



Early Literacy Matters

State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

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






MS

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 Mississippi'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

17 out of 18



STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [Mississippi Code \(Lexis\) \(See Title 37. Education\)](#)
- [Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#)
- [Strong Readers Strong Leaders Mississippi](#)
- [MDE, How to Build Strong Readers: Mississippi's Guide to Developing Literacy Skills from Birth through Grade 12](#)
- [MDE, Leading in Literacy \(2025\)](#)

Science of Reading (SOR) Training



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state offers science of reading training or requires districts to adopt a policy to identify science of reading training, providers of the training, and personnel who will be trained. Participation in science of reading training may be optional for teachers and/or administrators.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Mississippi DOES offer science of reading training through [AIM Institute of Research and Learning](#), which provides science of reading training and access to resources for classroom application-based practices to support students through the science of reading.
- Mississippi DOES provide guidance for educators and administrators through the webpage [Literacy Professional Development and Resources](#), which are aligned to the science of reading. ([Strong Readers Strong Leaders Mississippi](#); see also [AIM Pathways for Mississippi](#); [MDE, Resources for Administrators](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES educators and principals at Literacy Support Schools (lowest performing school based on 3rd grade reading data) to participate in science of reading training sessions. ([Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#); [AIM Pathways for Mississippi](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- While Mississippi does require educators in schools identified as literacy support schools (lowest performing school based on 3rd grade reading data) to participate in training aligned to the science of reading, Mississippi should expand this and require *all* K–3 educators and administrators to participate in science of reading 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 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:

- Coaches ARE trained in science of reading – the [MDE Literacy Coaching Handbook](#) specifies that coaches must participate in on-going training, support, and networking to promote grade-level reading.
- Coaches ARE providing job-embedded training and coaching to K–3 teachers. The [MDE Literacy Coaching Handbook](#) notes that coaches provide daily technical support (at least 85% of the school week) to school-based coaches or lead teachers in their capacity to support instruction of the components of reading, implement curriculum, administer assessments, analyze data, and utilize technology. Further, the coaches must design and conduct professional development to meet the varied needs of school-based literacy coaches and teachers.
- Mississippi DOES monitor coaches by requiring submission of monthly reports to Regional Coordinators. (See [MDE Literacy Coaching Handbook](#))
- Mississippi DOES provide guidance for coaches on the most important aspects of their job and the timeline and list of required tasks through the Literacy Coach Pacing Guide in the [MDE Literacy Coaching Handbook](#).

Literacy Coaches

CONTINUED

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

RESOURCES

- [MDE, Educator in Residence \(EIR\) Model – EIR Process for MDE Literacy Coaches](#)
- [Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#) (Section III. Role of the MDE Literacy Coach)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Mississippi should ensure that a literacy coach that is trained in the science of reading is *assigned to each elementary school* to provide job-embedded professional development and coaching to K–3 teachers.

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Alignment



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

EPP required coursework is aligned to the science of reading and includes evidence-based literacy instruction.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- EPPs DO offer coursework aligned to the science of reading. ([NCTQ, Mississippi Summary 2023](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES Elementary Education Programs of Study to include reading/literacy courses focused on diagnosing and assessing reading difficulties. ([MDE, Guidelines for Process and Performance Review: Educator Preparation Providers \(2024\)](#))
- Required coursework DOES include structured literacy instruction. ([MDE, Guidelines for Process and Performance Review: Educator Preparation Providers \(2024\)](#))
- Coursework in the Elementary Education Program of Study DOES include instruction on how to identify students with reading difficulties. ([MDE, Guidelines for Process and Performance Review: Educator Preparation Providers \(2024\)](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Mississippi EPP requirements relating to literacy should prohibit the use of course materials that use 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:

- Mississippi DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading: Foundations of Reading. ([NCTQ, Mississippi Summary 2023](#); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction \(Nov. 2023\)](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES candidates to achieve a minimum qualifying passing score on the state’s required licensing assessments. ([MDE, Guidelines for Process and Performance Review: Educator Preparation Providers \(2024\)](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES only Elementary Education candidates to pass the Foundations of Reading Assessment. ([Mississippi Foundations of Reading](#)).
- Effective October 27, 2025, candidates seeking initial licensure in Elementary Education (K–3, K–6, or 4–6) – including Traditional, Non-traditional, and Supplemental pathways – now have two options to meet the reading requirement:
 - Option 1: Earn a passing score on the *Foundations of Reading* assessment, or
 - Option 2: Attempt the *Foundations of Reading* and complete *Pathways to Proficient Reading* (PPR) with a minimum score of 80%.

