



## EVIDENCE ADVOCACY CENTER

### SAMPLE STATES WITH STRONG LITERACY POLICIES: AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF FIVE STATES

The Evidence Advocacy Center (EAC) has produced five state reports that serve as strong examples of comprehensive state policy in reading/literacy science across eight critical policy action areas.

#### Model States

The following states were identified by the EAC as examples of states that have strong policies in reading/literacy science:

- [Alabama](#)
- [Mississippi](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Texas](#)

#### Identification of Model States

These five states were selected based on the strength and comprehensiveness of their literacy-related policies across eight core action areas (listed below). The states demonstrate a clear commitment to reading/literacy science through their legislation, state agency initiatives, and implementation supports that reflect both depth and breadth in literacy policy.

The Evidence Advocacy Center reviewed each state's current statutes, regulations, guidance documents, and department of education resources. This review emphasized recent developments and practical implementation strategies. While past analyses by NCTQ and *ExcelinEd* informed the early framework, the final selection prioritized alignment to all eight policy action areas and their respective subcategories, including newer or more recently adopted policies and initiatives.

#### Exemplar States – Strong Policies

All five model states demonstrate strong policies across most, if not all, of the eight policy action areas listed below. Their policies reflect a cohesive and intentional approach to advancing reading and literacy instruction statewide. These states have addressed a majority of the subcategories under each policy action, often exceeding basic requirements by incorporating innovative practices and continuous improvement strategies.

Each state has taken a slightly different path to policy implementation, but all share a robust commitment to ensuring that teachers are well-prepared, that schools are equipped with high-quality curricula and assessments, that students receive timely and effective support, and that parents are kept

informed of their children's progress. Their collective efforts make them strong exemplars for other states aiming to elevate literacy outcomes.

## Policy Action Areas

<p>1. <i>Standards for Educator Preparation Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State has specific, detailed standards aligned to reading/literacy science</li> <li>✓ Standards include how to teach English Learners</li> <li>✓ Standards include how to teach struggling readers, including those with dyslexia</li> </ul>
<p>2. <i>Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Approval and Renewal Process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State maintains full authority over EPP approval and renewal</li> <li>✓ Reviews syllabi and other reading/literacy course materials to determine integration of all standards and reading/literacy science</li> <li>✓ Includes literacy specialists/experts in review of instruction at EPPs</li> <li>✓ Includes licensure pass rate data in review process</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Elementary Reading Licensure Test</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State uses a strong reading licensure test for elementary teacher candidates</li> <li>✓ All elementary teacher candidates are required to pass the test</li> <li>✓ State publishes licensure test pass rate data</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>High Quality Curriculum</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Districts are required to select core curricula from an identified list</li> <li>✓ State provides guidance/tools for selection of high-quality curricula and supplemental materials that support English Learners and struggling readers</li> <li>✓ Districts are required to publish the curriculum they use on their district website</li> <li>✓ State publishes curriculum used by each district on State website</li> <li>✓ State allocates funds toward reading/literacy curriculum materials</li> <li>✓ Three-cueing system (MSV) is prohibited as a method to teach word identification</li> </ul>
<p>5. <i>Professional Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State requires professional learning in scientifically based reading instruction (SBRI) for all elementary teachers</li> <li>✓ State allocates funds for professional learning in SBRI</li> </ul>
<p>6. <i>Screening and Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Universal screening is required for K-3 students 3 times per year to identify students at risk for reading/literacy difficulties</li> <li>✓ List of required or recommended screeners is provided by State</li> <li>✓ A diagnostic assessment is required for students who do not meet benchmark in specific component(s) of the universal screener, and for those who may be at risk for dyslexia</li> <li>✓ Results of screening/assessment must be reported to parents/guardians</li> <li>✓ Districts must report screening/assessment data collected to the State</li> </ul>

7. *Supports for Schools and Educators – Funding and Literacy Coaches*

- ✓ State provides adequate funding to support and sustain literacy efforts
- ✓ State has a coaching model to support implementation and sustainability, and deploys literacy coaches to all districts

8. *Intervention*

- ✓ Individual reading plans are required for students who are consistently below benchmark on universal screening
- ✓ Regular progress monitoring and documentation are required within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), and these data are used to inform instruction and intervention
- ✓ Districts are required to notify parents/guardians of the need for an individual reading plan and include them in the process to develop it
- ✓ State publishes a list of approved or recommended intervention programs
- ✓ State or district provides families with literacy resources (e.g., through website, guides, online library, etc.)

