Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Texas’s adoption and implementation of the 18 Early Literacy Fundamental Principles.
Early Literacy Policy Implementation Rubric

Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy establishes support and intensive reading interventions for all K–3 students to ensure they read on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The policy also requires 3rd grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to 4th grade. For students severely below grade level and who do not qualify for a good cause exemption, retention provides struggling readers the additional time and intensive interventions they need to catch up with their peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></th>
<th>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</strong></td>
<td>This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></th>
<th>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</th>
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<th><strong>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</strong></th>
<th>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</th>
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| **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 Texas’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

10 out of 18

STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- TEC 28.007 Reading Diagnosis
- TEA, Reading Practices
Science of Reading (SOR) Training

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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:

• Texas DOES require all educators in Kindergarten–3rd grade, special education teachers, and principals to attend Reading Academies. (TEA, HB3 Reading Academies)

• Texas DOES allow LEAs to exempt certain educators who are not the teacher of record in required grade levels, including art, health education, music, physical education, speech communication, and theater arts or theater teachers. (TEA, HB3 Reading Academies)

• Texas DOES require the Reading Academies to provide training in the science of reading. (TEA, HB3 Reading Academies)

• Texas DOES monitor the requirement for science of reading training, by collecting data and providing a searchable database for Texas Reading Academies participants.

NOTEWORTHY

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

• Texas has created Science of Teaching Reading (STR) Pathways, which allows the educators to participate in shortened reading academies module content.

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:

- Texas HAS NOT adopted a policy relating to literacy coaches.
- Texas DOES provide grant funding for literacy coaching opportunities; however, this is optional and only available to districts that apply for funding specific to literacy coaching.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Texas 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
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

EPP required coursework (elementary, early childhood, and special education) is aligned to the science of reading and prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing. Coursework includes evidence-based literacy instruction, how to administer reading assessments, and how to identify students with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Texas DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that address all five core components of scientifically based reading. (NCTQ, Texas Summary 2023)
- Texas policy DOES provide that EPP required coursework must include evidence-based literacy instruction, how to administer assessments, and how to work with students identified as having dyslexia.
- Texas policy DOES specify that EPP required coursework for educator candidates should prohibit the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
- Beginning in 2024–2025, EPPs in Texas WILL have the opportunity to provide the Texas Reading Academies for elementary teacher candidates. (TEA, Texas Reading Academies and Educator Preparation Programs)
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:

- Texas DOES require educators to pass licensure tests that are aligned to the science of reading to obtain teacher licensure: The Science of Teaching Reading Exam (NCTQ, Texas Summary 2023; NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023))
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:

• Texas DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of the following early literacy efforts:
  • Funds for Literacy Achievement Academies
  • Literacy Framework funding
  • Funding for HB3 (Reading Academies, etc.)
  • Literacy Coaching & Professional Development (Kindergarten–5th grade)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

States require 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:

- Texas DOES require schools to administer the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment or mCLASS Texas to all kindergarteners at the beginning of the year. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

- Texas DOES require schools to administer the following assessments for students in 1st and 2nd grade: mCLASS Texas and TPRI/Tejas Lee at the beginning of the year. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

- Texas DOES allow districts to choose to use an approved instrument from the Commissioner’s list for students in 1st and 2nd grade or select their own instrument through a district-level committee. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

- Texas DOES monitor administration of the K–2 screeners by requiring schools to submit data to the Public Education Information Management System. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

- Texas DOES strongly encourage schools to administer instruments in the middle of the year and end of the year, but these are not required. (TEA, SY23–24 Kindergarten Assessment Requirements and Recommendations)

- Texas DOES require 3rd grade students to be assessed using the Reading Language Arts Assessment. (TEA, STARR Resources)
Universal Reading Screener

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

RESOURCES

- TEA, Data Tool Selection Guidance

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Texas should expand policy to require a state-approved universal reading screener be administered to all K–3 students three times per year to identify students at risk for reading failure.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Texas DOES require administration of a universal dyslexia screener for Kindergarten at the end of the school year. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

• Texas DOES require administration of a universal dyslexia screener for 1st and 2nd grade students at the beginning of the year. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

• Texas HAS confirmed that all of the universal reading screeners that are approved by the state are aligned to requirements for criteria for direct assessment in accordance with the most recent Dyslexia Handbook. (TEA, Data Tool Selection Guidance)

• Texas DOES require the screening instruments to screen for the following skills: letter sounds knowledge or letter naming fluency and phonological awareness in Kindergarten, and word reading accuracy or fluency and phonological awareness in 1st grade. (TEA, Dyslexia Handbook)

RESOURCES

• TEA, Key Assessment Dates and Requirements for Pre-K through Grade 2 – SY 2023–2024

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Texas should expand policy to require the state-approved screeners for characteristics of dyslexia 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.
Parental Notification

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

States require 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:

- Texas DOES require parent notification of the results of the Kindergarten screener within 60 days of administration. (TEA, Implementation of Early Childhood Instruments in the 2023–24 School Year)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Texas 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 dyslexia screener.
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:

