



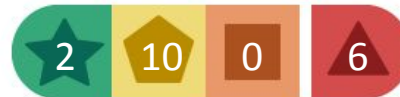
# Early Literacy Matters

## State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

Explore Washington, D.C.'s adoption and implementation of the 18 Early Literacy Fundamental Principles.






**DC**

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 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The policy also requires 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> 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><b>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</p> <p> <b>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</b> This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</p>
 <p><b>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</p>
 <p><b>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</p>
 <p><b>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</b></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

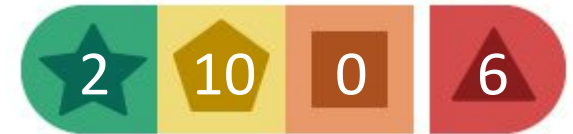
The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of states' implementation of K–3 reading policies aligned to ExcelinEd's [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy. It builds on an analysis of states' adoption of statutes and regulations establishing requirements for each component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

- [Code of the District of Columbia, Chapter 25D. Prevention of Reading Difficulties](#)
- [OSSE, Literacy DC](#)
- [OSSE, DC State-Wide Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#)

# 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:

- Washington, D.C. DOES offer science of reading training through the [OSSE Learning Management System](#).
- Washington, D.C. DOES require all educators to complete dyslexia and reading difficulties awareness training. ([Dyslexia DC, Frequently Asked Questions for DC Law 23-191 \(updated June 2023\)](#))
- Washington, D.C. DID recommend structured literacy training for school-based administrators in the [Early Literacy Education Task Force, Recommendations for Structured Literacy Instruction in the District of Columbia \(September 2023\)](#).
- Beginning in 2026–2027, Washington, D.C. [policy](#) WILL require kindergarten teachers to complete OSSE-approved structured literacy training or to demonstrate competency in structured literacy instruction.

# Science of Reading (SOR) Training

**CONTINUED****IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL****PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION****NOTEWORTHY**

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

- Washington, D.C. created the Early Literacy Education Task Force, which met between November 2022 and August 2023, to create recommendations to advance literacy instruction in the District. (See [Early Literacy Education Task Force, Recommendations for Structured Literacy Instruction in the District of Columbia \(September 2023\)](#))

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR  
STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require science of reading training, adopted by the District, for *all K–3 teachers and administrators*.
- In establishing this policy, Washington, D.C. should also create 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:

- Washington, D.C. DOES NOT provide for literacy coaches in policy in a meaningful way; however, [D.C. Code](#) DOES require supplemental funding for early literacy programs that includes the delivery of the literacy program by professionally coached interventionists.
- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES require administration of a pilot program in 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 to hire literacy coaches to provide support to classroom teachers and the use of structured literacy instructional skills. The program must prioritize schools with the lowest performance on statewide assessments. The first year of the pilot will involve 4 literacy coaches to support up to 20 schools.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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:

- Washington, D.C. DOES have standards for educator preparation programs that address all components of scientifically based reading and require candidates to complete coursework in the science of reading. ([NCTQ, Washington, D.C. Summary 2023](#))
- Washington, D.C. policy ([5A DCMR 1704.6](#) & [5A DCMR 1706.7](#)) DOES require educator preparation programs that are preparing candidates for subject area programs with primary responsibility of literacy instruction, including early childhood, elementary, and special education, and others identified by OSSE, to provide coursework that is aligned to the science of reading and how to identify students with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, and demonstrate competency in each of the five components of scientifically based reading instruction. (See also [OSSE, State Educator Preparation Provider and Subject Area Program Approval Handbook \(September 2024\)](#); [OSSE, Science of Reading Standards Rubric](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require educator preparation program coursework to prohibit 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:**

- Washington, D.C. DOES require education candidates to pass a science of reading aligned assessment to obtain teacher licensure: Praxis Elementary Education: Teaching Reading (7002). ([OSSE, Test Change Advanced Notification: Elementary Education Teacher Certification \(January 13, 2025\)](#))

## 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:**

- Washington, D.C. DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  - Literacy Initiatives (D.C. Budget)

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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:

- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES require a universal reading screener to be administered to K–2 students.
- Washington, D.C. HAS established an approved [universal screener list](#). If a local educational agency (LEA) chooses to use a screening tool that is not recommended by OSSE, it must, [upon request](#), make available its reasoning for choosing that particular tool.
- Washington, D.C. DOES explain that schools should administer the universal screener for all K–2 students at least three times per year. ([OSSE Approved Universal Screener List](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES require schools to certify compliance with requirements of the law, including specifying that all K–2 students will be screened using a recommended assessment *three times per year*. ([Dyslexia DC, Communications Toolkit for Local Education Agencies \(LEAs\) to Support Implementation of DC Law 23-191](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require the universal reading screener to be administered to *all K–3 students* three times per year.

# Screeners 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:

- Washington, D.C. HAS approved a [list of universal reading screeners](#) to support LEAs with the implementation of the dyslexia laws; however, schools are not required to use screeners from this list. ([Dyslexia DC, Frequently Asked Questions for DC Law 23-191 \(updated June 2023\)](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES explain that schools should administer the universal screener for all K–2 students at least three times per year, but it is NOT CLEAR this is a requirement. ([OSSE Approved Universal Screener List](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES require the screeners to assess the following skills, as developmentally appropriate: phonological and phonemic awareness, rapid naming, correspondence between sounds and letters, and decoding. ([OSSE Approved Universal Screener List](#); [Dyslexia DC, Frequently Asked Questions for DC Law 23-191 \(updated June 2023\)](#); [Dyslexia DC, Communications Toolkit for Local Education Agencies \(LEAs\) to Support Implementation of DC Law 23-191](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require all universal reading screeners 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*.
- Washington, D.C. should also *clearly* require the screener to be administered, at a minimum, to all students at the end of Kindergarten and the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.



# Parental Notification



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The 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:

- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES require parental notification if a student is identified as having a reading difficulty. (See also [Dyslexia DC, Universal Screener Implementation Guidance for DC Law 23-191](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES provide guidance for schools in the form of communication templates to notify parents of the results of the students' universal reading screener to identify reading deficiencies and to identify characteristics of dyslexia. ([Dyslexia DC, Communications Toolkit for Local Education Agencies \(LEAs\) to Support Implementation of DC Law 23-191](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES require schools to certify compliance with requirements of the law, including specifying all families will be notified of the screening results after each screening. ([Dyslexia DC, Communications Toolkit for Local Education Agencies \(LEAs\) to Support Implementation of DC Law 23-191](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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.

# District Adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION

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 and/or state must post their adopted materials on the district website. 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:

- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES require LEAs to adopt a science-based reading program. LEAs must [report](#) requested information to OSSE including the name of the Tier I literacy curriculum to be used, which is then [published](#) by OSSE.
- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES require OSSE to create and publish an approved list of HQIM that are aligned with the science of reading, which must be periodically updated.
- Washington, D.C. HAS adopted a [list](#) of high-quality, science-based literacy programs for K–5.
- Washington, D.C. HAS created guidance for schools relating to adoption of high-quality instructional materials. ([OSSE, High-Quality Instructional Materials Rubric for K–5 Science-Based Literacy Programs](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

# 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:

- Washington, D.C. 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

- Washington, D.C. should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing.

# 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:**

- Washington, D.C. DOES NOT require the creation of an individual reading plan.
- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES require written notification to the parent to describe the reading instruction and interventions that will be provided to the student, if needed.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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.
- Washington, D.C. should further require an established 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 encourages schools to monitor students' progress within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Washington, D.C. DOES encourage schools to establish an organizational structure to operationalize a unified MTSS system to monitor student progress. ([OSSE, District of Columbia Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#))

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should require schools to regularly monitor and document students' progress within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and use data to inform instruction and interventions, as needed and in a timely manner.

# 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:**

- Washington, D.C. DOES require LEAs to use universal screener data to inform Tier 1 and intervention instruction. ([Dyslexia DC, Universal Screener Implementation Guidance for DC Law 23-191](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES provide some guidance to LEAs relating to evidence-based interventions. (See [OSSE, District of Columbia Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#))

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require schools 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:**

- Washington, D.C. DOES NOT require districts to offer summer reading camps for rising 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> grade students at risk of reading failure.
- Washington, D.C. DOES require students who may be retained to attend summer school. ([DCPS Student Promotion Policy](#))

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> grade students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.
- Washington, D.C. should further require all staff at the 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 parent to support reading at home.

#### EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Washington, D.C. HAS created a list of resources for LEAs to share with families to support reading at home. The list includes research aligned resources that are available at no cost to families. (See [OSSE, Early Literacy Communication Toolkit](#))
- Washington, D.C. DOES NOT require schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents.

#### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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, Washington, D.C. should require strategies that are shared with parents to target students' needs based on data and should be aligned with the science of reading.

## Initial Determinant Retention at 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:

- Washington, D.C. 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.
- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES provide that the student's principal, in consultation with the student's teacher, should decide whether a student will be promoted.

### CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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 4<sup>th</sup> grade including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment or qualifying for a good cause exemption.

# Multiple Options for Promotion



## IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state allows the school-based team, in consultation with the parent, to determine the student's promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade retention. Students may also be promoted if they attend a summer reading program.

## EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Washington, D.C. DOES NOT have a retention policy and DOES NOT offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Washington, D.C. [policy](#) DOES provide that the student's principal, in consultation with the student's teacher, should decide whether a student will be promoted. (See [DCPS Student Promotion Policy](#))

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. should expand policy to require that students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills (on the state test-based options provided) be retained, receive intensive reading interventions, and offer at least three pathways for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or successfully demonstrating sufficient 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:

- Washington, D.C. DOES NOT have a retention policy and DOES NOT allow specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

## CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Washington, D.C. 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 4<sup>th</sup> grade that recognize the special needs of some students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who were previously retained.
- Washington, D.C. should further require intensive interventions to continue in 4<sup>th</sup> grade for students promoted for good cause.