## ALABAMA

Alabama is a model for state legislation as it is strong across all policy action areas below.

In 2019, the Alabama Legislature passed the [Alabama Literacy Act](#) (ALA) to improve the reading proficiency of K-3 public school children and ensure that they are able to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. The implementation of the ALA is supported by the [Alabama Reading Initiative](#) (ARI).

### Standards for Educator Preparation Programs

Alabama has strong standards for educator preparation programs (EPP) that are aligned to reading/literacy science.

- Program Standards**

In May 2024, the Alabama State Board of Education strengthened its [standards](#) for literacy coursework in the Science of Reading. These updated standards are applicable to Educator Preparation Programs for early childhood education, elementary education (K-6) and collaborative special education (K-6) and must be implemented in coursework by August 2024.

Standards for instruction are aligned to the International Dyslexia Association's [Knowledge and Practice Standards](#) for Teachers of Reading and include the following areas of focus as detailed in the Administrative Code:

Foundation of Literacy Acquisition Principles & Practices of Structured Literacy Phonological & Phonemic Awareness Phonics and Word Recognition Automatic-Fluent Reading of Text Vocabulary	Listening and Reading Comprehension Written Expression Knowledge of Diverse Reading Profiles, including Dyslexia Assessment and Instruction of Developing Literacy
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Standards cover knowledge of the core components of Alabama's model of [Multi-Tiered System of Support \(MTSS\)](#). Standards also include how to teach reading to English Learners, multilingual learners, students who speak multiple dialects, and struggling readers including those with dyslexia, ADHD, dysgraphia, and developmental language comprehension disorder.

- Coursework**

Since the 2020-2021 academic year, each EPP is required to provide at least 9 credit hours in reading or literacy coursework. In addition, in order to support EPPs in implementing the new [Science of Reading Standards](#), in 2023 each EPP was provided an [Alabama Reading Initiative](#) Regional Literacy Leadership Specialist (RLLS). The RLLS supported the EPP as it updated coursework to be in line with the new standards, providing professional learning sessions, reviewing practices, providing exemplars and assisting the EPP as it worked to align their program with the Alabama Reading Initiative K-3 standards. Since the enactment of the standards in 2024, support has been provided regionally.

Public teacher preparation programs leading to initial certification [must comply with the credit hour requirements](#) for scientifically-based reading/literacy coursework in order to receive an appropriation from the Education Trust Fund.

Literacy coursework at EPPs must include instruction in reading, writing and oral language development. Candidates must learn to recognize, explain and apply scientific research from reading, language, writing and child development to support evidence-based practices. In addition, they must be taught how to teach foundational reading skills using a variety of strategies including explicit and systematic instruction, guided practice, error correction and corrective feedback, and multisensory/multimodal language instruction.

- **Dyslexia**

Educator Preparation Programs at public colleges and universities must offer [dyslexia therapy teacher preparation courses](#) to teacher candidates that are approved by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council or the International Dyslexia Association. Additionally, a Dyslexia Simulation Training course is offered to all EPPs and professors and is led by ARI Regional Specialists and/or Regional Inservice Center Directors.

- **Prohibited practices**

Educator Preparation Programs are prohibited by law from utilizing the “[three-cueing](#)” system in coursework, materials and instructional strategies. “Three-cueing” is defined as any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues (MSV).

## Educator Preparation Program Approval and Renewal

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is responsible for approval and renewal of the State’s Educator Preparation Programs.

- **Program Approval**

The ALSDE, through its Office of Teaching and Leading, is responsible for [approval and renewal](#) of EPPs, and provides advisory and consultative services in developing and maintaining quality preparation programs that meet all Alabama State Board of Education (ALSBE) rules and standards. In addition, the Alabama Literacy Act stipulates that all EPPs must be accredited by the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation \(CAEP\)](#). ALSDE has a [partnership agreement](#) with CAEP for this purpose. Under this agreement, the State has sole responsibility for program approval and renewal, and uses information generated from CAEP’s review of the EPPs in those processes.

Institutions choosing to seek State [approval](#) as an EPP must use the ALSDE processes to document compliance with Alabama-specific standards. Programs must include a focus on leadership for special education, English language learners, career and technical education, technology, pre-K programs, and adolescent literacy. In addition, EPPs must also use CAEP processes to document compliance with [CAEP standards](#) as adopted for use in Alabama. The process for initial approval or renewal of [CAEP accreditation](#) requires the program to complete a self-study process, a self-study report, a formative review and a site visit. When all standards are met through CAEP processes and Alabama processes, ALSDE staff prepare an approval resolution for consideration by the ALSBE.