- Texas DOES require school districts to provide phonics curriculum that uses systematic, direct instruction in Kindergarten–3rd grade. ([Texas Resource Review, List of Compliant Phonics Programs](#))
- Texas HAS developed K–3 phonics rubrics and created a [vetted and approved list](#) of phonics materials. ([Texas Resource Review, List of Compliant Phonics Programs](#))
- Texas DOES NOT require districts to adopt materials from the list; rather, districts MAY use the rubrics to select instructional materials. ([TEA, List of Compliant Phonics Program Frequently Asked Questions](#))
- Texas DOES allow districts to use a phonics program that does not fully comply with the requirements in policy, so long as the program has a strong evidence base. ([TEA, List of Compliant Phonics Program Frequently Asked Questions](#))
- The vetted and approved list of materials is in compliance with the phonics-specific Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. ([Texas Resource Review, List of Compliant Phonics Programs](#))

NOTE

- The state is currently accepting public comments on the Instructional Materials Review and Approval rubrics for K–3 [English language arts and reading](#).

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Texas should expand policy to require districts to adopt instructional materials from the vetted and approved list only.
- Further, Texas should require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.
Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Texas HAS adopted a policy that prohibits school districts from using any instruction that incorporates three-cueing in the phonics curriculum.

• Texas HAS adopted a policy that requires the agency to provide assessments to school districts in complying with the requirements in the law.

• Soon, Texas WILL release guidance on prohibition of three-cueing in instructional materials and a timeline for the elimination of the use of materials with three-cueing. (TEA, House Bill 1605)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

At this time, we have no considerations for strengthening this principle.
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:

• Texas DOES require the creation of accelerated education plans for students who fail to achieve approaches or higher on two consecutive assessments in the same subject area. (TEA, Accelerated Instruction)

• Texas IS creating rules that will provide that students in 3rd grade who do not approach grade level or higher will be required to receive 30 hours of supplemental instruction. (TEA, Accelerated Instruction)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Following policy change that requires schools to administer the universal reading screener three times per year for students in 1st–3rd grade, Texas should then require schools to develop and implement individual reading plans for students who are identified as having reading deficiencies within 30 days of receiving screening results.

• Texas should then establish a process for monitoring the implementation of those plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plans.
Regularly Monitor Student Progress

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires schools to monitor students’ progress within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). 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:

- Texas HAS created a multi-tiered system of supports to align schoolwide practices to support the academic development of students. ([TEA, Safe and Supportive Schools](#))

- Texas DOES require educators to monitor student academic development within the classroom as part of the MTSS. ([TEA, Safe and Supportive Schools](#))

- Texas DOES recommend schools determine how the administered instrument and data are consistently utilized within the existing system for monitoring students’ progress. ([TEA, SY23–24 Grade 1 Assessment Requirements and Recommendations](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Texas should expand policy to require administration of the universal reading screener for K–3 students three times per year – the data from this can then be used to inform instruction and interventions within the MTSS that the state has established.
Evidence-Based Interventions

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:

• Texas DOES require all students who do not achieve approaches or higher on STAAR 3rd grade assessments to be provided with accelerated instruction, which includes either being assigned a TIA designated teacher for the subsequent school year in the applicable subject area OR provided supplemental instruction aligned with the research on high impact tutoring in the TEKS for the applicable grade levels and subject area. (TEA, Accelerated Instruction)

• The Texas Education Agency HAS partnered with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk and the University of Texas to develop pathways that provide evidence-based tiered interventions that educators can use to support students. (TEA, Safe and Supportive Schools)

• Texas HAS established the Vetted Texas Tutor Corps (VTTC) to provide high impact tutoring to accelerate student learning. (TEA, Vetted Texas Tutor Corps)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Texas should expand policy and require school districts to target students’ needs by adopting interventions grounded in the science of reading from a vetted and approved list. The interventions on the list should include those that are provided before, during, or after school.
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:

• Texas HAS NOT adopted a policy relating to summer reading camps.
• Texas HAS created a Summer Learning Framework which allows for optional supports for districts interested in planning and implementing a high-quality summer learning program. ([TEA, Summer Learning Framework](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Texas should expand policy by requiring 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.
• Texas should further require all staff at summer reading camps to be trained in the science of reading.
Parent Read-At-Home Plan

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:

• Texas HAS NOT adopted a policy relating to parent read-at-home plans.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Texas should expand policy to require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency.

• Texas should ensure the strategies shared with parents target students’ needs based on data and are aligned with the science of reading.
Initial Determinant Retention at 3rd Grade Based on State Assessment

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:

- Texas DOES NOT have a policy that requires 3rd grade students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained.

- Texas DOES provide that parents can request to have their child retained in Kindergarten, or 1st–3rd grade. If a school disagrees with the parent’s request, the school must convene a retention committee to discuss the retention further; however, the ultimate decision is up to the parent. (TEA, Early Childhood Education FAQs)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Texas should expand policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided 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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Texas should expand policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained and offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or 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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Texas should expand policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained and 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.

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