([Guidance on Literacy Requirement for Elementary Education Licensure](#))

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:

- Mississippi DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of SOME early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
 - General funding for the Literacy Initiative and Assessment [\$6,805,774 through FY26 Budget]
 - Statewide training grounded in the science of reading
 - Adoption and implementation of high-quality instructional materials
 - Literacy coaches [\$16,881,692 over 5 years (July 2022–June 2027)]

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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



Universal Reading Screener



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION: Above & Beyond

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:

- Mississippi HAS established an approved [list of reading screeners](#) to be used by local school districts in Kindergarten–3rd grade. (See also [MDE, Universal Screener Companion Guide](#))
- Mississippi DOES monitor district adoption of universal reading screeners through the state’s [Reading Screener Grant Application](#).
- Mississippi REQUIRES screeners to be administered *three times per year*. ([MDE, Universal Screener Companion Guide](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES diagnostic assessments to be administered to students who score below benchmark on a specific component. ([MDE, Universal Screener Companion Guide](#); [MDE, Universal Screener and Diagnostic Assessment](#))
- Mississippi DOES monitor schools’ use of screener data to identify students at risk of reading failure by requiring districts to submit [Screener Upload Spreadsheets](#) to the state.

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.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Mississippi HAS approved a [list of screeners](#) for characteristics of dyslexia.
- Mississippi’s approved screener IS administered to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st grade. ([MDE, Mississippi Approved List of Dyslexia Screeners \(2025–2030\)](#))

RESOURCES

- [MDE, Dyslexia](#)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Mississippi should *expand policy* to require the dyslexia screener be administered, at a minimum, to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.
- Mississippi’s approved dyslexia screeners should assess *all identified skills*, as developmentally appropriate, including sound-symbol recognition and oral reading fluency.



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:

- Mississippi REQUIRES teachers to [provide parents with notice](#) when their student has been identified as having reading difficulties. (See [MDE, Required K–3 Parental Notification Letters About Supplemental Support](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES “immediate written notification” to parents. ([Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES the district and the school to ensure notice was given to the parent. ([Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#); see also [MDE, Guidelines for Students Identified with a Reading Deficiency and/or For Students Not Promoted](#))

RESOURCES

- [MDE, Literacy Communication Toolkit](#)
- [Sample Parent Notification Letter](#)
- [Dyslexia Screener Sample 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:

- Mississippi DOES provide guidance and resources to support the identification and selection of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) aligned to science of reading and state standards. ([MDE, English Language Arts High-Quality Instructional Materials Roadmap to Text Adoption](#))
- Mississippi DOES provide a [list of state-adopted high-quality instructional materials](#) for English language arts.
- Mississippi’s list of HQIM ARE aligned to the Mississippi College-and-Career Readiness Standards. (See [MDE, Literacy: Resources for Teachers](#))

District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

CONTINUED

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

RESOURCES

- [MDE, Resources for Administrators](#)
- [Mississippi Instructional Materials Matter](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions: English Language Arts – High Quality Instructional Materials](#)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Mississippi should consider expanding policy to require all districts in the state to adopt high-quality instructional materials – while the state has provided many resources on HQIM, it is not clear that districts are required to adopt HQIM as part of their comprehensive literacy program.
- Mississippi should 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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Mississippi 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:

- Mississippi [policy](#) (Miss. Code 37-177-1, et al.) REQUIRES schools to establish individual reading plans for any K–3 student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, as well as any student who was promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, Frequently Asked Questions](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES plans to be developed and beginning implementation within two weeks after identification of the deficiency. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, Frequently Asked Questions](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES parents to be provided with [notice of the proposed instructional services and supports](#), as outlined in the student’s individual reading plan.
- The individual reading plan MUST include information on progress monitoring and goals and benchmarks for growth. ([Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#))

RESOURCES

- [MDE, Mississippi Evidence-Based Academic Interventions Approved List \(2021\)](#)

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:

- Mississippi DOES track district/school monitoring of students' progress within a MTSS. ([MDE, Guidelines for Students Identified with a Reading Deficiency and/or For Students Not Promoted; see also MDE, Individual Reading Plan/MTSS Alignment Checklist](#))
- Mississippi REQUIRES progress to be monitored at the middle and end of each year, as well as through formal monthly progress monitoring for Tier I interventions, bi-weekly progress monitoring for Tier II, and weekly progress monitoring for Tier III.
- Mississippi DOES provide guidance on progress monitoring, including the use of assessment tools (benchmark and large-scale) and classroom assessments. (See [MDE, Intervention Services](#))
- Mississippi HAS created resources for schools to track student data to make instructional decisions for students, including Student Data Collection Worksheet, Intensive Intervention Document, and Good Cause Exemption Summaries. ([Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#))

RESOURCES

- [MDE, MTSS LBPA Flowchart Grades K-3](#)

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:

- Mississippi HAS adopted an [Evidence-Based Academic Interventions Approved List](#).
- Mississippi PROVIDES guidance relating to interventions, including through State Board Policy (Interventions) and other resources. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#) (see page 47); [MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, Frequently Asked Questions](#))
- Mississippi [policy](#) (Miss. Code 37-177-1, et al.) DOES encourage the following types of interventions: small group instruction, reduced teacher-student ratios, tutoring, transition classes, extended school day, week, or year, and summer reading camps. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, Frequently Asked Questions](#))

RESOURCES

- [MDE, Guidelines for Students Identified with a Reading Deficiency and/or For Students Not Promoted](#)
- [MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#)
- [MDE, Intervention Services](#)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

Summer Reading Camps



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Mississippi includes summer reading camps in policy, but schools are not required to offer summer reading camps to students.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Mississippi's [policy](#) (Miss. Code 37-177-1, et al.) DOES provide for summer reading camps; however, schools are not required to use this approach. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, Frequently Asked Questions](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Mississippi should require districts to provide summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th graders at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.
- Mississippi should also require all staff that teach at summer reading camps to be trained in 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:

- Mississippi [law](#) (Miss. Code 37-177-1, et al.) REQUIRES schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents, pursuant to a parent contract. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#))
- Mississippi DOES provide online resources to parents to support reading at home, through the [Strong Readers Strong Leaders Mississippi](#) website and MDE [Literacy Resources for Parents](#) website.
- Mississippi HAS created a [Read-At-Home Plan for Student Success](#) 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:

- Mississippi [law](#) (Miss. Code 37-177-1, et al.) REQUIRES students be retained in 3rd grade, absent a good cause exemption, if they are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided.

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:

- Mississippi DOES offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, Frequently Asked Questions](#)) These include:
 - Earning a “met LBPA requirements” (level 3 or above) on the multiple-choice portion of the 3rd Grade MAAP-ELA Assessment;
 - Achieving a “met LBPA requirements” (level 3 or above) on either of the two retest opportunities on the 3rd Grade Reading Alternative Assessment (also qualifies as “Good Cause Exemption”);
 - Achieving a Level 3 or higher on the 3rd Grade MAAP-ELA Assessment after the writing is scored (also qualifies as a “Good Cause Exemption”).

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:

- Mississippi [law](#) (Miss. Code 37-177-1, et al.) DOES allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade. ([MDE, Good Cause Exemption Documentation \(LBPA\)](#)) Good cause exemptions include:
 - Limited English Proficient students with less than two (2) years of instruction in an English Language Learner program;
 - Student with a disability whose IEP indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law;
 - Student with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who has an IEP or Section 504 Plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation in reading for two (2) years but still demonstrates a deficiency or was previously retained in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade;
 - Student who demonstrates an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education;
 - Student who received intensive intervention in reading for two (2) or more years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and who was previously retained in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade for a total of two (2) years and has not met exceptional education criteria.

Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students

CONTINUED



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

- Mississippi REQUIRES intensive interventions and an Individual Reading Plan to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause. ([MDE, Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