If the CAEP decision for an EPP is [probationary accreditation](#), ALSBE members may consider a resolution to extend state program approval for up to two years to allow for an onsite review to determine whether the EPP meets CAEP standards and Alabama-specific standards. If the resolution is adopted and all CAEP and Alabama-specific standards are deemed met, state approval may be extended for an additional five years. If the resolution is not adopted or if all CAEP and Alabama-specific standards are not met, the process to rescind ALSBE approval will be initiated.

- **Program Renewal**

Educator Preparation Programs undergo a [comprehensive review](#) every seven years. The review process is coordinated by staff members in the Educator Preparation Section of the ALSDE and includes the appointment and training of review team chairpersons and members, as well as the evaluation of their effectiveness.

The State reviews [syllabi](#) of reading courses to determine the integration of all reading standards and the Science of Reading as part of the program renewal process. In addition, the EPP uses [CIEP](#) (Continuous Improvement in Educator Preparation) Program Report Submission Forms, program checklists and other evidence to document compliance with program approval and renewal rules and submits it to the ALSDE review team. The team also conducts a site review. [Licensure pass rate data](#) is reviewed as part of the program renewal process.

- **The Barksdale Reading Institute and The Path Forward**

In January 2021, The Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI) was contracted to [review](#) the quality of reading preparation in Alabama's EPPs. Syllabi, course schedules and textbooks were reviewed, and a final report was provided to the universities and the State in Spring 2022. As EPPs were renewed, it was expected that they fully comply with implementing BRI's recommendations. This was reviewed in collaboration between ARI and Teaching and Leading staff prior to accepting the program's renewal

BRI closed in June 2023, but its legacy continues through [The Path Forward](#), a program run by The Hunt Institute to help states transform their teacher preparation and licensure programs to incorporate reading/literacy science. In 2022, [Alabama](#) was chosen to participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of states to participate in this program. Through a series of convenings and targeted coaching support led by experts in reading, policy and teacher preparation, state teams worked toward the development of a comprehensive action plan to embed reading/literacy science in their EPPs. Following this effort, the ALSDE established a Higher Education Task Force to address the goals established in the work with The Path Forward. In addition, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) enacted a series of supports for Higher Education including offering LETRS training to professors supporting K-3 literacy (see below under Professional Learning), training in evidence-based instruction by Regional Inservice Centers or ARI Regional Literacy Specialists, and professional learning to preservice students in the content of the Alabama Literacy Act.

The State continues to monitor the implementation of reading/literacy science in its EPPs.

## Elementary Reading Licensure Test

Alabama uses a strong reading licensure test, Pearson's [Foundation of Reading test](#) for [certification](#) in Elementary Education (K–6), Early Childhood Education (P–3), and Collaborative Special Education (K-6). All elementary teacher candidates, including candidates through [Alternative Teacher Preparation Organizations](#), are [required](#) to pass the test. As stated above, Alabama uses licensure test pass rate data to make decisions about program renewal. Alabama publishes pass rate data by institution on the Reading Foundations test, Praxis content test and edTPA test (see [Educator Preparation Institutional Report Card](#)).

## High-Quality Curriculum

Alabama provides guidance to districts in the selection of high-quality instructional materials aligned to reading/literacy science and to the [2021 Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts](#) standards.

The [Alabama Literacy Act](#) (ALA) established a [Literacy Task Force](#). One of the roles of the Task Force is to provide recommendations for comprehensive core reading and intervention programs to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

- **State-Approved Curricula**

Beginning with the [2022-2023 school year](#), and based on the recommendation of the Literacy Task Force, the ALSDE [approved two core reading programs](#): Open Court (McGraw Hill) and Core Knowledge Language Arts (Amplify). Under the [ALA](#), “each local education agency shall offer an approved comprehensive core reading program to all students based on the science of reading which develops foundational reading skills”. The State allocates funds to districts for the purchase of approved curricular programs.

