Early Literacy Matters
State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Vermont’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>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</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>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</td>
<td>The fundamental principle is not adopted in policy, does not meet minimum implementation requirements or is grant-based and not sustainable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Vermont’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

2 out of 18

STATE POLICY ADOPTION
REFERENCE MATERIALS

- 16 VSA 2903 Preventing early school failure; reading instruction
- Blueprint for Early Literacy Comprehensive System of Services, PreK through Third Grade (2019)
- Act 173 (2018)
- Act 28 (2021)
- Education Quality Standards
Science of Reading (SOR) Training

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Vermont DOES NOT require K–3 teachers and administrators to participate in state-adopted science of reading training.
- Vermont HAS begun offering a training series for educators relating to literacy. ([Vermont Agency of Education, English Language Arts/Literacy](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont should expand policy to require all K–3 teachers and administrators to participate in state-adopted science of reading training.
- In adopting this policy, Vermont should ensure there is an implementation plan for rollout that is clearly communicated to all educators.
Literacy Coaches

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:

- Vermont DOES NOT provide for literacy coaches in policy.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Vermont DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that address all core components of scientifically-based reading; however, Vermont only provides details for some of them. (NCTQ, Vermont Summary 2023)
- Vermont DOES have a process to review educator preparation course syllabi. (Early Literacy in Vermont: Findings from the Vermont Educator Preparation Course Syllabi Review)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont should expand policy to 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.
- Vermont should further ensure 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:

- Vermont DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading: Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects, Reading and Language Arts, subtest; however, this licensure test DOES NOT adequately address all five core components of reading. ([NCTQ, Vermont 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

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:

• Vermont DOES NOT provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

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:

- Vermont DOES NOT require a state-approved universal reading screener to be administered to K–3 students three times per year to identify students at risk for reading failure.

- Vermont policy DOES require schools to implement and continually update standards for student performance, as well as methods of assessment to determine attainment of the standards for student performance. Standards must include a standard for reading level proficiency for students completing 3rd grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

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:

- Vermont HAS NOT approved a screener for characteristics of dyslexia.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont should expand policy to require schools to administer a state-approved screener for characteristics of dyslexia that assesses the following skills, as developmentally appropriate: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, rapid naming, encoding, and oral reading fluency.

- Vermont should require the dyslexia screener to be administered, at a minimum, to all students at the end of Kindergarten and at the beginning of 1st and 2nd grade.
Parental Notification

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:

• Vermont HAS NOT established a policy relating to parental notification.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Following approval of a universal screener and dyslexia screener to be administered to students, Vermont should further expand policy to require parental notification of students identified with reading difficulties within 30 days of each administration of the state-approved universal reading screener and dyslexia screener.
District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

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:

- Vermont DOES NOT require school districts to adopt high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading and state standards.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Vermont should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing instruction and materials.
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:

- Vermont DOES NOT require the creation of individual reading plans for students identified with a reading deficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- In addition to establishing policy relating to universal reading screeners, Vermont should 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.

- Further, Vermont should establish a process for monitoring the implementation of those plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plan.
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:

• Vermont HAS created a multi-tiered system of supports framework to support students academically.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Vermont should expand policy to require schools to regularly monitor and document students’ literacy progress within the state’s multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

• To strengthen the state’s use of the MTSS, Vermont should expand policy relating to universal reading screeners. Vermont can then use data from the screeners to inform instruction and interventions, as needed.
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:

• Vermont DOES NOT have a policy relating to the use of evidence-based science of reading interventions for students who have been identified as having a reading deficiency.

• Vermont policy DOES require schools to provide supplemental reading instruction to any enrolled student in 4th grade whose reading proficiency falls below 3rd grade reading expectations.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Vermont should expand policy to 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

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:

- Vermont DOES NOT have a policy requiring districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont 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.
- Vermont 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:

- Vermont DOES NOT require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency.
- Vermont policy DOES require schools to provide information and support to parents relating to literacy.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont 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.
- Further, Vermont should require strategies that are shared with parents to target students’ needs based on data and are aligned with 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:

• Vermont DOES NOT have a policy that requires a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided be retained.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Vermont should expand policy to require that a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options be retained and receive intensive intervention in reading.
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:

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Vermont 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 receive intensive reading intervention. Policy should include at least three pathways for promotion to 4th grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or successfully demonstrating sufficient 3rd grade reading skills through a portfolio of student work.
Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED

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

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

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

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont 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 receive intensive reading intervention. 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.

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