professional development

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

*Full implementation of this principle 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:

- By 2024–2025, Minnesota policy DOES require each school district to screen every student in Kindergarten–3rd grade using a state-approved universal screener.

- Minnesota HAS approved three screeners: DIBELS 8th Edition from Amplify or Fastbridge earlyReading and CBM Reading from Renaissance. ([MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions](MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions))

- By 2024–2025, Minnesota policy DOES require the screener to be administered two times per year.

- By 2025, Minnesota WILL require districts to submit data on student performance in Kindergarten–3rd grade on foundational reading skills to the Department of Education in the annual local literacy plan. ([MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions](MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions))

**RESOURCES**

- [MDE, The READ Act: K–3 Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screening Guidance](MDE, The READ Act: K–3 Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screening Guidance)

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- Minnesota should expand policy to require a state-approved universal reading screener to be administered to all K–3 students *three times per year* to identify students at risk for reading failure.
Screener for Characteristics of Dyslexia

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL 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, at minimum, administered to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of first and second grade.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Minnesota policy DOES require districts to screen students in Kindergarten–3rd grade for characteristics of dyslexia using a screening tool approved by the Department of Education, which may be integrated with universal screening for mastery of foundational skills and oral language. (See also MDE, READ Act: The READ Act Implementation Timeline; MDE, Dyslexia)

• Minnesota HAS created a list of dyslexia screeners and DOES specify that the screening tools must screen for the following skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, and oral language. (MDE, Screening and Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia)

• Minnesota DOES provide guidance to additionally screen for letter naming and word reading fluency. (MDE, Screening and Identifying Characteristics of Dyslexia)

RESOURCES

• MDE, The READ Act: K–3 Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screening Guidance

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
Parental Notification

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The 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:

• Minnesota policy DOES require schools to provide notice to parents of students identified with reading difficulties at least biannually after administering each screener. (MDE, Parent Notification and Engagement)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• In addition to expanding policy to require universal reading screeners to be administered three times per year to K–3 students, Minnesota should further expand policy to require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of each administration of the state approved universal reading screener and dyslexia screener.
District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

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:

• By January 1, 2024, Minnesota WILL identify five evidence-based literacy curricula and supporting materials that districts can select from. (See also MDE, READ Act: The READ Act Implementation Timeline)

• Minnesota DOES require the curriculum used by districts to be evidence-based and aligned to the science of reading. (MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions)

• By 2025, Minnesota policy WILL require districts to report the curricula being used by school site and grade level to the Department through the local literacy plan, which then must be posted on the official school district website.

• Minnesota DOES require districts to use approved curriculum only when the curriculum was purchased with state funds that require curriculum to be selected from a list of approved curricula. (MDE, The Read Act Frequently Asked Questions)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Minnesota should expand policy to require school districts to adopt high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading and state standards from a vetted and approved list.
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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Minnesota should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing.
Individual Reading Plans

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Minnesota policy DOES strongly encourage districts to provide personal learning plans for students who are unable to demonstrate grade-level proficiency, as measured by the statewide reading assessment in 3rd grade or a screener identified by the Department of Education.

- Minnesota policy DOES specify that if a personal learning plan is created, it must include targeted instruction that is evidence-based and includes ongoing progress monitoring.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Minnesota should expand policy to require schools to develop and implement an individual reading plan for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency within 30 days of receiving screening results.

- Minnesota should establish a process for monitoring the implementation of the individual reading plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plan.
Regularly Monitor Student Progress

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:

- Minnesota policy DOES strongly encourage districts to adopt a MTSS framework in order to monitor students’ progress, evaluate program fidelity, and analyze student outcomes and needs in order to design and implement ongoing evidence-based instructions and interventions.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Minnesota should expand policy to require schools to regularly monitor and document students’ progress within a multi-tiered system of supports and utilize data from the universal reading screener that should be administered to all K–3 students three times per year to inform instruction and interventions as needed and in a timely manner.

- Minnesota should ensure monitoring takes many forms, including observations, assessments, screeners, and student work.
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:

- Minnesota policy DOES require students identified as having reading deficiencies to be provided with reading intervention that specialize in evidence-based instructional practices and measure mastery of foundational reading skills.

- Minnesota policy DOES require the state to monitor the interventions that schools are providing to students by providing a summary of efforts to screen, identify, and provide interventions in the literacy plan.

- By 2025–2026, Minnesota policy WILL require intervention programs to be taught by intervention teachers or special education teachers who have successfully completed training in evidence-based reading instruction approved by the state’s Department of Education.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Minnesota should expand policy to require the Department to create a vetted and approved list of evidence-based interventions that are grounded in the science of reading from which districts can select interventions to target students’ needs.
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:

- Minnesota DOES NOT have a policy requiring districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure.
- Minnesota policy DOES specify that attendance in summer school is one option for interventions that schools may offer to students who have been identified with a reading deficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Minnesota 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.
- Minnesota should further require all staff at summer reading 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:

• Minnesota policy DOES require parental notification to include strategies for parents to use at home in helping their student succeed in becoming grade-level proficient in reading in English.

• Minnesota DOES provide online resources to parents. (MDE, Parents and Communities as Partners)

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:

- Minnesota DOES NOT have a policy that requires a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options be retained.
- Minnesota policy DOES specify that the optional personal learning plan may include grade retention and students MAY NOT be retained solely due to delays in literacy or not demonstrating grade-level proficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Minnesota should expand policy to require that a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options 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:

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

• Minnesota policy DOES specify that the optional personal learning plan may include grade retention and students MAY NOT be retained solely due to delays in literacy or not demonstrating grade-level proficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Minnesota should expand policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills (on the state test-based options provided) be retained. Policy should include at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or successfully demonstrating sufficient 3rd grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work.
Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

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

• Minnesota policy DOES specify that the optional personal learning plan may include grade retention and students MAY NOT be retained solely due to delays in literacy or not demonstrating grade-level proficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Minnesota should expand policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills (on the state test-based options provided) be retained. Policy should include 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.

• Minnesota should further require intensive interventions to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause.