



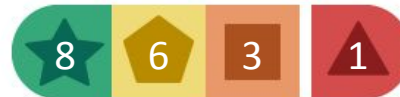
Early Literacy Matters

State-by-State Policy Implementation Report

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






WI

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

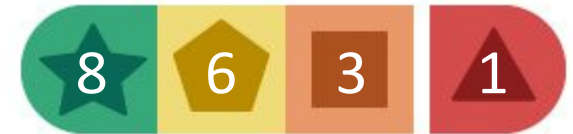
The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of states' implementation of K–3 reading policies aligned to ExcelinEd's [fundamental principles](#) of an early literacy policy. It builds on an analysis of states' adoption of statutes and regulations establishing requirements for each component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

17 out of 18



STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- [2023 Wisconsin Act 20](#)
- [Wisconsin DPI, Wisconsin Reads](#)

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:

- Wisconsin DOES require all Kindergarten–3rd grade teachers to begin a reading training program – this includes reading teachers, special education teachers, and teachers of multilingual learners in public school districts and independent charter schools. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin HAS adopted science of reading training for educators. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#); [The Center for Effective Reading Instruction, Accredited Independent Teacher Training Programs](#); see also [Wisconsin DPI, Professional Development Training Requirement](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require administrators, including district reading specialists and principals for Kindergarten–3rd grade, to complete a reading training, offered by the Leadership in Literacy Institute or a provider that meets specific requirements. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin HAS adopted science of reading training for administrators. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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 professional development 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:

- Wisconsin [policy](#) established in 2023 DOES create a literacy coaching program to improve literacy outcomes in the state.
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require individuals serving as literacy coaches to have knowledge and expertise in science-based early literacy instruction.
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES assign literacy coaches to schools and districts based on scores on the standardized reading tests and those schools that request a coach.
- Wisconsin DOES require a minimum of 3 coaches in each CESA region and a minimum of 2 coaches in a private school. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES provide funding through 2025–2026 for early literacy coaches. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require each school district to employ a reading specialist certified by the Department to coordinate a comprehensive reading curriculum for Kindergarten–12th grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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:

- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require all educator preparation programs to demonstrate that it provides instruction that prepares teachers to teach reading and language arts using science-based early reading instruction.
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES specify that all educator preparation programs must demonstrate that it does NOT provide instruction on teaching reading and language arts that incorporates three-cueing.
- Wisconsin DOES have standards for educator preparation programs relating to reading; however, the standards DO NOT address all core components of scientifically based reading instruction. ([NCTQ, Wisconsin Summary 2023](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin should ensure EPP required 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

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:

- Wisconsin DOES require a licensure test that addresses reading and is aligned to the science of reading: Foundations of Reading. ([NCTQ, Wisconsin Summary 2023](#); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction \(Nov. 2023\)](#))

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:

- Wisconsin DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
 - Funding for literacy programs
 - Funding for early literacy assessments
 - Funding for literacy coaches (through 2025–2026)
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES provide for a maximum reimbursement grant of 50% of the purchase price of early literacy instructional materials appearing on the state’s recommended [list](#) with the caveat that these grants will also be prorated based on the number of districts that apply. Funding is available until 2026. (See [Wisconsin DPI, Early Literacy Curriculum](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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:

- Wisconsin DOES require a universal reading screener to be administered to students in Kindergarten–3rd grade, three times per year. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#); *see also Wisconsin DPI, Early Literacy Assessment, Act 20*)
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require each school board and the operator of each independent charter school to annually assess the early literacy skills of each pupil enrolled in four-year-old Kindergarten in the school district or in the independent charter school at least two times during the school year using a fundamental skills screening assessment selected by the Department.
- Wisconsin HAS approved a single reading readiness screener – AimswebPlus from Pearson – that meets the requirements in policy. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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:

- Wisconsin DOES require schools to administer diagnostic reading assessments for any student scoring below the 25th percentile of the reading readiness screener within 10 days. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require schools to administer diagnostic reading assessments if a child has characteristics of dyslexia and a parent or teacher requests the diagnostic reading assessment – this must occur within 20 days of the request. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES publish and maintain a [list of diagnostic assessments](#), as recommended by the curriculum council. LEAs that purchase and implement a DPI recommended diagnostic reading assessment will be eligible for reimbursement. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin HAS created a diagnostic assessment guidance with information on statutory requirements, how the list of diagnostic assessments was created, and information on each of the assessments. ([Wisconsin DPI, Diagnostic Assessment for Early Literacy](#))



Screeners for Characteristics of Dyslexia

CONTINUED

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

- Wisconsin DOES require diagnostic reading assessments to assess the following skills, as developmentally appropriate: rapid naming, phonological awareness, word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, listening comprehension, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

RESOURCES

- [Wisconsin DPI, Informational Guidebook on Dyslexia and Related Conditions](#)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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, not just 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:

- Wisconsin DOES require districts to notify parents with the results of the reading readiness screener *no later than 15 days after* the assessment is scored. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require districts to notify parents with the results of the diagnostic reading assessment results. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20: Resources](#))
- Wisconsin DOES provide templates that local education agencies can use to meet the parent/caregiver communication requirements. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20: Resources](#))

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:

- Wisconsin DOES require all schools to provide science-based early literacy instruction in both universal and intervention settings. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require the Early Literacy Curriculum Council to recommend literacy curricula and instructional materials for use in Kindergarten–3rd grade.
- Wisconsin HAS adopted a list of early literacy curricula as required by policy. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20: Resources](#); see also [Wisconsin DPI, Early Literacy Curriculum](#))
- Wisconsin DOES NOT require districts to use the materials from the early literacy curricula lists. School boards will retain authority to select the early literacy instructional materials, so long as they meet the definition of science-based early literacy instruction. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES provide guidance, including a Curriculum Crosswalk Toolkit, to provide schools and districts with guidance to support the analysis of compliance with Act 20. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require school districts to post an early literacy remediation plan that includes the name of the reading diagnostic assessment the district uses, the reading interventions used to address dyslexia, how the school district monitors student progress during interventions, including tools, and a description of how the district uses assessment results to evaluate early literacy instruction, as well as a description of the parent notification policy. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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.
- Wisconsin should further require districts to post their adopted materials on the district website.

Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state has *adopted a policy to eliminate* the use of all instructional materials that include the three-cueing systems model for teaching word reading *with a clear timeline for the elimination* of the use of these materials.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES prohibit literacy coaches from using or promoting instruction that includes three-cueing.
- Wisconsin [policy](#) from 2023 DOES specify that all educator preparation programs must demonstrate that it does NOT provide instruction on teaching reading and language arts that incorporates three-cueing.
- Wisconsin DOES provide guidance on the definition of three-cueing and the requirements of policy relating to the prohibition on three-cueing. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

Individual Reading Plans



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires 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. There is an established process for monitoring the implementation of those plans and a timeline for notifying parents of the development of the plan.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Wisconsin DOES require any K–3 student scoring below the 25th percentile on the reading readiness screener or diagnostic assessment to receive a personal reading plan. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require that 1) if the pupil is identified as at-risk based on the first universal screening assessment or based on a diagnostic assessment, the personal reading plan must be created no later than the third Friday of November, and 2) if the pupil is identified as at-risk based on the second or third universal screening assessment or based on a diagnostic assessment, the personal reading plan must be created within 10 days after the applicable screening assessment is administered.
- Wisconsin DOES require schools to provide a copy of the personal reading plan to parents and provide progress updates after 10 weeks. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require schools to monitor student reading development progress weekly. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin has created a [Personal Reading Plan Toolkit](#) to provide guidance to schools in the creation of student personal reading plans. (See also [Wisconsin DPI, Act 20: Resources](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

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:

- Wisconsin HAS established a framework for an equitable multi-level system of supports. ([Wisconsin DPI, Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require any K–3 student scoring below the 25th percentile on the reading readiness screener to receive a personal reading plan. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin DOES require schools to monitor student reading development progress weekly. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

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:

- Wisconsin DOES require interventions to be evidence-based. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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:

- Wisconsin DOES NOT have a policy requiring districts to offer summer reading camps to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure.
- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES provide for a summer reading program as a requirement for students promoted to 4th grade who had personal reading plans during 3rd grade and who did not complete the personal reading plan.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin should adopt 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.
- Wisconsin should further require all staff at summer reading camps to be trained in the science of reading.

Parent Read-At-Home Plan



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires schools to provide read-at-home plans to parents as soon as a student is identified with a reading deficiency. Strategies shared with parents target students' needs based on data and are aligned with the science of reading.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Wisconsin DOES require any K–3 student scoring below the 25th percentile on the reading readiness screener to receive a personal reading plan, which must include strategies the student's parent can use at home to help the student achieve grade-level literacy skills. ([Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.

Initial Determinant Retention at 3rd Grade Based on State Assessment



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: The state requires that a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided – and does not meet a good cause exemption – *be retained*.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require school boards to adopt written policies specifying the criteria for promoting a student from the 3rd grade to the 4th grade.
- By September 1, 2027, Wisconsin [policy](#) WILL require schools to follow the locally adopted school board policy to promote a 3rd grade student to 4th grade.
- Wisconsin DPI HAS created a [model policy](#) for promoting students from 3rd to 4th grade that includes reading achievement criteria.
- Wisconsin DOES encourage schools to adopt a policy that makes “student-by-student decisions about 3rd grade to 4th grade promotion that emphasize continued reading supports for the student **rather than 3rd grade retention.**” ([Wisconsin DPI, Model 4th grade Promotion Policy for Wis School Districts and Independent Charter Schools](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: The state offers 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.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require school boards to adopt written policies specifying the criteria for promoting a student from the 3rd grade to the 4th grade.
- By September 1, 2027, Wisconsin [policy](#) WILL require schools to follow the locally adopted school board policy to promote a 3rd grade student to 4th grade.
- Wisconsin WILL require certain interventions for 3rd grade students promoted to 4th grade while still on a personal reading plan, including providing the student with intensive instructional services, progress monitoring, and supports; providing the student with an intensive summer reading program each summer until the student scores at grade-level in reading on a summative assessment; and notifying the parent that the child has not exited the personal reading plan with a description of the services and supports that will be provided. ([Wisconsin Statute 118.33 \(5m\) High school graduation standards; criteria for promotion](#); see also [Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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.

Good Cause Exemptions for Some Students



IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Full implementation of this principle requires the following: The state allows *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. Intensive interventions are required to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Wisconsin [policy](#) DOES require school boards to adopt written policies specifying the criteria for promoting a student from the 3rd grade to the 4th grade.
- By September 1, 2027, Wisconsin [policy](#) WILL require schools to follow the locally adopted school board policy to promote a 3rd grade student to 4th grade.
- Wisconsin WILL provide for good cause exceptions for intensive interventions of students in 4th grade or above, including exceptions for children identified as limited English proficient, children who score proficient in reading on an alternative standardized assessment, children with an IEP, and children who receive intensive interventions and were previously retained. ([Wisconsin Statute 118.33 \(5m\) High school graduation standards; criteria for promotion](#); see also [Wisconsin DPI, Act 20 FAQ](#))
- Wisconsin [policy](#) WILL require students who are promoted to 4th grade who had a personal reading plan during 3rd grade and did not complete the plan to be provided with intensive instructional services, progress monitoring, and supports that remediate the identified areas of deficiency.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Wisconsin 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.

