Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report
Explore Utah’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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</strong></td>
<td>This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</td>
</tr>
<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 Utah’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

12 out of 18

STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Utah’s Early Outcomes Improvement Act
- USBE, Utah’s K-12 Literacy Framework
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:

• State policy DOES require science of reading training for K–3 teachers and administrators.

• Utah DOES provide science of reading training through Lexia LETRS.

• Utah DOES provide grant funds for LEAs to offer professional learning opportunities in early literacy to Pre-K–3 teachers. (USBE: Professional Learning Grant)

• Utah DOES offer training opportunities relating to literacy through the USBE-Midas Education website.

NOTEWORTHY

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

• Utah has created a goal of having 70% of 3rd grade students reading on grade level by June of 2027. A press release from September 2023 indicates five LEAs in the state have already achieved this goal.
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:

- Utah DOES provide for early literacy coaches in policy.
- Utah DOES provide grant funds through the Professional Learning Grant for coaching supports. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual](#))
- Utah HAS created two endorsements for existing educators relating to reading; Level 2 allows educators to work as a literacy coach.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Utah should ensure that a literacy coach that is trained in the science of reading is assigned to each elementary school to provide job-embedded training and coaching to K–3 teachers.
Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Alignment

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Utah DOES have standards that address all five core components of scientifically based reading. ([NCTQ, Utah Summary 2023](#))

• Utah HAS created the educator preparation program, Competencies for Elementary Literacy, which includes competencies related to assessments and how to identify students with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Utah should expand policy to require that educator preparation program coursework prohibits the use of course materials that include 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:

- Utah DOES require elementary education candidates, including candidates for early childhood, elementary, or special education licenses, to pass a science of reading aligned assessment to obtain licensure: Foundations of Reading. (NCTQ, Utah Summary 2023; NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023))

- Utah HAS provided funding to cover the cost of the initial administration of the assessment.

- Utah IS monitoring candidates who are taking the assessments and the pass rate by requiring educator preparation programs to submit data to the Department.

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:

- Utah DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of the following early literacy efforts:
  - Early Literacy Program Grant funds
  - Elementary Teacher Preparation Assessment Grant funds
  - Partnerships for Student Success Grant funds
  - Professional Learning Grant funds

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

A state-approved universal reading screener is administered to K–3 students three times per year to identify students at risk for reading failure.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Utah DOES require schools to administer the state-approved universal reading screener, Acadience, to K–3 students three times per year – beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual])

- Utah DOES monitor district use of a universal reading screener, as the state requires schools to report data relating to its administration. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual])

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
Screener for Characteristics of 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:

- Utah DOES NOT require dyslexia screeners to be administered to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.
- Utah DOES require students identified as “at risk” based on multiple sources of data to be administered diagnostic assessments to measure for characteristics of dyslexia.
- Utah HAS NOT approved a screener for characteristics of dyslexia.
- Utah DOES provide guidance that specifies that diagnostic assessments should measure the following characteristics: phonemic and phonological awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, rapid naming, and encoding skills. (USBE, Dyslexia Handbook)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Utah should adopt policy to require dyslexia screeners to be administered to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade, not just administered to those students identified as “at risk” on the universal reading screener.
Parental Notification

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of each administration of the state-approved universal reading screener and/or dyslexia screener.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Utah DOES require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of administration of the screener. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual](#))

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:

• Utah DOES provide guidance relating to the selection and adoption of evidence-informed core reading programs that are aligned to the science of reading. ([USBE, Science of Reading Evidence-Informed Core Criteria Checklist (2023)](https://example.com))

• Utah HAS created Curricular Guidance which includes definitions and clarifications for implementation of the state’s instructional materials law.

• Utah HAS adopted a vetted and approved list of elementary literacy curricula.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Utah should expand policy to require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.
Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Utah DOES NOT, through policy, guidance, training, or other avenues prohibit the use of instructional materials that include three-cueing.
- Utah DOES provide elementary literacy curriculum guidance that identifies three-cueing as a red flag.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Utah should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing.
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:

- Utah DOES require schools to use data from the students’ screener results to develop a plan for intervention. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual](#))
- Utah DOES NOT clearly require the creation of an individual reading plan, and the state DOES NOT provide guidance that is easily available relating to plans for intervention.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Utah 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.
- Utah should also establish a process to monitor the implementation of the plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plan.
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:

• Utah DOES require schools to monitor the progress of students who scored well-below or below-benchmark score, following guidelines outlined by Acadience Reading. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual](#))

• Utah DOES have an MTSS to monitor and document students’ progress, which uses universal, targeted, and intensive levels of support. ([USBE, Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports (UMTSS)](#))

• Utah DOES provide training for [UMTSS Literacy Instruction](#).

RESOURCES

• [Acadience Learning, Progress Monitoring with Acadience Reading K–6](#)

• [USBE, Utah MTSS 3-Tier Critical Components Definitions](#)

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:

- Utah DOES require schools to provide focused, individualized interventions related to reading if a student’s score on the Acadience Reading screener indicates that the student lacks competency in reading. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual](https://www.earlyliteracymatters.org))

- Utah DOES require all intervention materials for K–3 students scoring below or well-below grade level to be evidence-based. The state also provides guidance on selecting evidence-based interventions. ([USBE, Critical Features of Tiered Literacy Interventions 2.0](https://www.earlyliteracymatters.org))

- Utah HAS created a [vetted and approved list](https://www.earlyliteracymatters.org) of K–3 elementary literacy interventions.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
Summer Reading Camps

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Utah DOES NOT require districts to offer summer reading camps to students at risk of reading failure.
- Utah policy DOES provide that summer school may be an option for an intervention for students who have been identified as having a reading deficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Utah 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.
- Utah should further require all staff at summer reading camps to be trained in the science of reading.
Parent Read-At-Home Plan

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state or district provides online resources to parents to support reading at home.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Utah DOES require schools to provide information to parents relating to activities that they may engage in with the student to assist the student in improving reading. ([USBE, Early Learning Program – Technical Manual](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Utah 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, which should include data-based strategies that target students’ needs and are aligned to the science of reading.
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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Utah 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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Utah 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.
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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Utah 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.

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