Explore Missouri’s adoption and implementation of the 18 Early Literacy Fundamental Principles.
Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy establishes support and intensive reading interventions for all K–3 students to ensure they read on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The policy also requires 3rd grade students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to 4th grade. For students severely below grade level and who do not qualify for a good cause exemption, retention provides struggling readers the additional time and intensive interventions they need to catch up with their peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FULL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></th>
<th>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, and there is evidence of full implementation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABOVE &amp; BEYOND BADGE:</strong></td>
<td>This badge recognizes efforts that exceed full implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy, but there is limited evidence of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is adopted in policy with a future date for implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRINCIPLE NOT ADOPTED</strong></td>
<td>The fundamental principle is not adopted in policy, does not meet minimum implementation requirements or is grant-based and not sustainable.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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 Missouri’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

14 out of 18

STATE POLICY ADOPTION REFERENCE MATERIALS

- RsMO 167.268 Policy for reading success plans
- RsMO 167.645 Reading assessments required
- RsMO 170.014 Reading instruction act
- Missouri DESE, DESE’s Literacy Initiatives & Efforts
- Missouri DESE, State 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:

• Missouri HAS provided funding for educators to participate in LETRS training. ([Missouri DESE, DESE’s Literacy Initiative & Efforts])

• Missouri DOES provide information on professional development related to literacy and English language arts. ([Missouri DESE, English Language Arts: ELA PD])

• Missouri policy DOES require districts to provide professional development opportunities to educators to enhance their skills in order to respond to “children’s unique reading issues and needs.”

• Missouri DOES provide administrator training through the state’s Regional Professional Development Centers that is aligned to the science of reading, including LETRS for administrators.

• Missouri DOES require LEAs to make certain assurances when applying for reimbursements that are available for participating in the evidence-based reading instruction program, including an assurance that the LEA will commit to training all K–3 classroom teachers in LETRS training. ([Missouri DESE, State Guidance for Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Program])

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should adopt science of reading training that is required of all K–3 teachers and administrators.
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:

- Missouri DOES provide for literacy coaches through local Regional Professional Development Centers who receive training in all state-approved instructional materials. (Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ))

- Missouri DOES provide literacy support staff through Regional Professional Development Centers. (Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ))

- Missouri DOES provide Regional Professional Development Centers literacy coaches to support LEAs in implementing assessments and analyzing data. (Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Missouri 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 teacher.
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:

• Missouri DOES have standards for teacher preparation programs that are aligned to the science of reading. ([NCTQ, Missouri Summary 2023](#))

• Missouri policy DOES require EPP coursework for teacher education programs in early childhood, K–5 elementary teacher certification, and all reading and special education certificates to be aligned to the science of reading; and include identification of reading deficiencies, dyslexia, and other language difficulties; and the administration and interpretation of assessments.

• Missouri DOES allow EPP faculty to participate in LETRS training. There are currently 100 EPP faculty taking advantage of this opportunity.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should ensure that EPP required coursework prohibits the use of course materials that include three-cueing.
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:

- Missouri currently DOES NOT use education candidate science of reading scores for licensure – passing the licensure test that addresses reading is optional: Missouri Educator Gateway Assessment, Elementary Education Multi-Content, which is not aligned to the science of reading. ([NCTQ, Missouri Summary 2023](https://www.nationalcenterfor教师quality.org/report/Missouri); [NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023)](https://www.nationalcenterforteacherquality.org/report/Missouri))

- Missouri DID award the contract for educator candidate assessments to ETS, and the proposed list of tentative test choices indicate elementary educators would need to pass the Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects assessment for licensure; which is not aligned to the science of reading. ([NCTQ, False Assurances: Many states’ licensure tests don’t signal whether elementary teachers understand reading instruction (Nov. 2023)](https://www.nationalcenterforteacherquality.org/report/Missouri))

**CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY**

- Missouri 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
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:

• Missouri DOES provide direct funding specifically to support state and/or local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles. These include:
  • Funding for the Missouri Read, Lead, Exceed Initiative ($25 million in state funding, $35 million in federal relief funding)
  • Funding for LETRS training for educators
  • Funding for the Evidence-Based Reading Instructional Program, which reimburses LEA costs for evidence-based reading instruction materials, resources, and support services (See Missouri DESE, Reimbursement Grant One-Pagers)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

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

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

State requires districts to adopt a universal reading screener to be administered 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:

• Missouri HAS created a list of state-approved K–3 reading assessments. ([Memo: OCCR-23-005 – State Approved Reading Assessment List (2023)])

• Missouri DOES require the assessments to be administered two times per year (beginning of the year and end of the year assessments). ([Memo: OCCR-23-005 – State Approved Reading Assessment List (2023)])

• Missouri DOES monitor administration of the universal reading screeners, as assessment vendors report results to DESE in a secured format. ([Memo: OCCR-23-005 – State Approved Reading Assessment List (2023)])

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should expand policy to require districts to administer the reading screeners *three times per year* to identify students at risk for reading failure.
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Missouri has established a list of screeners, not approved by the state, for characteristics of dyslexia. These must be administered at least twice in Kindergarten and at least three times in 1st–3rd grade.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Missouri DOES require schools to conduct dyslexia screenings for students. (Missouri DESE, LEA Guidance for Serving Students At-Risk for Dyslexia)

- Missouri DOES require schools to screen students within the first 30 days of the school year for 1st–3rd grade, with follow up at the middle and end of the year for progress; in the fall of Kindergarten and at the end of the year for systematic documentation and progress monitoring. (Missouri DESE, LEA Guidance for Serving Students At-Risk for Dyslexia)

- Missouri HAS created a list of screeners for dyslexia that schools may choose from; however, the state cautions that this is not an inclusive nor a recommended list of screeners or programs.

- Missouri DOES give LEAs discretion as to which screening and diagnostic tools are used relating to dyslexia. (Missouri DESE, LEA Guidance for Serving Students At-Risk for Dyslexia)

- Missouri DOES provide guidance to LEAs for serving students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia. (Missouri DESE, LEA Guidance for Serving Students At-Risk for Dyslexia)
Screener for Characteristics of Dyslexia

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

• Missouri DOES collect data on student screening information for Kindergarten–3rd grade. (Missouri DESE, Dyslexia Data Collection)

• Missouri DOES allow schools to use the state-approved K–3 Reading Assessment list to satisfy the policy requirements for dyslexia screening, as all approved vendors on Missouri’s list have a universal dyslexia screening tool.

• Missouri DOES require parental notification of dyslexia screeners and provides sample letters for schools to use for this communication. (Missouri DESE, LEA Guidance for Serving Students At-Risk for Dyslexia)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should approve a 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.
Parental Notification

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

States require 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:

• Missouri DOES require schools to notify parents of any student with a Reading Success Plan at least annually in writing, which includes providing parents information on the current services provided, proposed intensive interventions, and information and strategies for helping the student at home succeed in reading proficiency. (Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist; Missouri DESE, Missouri Reading Success Plans: Guidance for Missouri School Districts (Revised November 2023))

• Missouri DOES require ongoing, regular updates to parents at least four times per year regarding results of interventions and student progress. (Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist)

RESOURCES

• Missouri DESE, Sample RSP Parent Letters

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should require parental notification within 30 days of identification of a reading deficiency.
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:

• Missouri DOES require all reading programs to be aligned to evidence-based reading instruction that is aligned to the science of reading. (Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions)

• Missouri HAS published a list of state-approved materials to serve as examples of evidence-based reading instruction materials that are aligned with the science of reading. (See also Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions)

NOTEWORTHY

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

• ELEAs may be eligible to request reimbursement for the Evidence-Based Reading Instructional Materials Program for reading instructional materials that are chosen from the approved list. (Missouri DESE, Evidence-Based Reading Instructional Materials; Missouri DESE, State Guidance for Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Program)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should 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:
• Missouri HAS NOT adopted a policy that bans three-cueing instructional materials.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should adopt a policy, clearly in statute or regulation, that prohibits the use of three-cueing as part of their comprehensive literacy policy.
Individual Reading Plans

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires schools to develop and implement an individual reading plan for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency based upon screening results. Timeline and monitoring may vary.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Missouri DOES require schools to create a Reading Success Plan for students who are identified as having a reading deficiency. ([Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions]; Missouri DESE, Missouri Reading Success Plans: Guidance for Missouri School Districts (Revised November 2023))

• Schools must assess students within the first 30 days of schools. A Reading Success Plan, if needed, must be developed by the end of the first quarter. ([Missouri DESE, Missouri Reading Success Plans: Guidance for Missouri School Districts (Revised November 2023))

• Missouri DOES require schools to inform parents in writing of students who receive a Reading Success Plan. ([Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions])

• Missouri DOES require student-level Reading Success Plan data to be reported to DESE. ([Memo: OCRR-23-005 – State Approved Reading Assessment List (2023); Missouri DESE, Missouri Reading Success Plans: Guidance for Missouri School Districts (Revised November 2023))
Individual Reading Plans

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

RESOURCES

- Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist
- Missouri DESE, RSP Template
- Missouri DESE, Sample RSP Parent Letters

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Missouri should expand policy to require schools to create Reading Success Plans for students within 30 days of identification of a reading deficiency.
Regularly Monitor Student Progress

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
FULL IMPLEMENTATION

Missouri does require 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. However, Missouri does not administer the universal reading screener three times per year in Kindergarten–3rd grade.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

- Missouri DOES require schools to establish a plan to monitor and evaluate progress on goals and objectives in students’ Reading Success Plans. ([Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist](#))
- Missouri DOES require teachers to revise interventions for students based on data. ([Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist](#))
- Missouri DOES provide for a multi-tiered system of supports to monitor student progress. ([Missouri DESE, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Missouri should expand policy to require administration of the universal reading screener three times per year in Kindergarten–3rd grade – the data that is produced from these screeners will then be effective in informing 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:

- Missouri DOES require schools to provide evidence-based interventions to students who have a Reading Success Plan. ([Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist](#))
- Missouri DOES allow for interventions to include small group or individual instruction, reduced teacher-student ratios, more frequent progress monitoring, tutoring or mentoring, extended school day, week, or year, and summer reading programs. ([Missouri DESE, RSP Implementation Checklist](#))

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Missouri should establish a vetted and approved list of interventions that are grounded in the science of reading that school districts can use to target student needs.
Summer Reading Camps

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The state requires districts to offer summer reading camps to students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.

EVIDENCE/GUIDANCE

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

• Missouri DOES require summer reading camps for students in 4th grade with Reading Improvement Plans who are still reading below 3rd grade level. ([Missouri DESE, English Language Arts: Reading Improvement Plans (SB319)](https://www.earlyliteracymatters.org))

• Missouri policy DOES allow districts to offer summer reading programs for students who exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should expand policy to require districts to offer summer school to rising 1st–4th grade students at risk of reading failure to remediate learning loss and/or build reading skills.

• Missouri 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:

- Missouri DOES require schools to suggest read-at-home plans for parents as part of the student’s Reading Success Plan. (Missouri DESE, Literacy Initiatives Frequently Asked Questions; Missouri DESE, Missouri Reading Success Plans: Guidance for Missouri School Districts)

- Missouri DOES provide for a “Family Component” within the Reading Success Plan template, which allows educators to provide information on at-home guidance and strategies. (Missouri DESE, RSP Template)

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

This principle currently meets full implementation.
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:

• Missouri policy DOES require a student to be retained, if it is determined to be appropriate by a student’s parent or guardian and appropriate school staff, after considering all relevant factors, including the reading deficiency, the student’s progress in other subject areas, and the student’s overall intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Missouri should expand policy to require students who are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options be retained.
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 4th grade or 3rd 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:

- Missouri policy DOES require a student to be retained, if it is determined to be appropriate by a student’s parent or guardian and appropriate school staff, after considering all relevant factors, including the reading deficiency, the student’s progress in other subject areas, and the student’s overall intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

- Upon establishing a retention policy for students in the state, the state should offer at least three pathways to 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:

• Missouri DOES NOT provide for retention of a student who is unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided and therefore does not provide for specific good cause exemptions for promotion to 4th grade.

CONSIDERATION(S) FOR STRENGTHENING POLICY

• Upon establishing a retention policy for students in the state, the state should allow for 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 should be required to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause.