



Early Literacy Matters

State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

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






VT

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

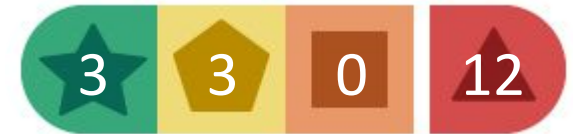
The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of states' implementation of K–3 reading policies aligned to ExcelinEd's [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy. It builds on an analysis of states' adoption of statutes and regulations establishing requirements for each component 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 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.

ADOPTION IMPLEMENTATION

6 out of 18



STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [16 VSA 2903 Foundation for literacy](#)
- [Vermont Agency of Education, Read Vermont](#)
- [Report of the Advisory Council on Literacy \(2022\)](#)
- [Act 173 \(2018\)](#)
- [Act 28 \(2021\)](#)
- [Act 139 \(2024\)](#)
- [Act 72 \(2025\)](#)
- [Education Quality Standards](#)

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:

- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to provide professional learning activities to K–3 teachers and administrators, which must include information on implementing a reading screening assessment, interpreting results, determining instructional practices for students, and communicating results with families. (See also [Vermont Agency of Education, Overview of Act 139 Requirements and Recommendation for Local Education Authorities \(LEAs\) and Approved Independent Schools](#))
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to maintain a record of completion of professional learning, as required by the state.
- Vermont DOES offer a training series for educators relating to literacy but has not established requirements on length, frequency, breadth, and depth of training. ([Vermont Agency of Education, English Language Arts/Literacy](#); [Vermont Agency of Education, Read Vermont](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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.
- Vermont HAS created Read Vermont, with one priority related to literacy coaches. The first phase of this initiative involves offering free, intensive, personalized support for at least 100 PK–3 educators and 40 educational leaders/administrators in the state's elementary schools from January 2025 through February 2026. ([Vermont Agency of Education, Overview of Read Vermont Job-Embedded Coaching Opportunity](#))

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.

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:

- 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](#))
- Vermont Agency of Education IS currently submitting recommendations to the Vermont Standards of Professional Educators to strengthen educator preparation programs' alignment to evidence-based, structured literacy practices, per [Act 139 of 2024](#).
- Buly July 2026, Vermont [policy](#) WILL require the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators to take action based on the recommendations from the Agency of Education regarding strengthening educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-based literacy.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont should expand policy to require that educator preparation program coursework prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing instructional strategies.
- 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.

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) 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:

- 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 \(Nov. 2023\)](#))
- Vermont Agency of Education IS currently submitting recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board of Professional Educators to strengthen educator preparation programs' teaching of evidence-based, structured literacy practices per [Act 139 of 2024](#). These recommendations include requiring a strong licensing exam for educators responsible for teaching students how to read. More specifically, the *Praxis Teaching Reading (5205)* is recommended as Vermont already uses the Praxis and this assessment specifically evaluates candidates' ability to teach and assess the five foundational components of reading and cover considerations for linguistically diverse learners and learners with characteristics of dyslexia for all licenses and endorsements related to early childhood, elementary education, PK–12 special education, and PK–12 reading specialists.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Vermont should require elementary education candidates to pass an assessment that is aligned to the science of reading in order to obtain teacher licensure.

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

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

States require districts to adopt a universal reading screener to be administered at least one time per year with optional mid-year and end-of-year screening.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require each public and approved independent school eligible to receive public tuition to screen all students in Kindergarten–3rd grade, at least annually, using “age and grade-level appropriate universal reading screeners.”
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require the universal screeners to be administered according to best practices and the technical specifications of the screener being used.
- The Agency of Education published [Review and Recommendations: K–3 Universal Screener](#), which reviews universal reading screening instruments most commonly used in Vermont, offers recommendations, and provides practical guidance for screener selection and supplementation to meet Act 139 review criteria. The review is based on technical adequacy, attention to linguistic diversity, administrative usability, and valid measures of the developmental skills in early literacy, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as required by [Act 139](#).
- 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.

Screeners 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.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require the universal reading screeners administered annually to students to include valid measures of the developmental skills in early literacy, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES explain that additional diagnostic assessments and evidence-based curriculum and instruction for students demonstrating dyslexia characteristics must be determined by data-informed decision-making.
- Vermont's [Review and Recommendations: K–3 Universal Screener](#) DOES state that universal screeners can flag students who demonstrate the 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 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.
- 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

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:

- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to notify parents of students who have received a screening result that is significantly below the relevant benchmarks within 30 days of administration of the screener. (See also [Vermont Agency of Education, Requirements and Recommendations on Screening Notification for Parents and Guardians](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require evidence-based reading instructional practices or programs that are provided to students who are reading significantly below relevant benchmarks to be “effective, explicit, systematic, and consistent with federal and State guidance” and they must address foundational concepts of literacy proficiency.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to offer reading instruction to K–3 students that is systematic and explicitly evidence-based.

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

- 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

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:

- Vermont HAS created a [multi-tiered system of supports](#) framework to support students academically.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to use screenings to determine which actions must be taken to meet students’ needs, which includes differentiated or supplementary evidence-based reading instruction and ongoing monitoring of progress.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES make clear that additional diagnostic assessments and evidence-based curriculum and instruction for those students who exhibit a reading deficiency must be determined by “data-informed decision making within existing processes,” based on required federal and state law.

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:

- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to provide interventions to students exhibiting reading deficiencies that are evidence-based; effective, explicit, systematic, and consistent with guidance and law; and address the foundational concepts of literacy proficiency.
- Vermont [policy](#) DOES require schools to provide supplemental reading instruction to any enrolled student whose reading proficiency falls below proficiency standards for the student's grade level or whose reading proficiency prevents progress in school.

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. (See [Vermont Agency of Education, Read Vermont: Resources for Parents and Guardians](#))

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.

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:

- 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 adopt 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 multiple pathways for promotion to 4th grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment or qualifying for a good cause exemption.

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 adopt 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.

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

