Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report
Explore South Carolina’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.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>☭ <strong>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</strong> This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</strong></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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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 South Carolina’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.

ADOPION IMPLEMENTATION

17 out of 18

STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [South Carolina Code Section 59-155-110 South Carolina Read to Succeed Act](#)
- [South Carolina Department of Education, Read to Succeed](#)
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:

- South Carolina DOES require all educators and administrators to receive training in the teaching of reading and earn the related literacy endorsement based on their certification. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed (R2S) Endorsement Requirements](#))

- South Carolina DOES allow educators to earn the R2S Literacy Teacher endorsement by successfully completing Lexia LETRS. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed (R2S) Endorsement Requirements](#))

- South Carolina HAS approved a list of Read to Succeed In-Service Courses for teachers and administrators.

- South Carolina HAS created Literacy Competencies for all Pre-K–5th Grade Classroom Teachers and Literacy Competencies for Administrators.

- South Carolina HAS adopted LETRS training and the FY24 budget provides funding for all K–3 teachers to complete the training, with a stipend for successful completion. ([SCDE, Science of Reading](#))
Science of Reading (SOR) Training

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

- South Carolina IS supporting districts in implementing LETRS by providing training for administrators and reading coaches on implementing LETRS practices. This includes providing a focused professional learning community on implementing evidence-based literacy instructional practices. (SCDE Memo: LETRS Administrator and Reading Coach PLC)

- South Carolina DOES monitor districts’ provision of teacher training in the science of reading, as the state is requiring districts to report this beginning in the 2023–2024 school year through the district and school reading plans.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- South Carolina should expand policy to *require* all K–3 teachers and administrators to participate in state-adopted 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 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:

- South Carolina policy DOES require reading/literacy coaches to be employed in each elementary school, and serve as job-embedded, stable resources for training throughout schools. ([SCDE, Literacy Specialists and Coaches](#))
- South Carolina HAS created [Literacy Competencies for Reading/Literacy Coaches](#).
- South Carolina DOES provide funding for reading/literacy coaches, which is determined by the number of primary and elementary schools serving students in the district. Funding may be used in primary, elementary, middle school, or a combination of these schools based on the area of highest need. ([SCDE Memo: State Funded Reading/Literacy Coach Allocation](#))
- South Carolina DOES provide for flexibility on hiring reading/literacy coaches and currently provides that reading/literacy coach funds may be used on interventionists providing support to struggling readers in Kindergarten–5th grade. ([SCDE Memo: State Funded Reading/Literacy Coach Allocation](#))
- South Carolina DOES provide for R2S Literacy Coach endorsements, which educators can achieve by completing 5 years of successful teaching experience and the R2S Literacy Teacher endorsement. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed (R2S) Endorsement Requirements](#))
**IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

**PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

**RESOURCES**

- SCDE, South Carolina Reading Coach Institute – Year 1 Principles of Coaching
- SCDE, South Carolina Reading Coach Institute – Year 2 Action Research
- SCDE, Reading Coach District MOA

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- South Carolina should ensure that a literacy coach that is trained in the science of reading is assigned to each elementary school, without the possibility of waiving the position, 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:

- South Carolina DOES have standards for educator preparation programs that address all five core components of scientifically based reading. (NCTQ, South Carolina Summary 2023)

- South Carolina DOES require educator preparation programs with candidates seeking certification in early childhood, elementary, or special education to complete a 12-hour course sequence in literacy that includes instruction in the major components of the reading process. (SCDE, Read to Succeed (R2S) Endorsement Requirements)

- South Carolina DOES provide Literacy Teacher endorsements or R2S Requirement endorsements for successful completion of the preparation program and certification requirements, including earning a “C” or better in all literacy courses in the program’s approved R2S sequence. (SCDE, Read to Succeed (R2S) Endorsement Requirements)

- South Carolina DOES require the following college courses for the R2S Literacy Teacher endorsement: Foundations of Reading, Instructional Practices, Assessment of Reading, and Content Area Reading and Writing. (SCDE, Read to Succeed (R2S) Endorsement Requirements)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- South Carolina should ensure that EPP required coursework for elementary, early childhood, and special education candidates is aligned to the science of reading and prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing.

- South Carolina should also ensure 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

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:

• South Carolina DOES require licensure tests that address reading: Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects, Reading and Language Arts subtest and Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge for Teaching, Reading and Language Arts—CTK subtest. However, these licensure tests DO NOT adequately address all five core components of reading. (NCTQ, South Carolina 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

• South Carolina should require elementary education candidates to pass an assessment that is aligned to the science of reading to obtain teacher licensure.
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:

• South Carolina DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  • Reading/literacy coaches, summer reading camps, and reading curriculum (FY24 Education Budget)
  • Per pupil allocations based on the number of students scoring “Not Met 1” on the previous year’s administration of SC Ready Reading (SCDE, Read to Succeed Summer Reading Camps)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• South Carolina should determine the adequate funding level to ensure implementation of the fundamental principles are fully funded.
Universal Reading Screener

**IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

**PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

State requires districts to adopt a universal reading screener to be administered 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:

- South Carolina DOES require schools to administer a state-approved universal reading screener to students in Kindergarten and 1st grade, and as needed for 2nd grade, three times per year. ([SCDE, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS); SCDE, South Carolina Multi-Tiered System of Supports (SCMTSS) Framework and Guidance Document](#))

- South Carolina HAS adopted a list of approved universal reading screeners.

- South Carolina DOES monitor districts’ use of screener data through district and school reading plans.

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- South Carolina should expand policy to require the universal reading screener to be administered to all K–3 students three times per year.
**Screener 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:**

- South Carolina HAS NOT approved a screener for characteristics of dyslexia.
- South Carolina DOES use universal screening results to identify “at-risk” students, including those with developmental reading disabilities. ([SCDE, The South Carolina Dyslexia Handbook](https://www.scde.sc.gov/))
- South Carolina DOES require the universal screener to screen for dyslexia and assess the following skills:
  - Kindergarten: alphabetic principle, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness
  - 1st grade: alphabetic principle, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, fluency

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- South Carolina should adopt a dyslexia screener that can be used to 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.
- South Carolina should expand policy to require the dyslexia screener to be administered, at a minimum, to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.
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:

• South Carolina DOES require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties during the second 9-week grading period, including the data, intensive instruction, and interventions provided to the students. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document](https://www.scde.org))

• South Carolina policy DOES require a general notice to parents of 3rd grade students regarding the Read to Succeed requirements for promotion or retention. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document](https://www.scde.org))

• South Carolina DOES provide guidance to schools through [parental notification templates](https://www.scde.org).

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• South Carolina should 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/or 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:

- Beginning with the 2024–2025 school year, state policy WILL require districts to select high-quality instructional materials from a vetted and approved list.

- South Carolina IS requiring districts to reflect on their plans for literacy instruction, intervention, and curriculum per Proviso 1A.73 to determine if they are aligned with the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational skills.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- South Carolina should further require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.
Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• South Carolina policy DOES prohibit the use of instructional materials that include three-cueing. The budget bill specifies that this begins with the current fiscal year.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
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:

- South Carolina DOES require reading portfolios for students not demonstrating grade-level proficiency, which indicates the intensive instruction and interventions that will be provided to the student. (SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document)
- South Carolina DOES encourage schools to create portfolios for all students. (SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- South Carolina should expand policy to require individual reading plans to be developed and implemented within 30 days of receiving screening results.
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:

• South Carolina DOES track district/school monitoring of students’ progress within a MTSS. (SCDE, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS))

• South Carolina DOES require schools to regularly monitor and use data to inform instruction and interventions as needed. (SCDE, South Carolina Multi-Tiered System of Supports (SCMTSS) Framework and Guidance Document)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
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:

• South Carolina DOES require interventions to be provided before, during, and after school. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document](#))

• South Carolina DOES require appropriate instruction and evidence-based interventions for all students who are at risk of experiencing academic difficulties. However, state guidance DOES NOT indicate the interventions must be aligned to the science of reading. ([SCDE, South Carolina Multi-Tiered System of Supports (SCMTSS) Framework and Guidance Document](#))

• South Carolina IS requiring districts to reflect on their plans for literacy instruction, intervention, and curriculum per [Proviso 1A.73](#) to determine if they are aligned with the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational skills.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• South Carolina should require school districts to target students’ needs by adopting interventions grounded in the science of reading from a vetted and approved list.
Summer Reading Camps

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires districts to offer summer reading camps to students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• South Carolina DOES require districts to provide 3rd grade students who are not reading proficiently on grade level with the opportunity to attend a summer reading camp. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed: Summer Reading Camp]; [SCDE, Summer Reading Camp])

• South Carolina DOES allow districts to invite students from other grades to attend summer reading camps, but it is not required. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed Summer Reading Camps])

• South Carolina DOES NOT clearly require summer reading camp educators to be trained in the science of reading, rather they may have an add-on literacy endorsement or documented and demonstrated substantial success in helping students comprehend grade level texts.

• South Carolina DID provide funding for summer reading camps through the FY24 education budget.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• South Carolina should expand policy to require districts to provide summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure.

• South Carolina should require all staff at the summer reading camps to be trained in the science of reading.
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:

• South Carolina DOES provide online resources to parents to support reading at home. (SCDE, Family Learning and Resources)

• South Carolina DOES require districts to provide such resources through the students’ Read to Succeed Plan, which includes suggestions for parents to support their students at home toward reaching grade-level reading proficiency. (SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document)

• South Carolina HAS supported districts and schools with family engagement through the creation of a Family Engagement Framework.
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:

- South Carolina DOES require students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state summative reading assessment, SC READY, be retained. (SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document)
Multiple Options for Promotion

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state offers at least three pathways to 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:

• South Carolina DOES offer at least three pathways to promotion to 4th grade, including successful completion of summer reading camps, demonstration of proficiency on an approved alternate assessment administered in the spring, or through a portfolio of student work. (SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document)

• South Carolina DOES require review of a student’s reading portfolio and summer reading camp post-assessment results to determine eligibility for promotion to 4th grade. The final decision for promotion is determined by the district superintendent, with recommendations from the principal. (SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document)
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:

- South Carolina DOES allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade, including exemptions for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who were previously retained. ([SCDE, Read to Succeed Third Grade Retention Guidance Document](https://www.scde.sc.gov/reading-readiness/early-learning-program/read-to-succeed))

- South Carolina DOES require intensive interventions to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause. ([SCDE, Third Grade Retention](https://www.scde.sc.gov/reading-readiness/early-learning-program))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.