- **Intervention Materials**

The ALA states that schools must provide an appropriate reading intervention program to K-3 students who have reading difficulties or characteristics of dyslexia based on the results of early reading assessments. The following is the 2024-2025 [ALSDE-approved list](#) of [intervention programs](#):

Take Flight (Scottish Rite for Children) SPIRE (School Specialty) Neuhaus	Project Read (Language Circle Enterprises) Phonics First (Brainspring)
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As stated in the [Alabama Literacy Act](#), the intervention program “shall be provided in addition to the comprehensive core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom”, and must include the following:

- explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential, and cumulative in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable;
- daily targeted small group reading interventions based on student need in phonological awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, sight words, vocabulary, or comprehension;
- implemented during regular school hours

- **Prohibited Practices**

Alabama state law specifically prohibits the use of the “[three-cueing](#)” system in coursework, materials and instructional strategies. “Three-cueing” is defined as any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues (MSV).

- **Consumer Information**

In 2024, Alabama enacted “[The Parents Right to Know](#)” law which requires schools to post the curricula they use for all subjects on the school website, and to provide information on instructional and supplemental materials upon request of the parent or guardian.

## Professional Learning

The Alabama Literacy Act puts a strong focus on [professional learning](#) in reading/literacy science for educators and administrators by requiring scientifically based reading instruction in all K-3 public schools and providing numerous opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to deliver this instruction. Under the ALA, schools are provided with funding and stipends for professional, ongoing learning and intensive, job-embedded coaching support. The [Alabama Reading Initiative](#) (ARI) provides



a blended model of professional learning and support in collaboration with the ALSDE and external partners.

- **Professional Development**

The [Literacy Task Force](#) is responsible for ensuring continuing professional learning in reading/literacy science from preservice, reading specialist, to instructional leadership. Preservice and inservice elementary teachers are provided with all of the following professional learning activities ([Ala. Code § 16-6G-6](#)):

- Mentoring and shadowing with master teachers selected by Alabama Reading Initiative regional literacy specialists and local reading specialists
- Job embedded, classroom-based coaching in the teaching of reading for the first five years of a teacher's career
- Curricula and resources in oral language development, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, writing and comprehension

Ongoing professional learning is described in the [Continuum for Teacher Development](#). The following professional development programs are provided to educators. All are fully funded by the State:

- [Alabama LETRS® Science of Reading Professional Learning Course \(Lexia\)](#): available since 2018; offered for preK-3 educators currently working in Alabama public schools, and [required](#) for K-3 teachers and administrators. [Stipends](#) were available for educators (\$1,000) who achieve mastery status in LETRS® or LETRS® EC (funded with ESSER dollars). Courses have also been offered to professors in all [Institutes of Higher Education](#) who support K-3 literacy, as well as facilitator training to qualifying professors. According to the State, as of Fall 2024, over 21,000 educators have participated in the Lexia LETRS courses. In addition, at the beginning of the FY 2024-2025 school year, all educators should have met the Initial Literacy Certification (Inservice Teachers) requirements in the ARI Continuum for Teacher Development.
- [Neuhaus Structured Literacy Modules](#) - ongoing, self-paced professional learning; available to all preK-12 Alabama educators including teachers, school leaders, administrators, EPPs, ALSDE staff and others who support Alabama public schools. Neuhaus Modules are also offered to identified community support agencies who support literacy before, during or after school. [Neuhaus](#) Education Center is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association.
- [Multisensory Structured Language Education \(MSLE\)](#)- available through [Neuhaus](#) and [Shelton](#) for [Certified Academic Language Therapy \(CALT\)](#), supports participants in the use of evidence-based strategies utilizing a multisensory structured language program for students with specific language disabilities such as dyslexia and related disorders.

- **Local Reading Specialists (Literacy Coaches)**

Alabama provides substantial funding to support the provision of [ARI Local Reading Specialists \(LRS\)](#) to all public schools with any combination of grades K-3. Each LRS [works in one school](#) and is hired directly by that school to provide intensive, targeted, job-embedded professional learning in reading/literacy science and other supports to teachers. ARI staff provide ongoing



professional learning sessions to Local Reading Specialists. See additional information below under “Supports for Schools and Educators”.

- **Professional Development – Principal Act**

Elementary school administrators are [required](#) to participate in early literacy and numeracy high-quality professional learning experiences offered by the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and Office of Mathematics Improvement (OMI). In addition 2023, Alabama passed the School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act to create and implement the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System (APLDS). This program provides annual stipends for K-12 principals and assistant principals who satisfactorily complete the program requirements. One of the requirements is to complete [30 APLDS clock hours annually](#) of high-quality professional learning from the state-approved list.

- **Professional Development – Dyslexia**

The ALSDE provides public school educators with [professional learning](#) on dyslexia including awareness training, dyslexia-specific classroom strategies and identification of at-risk students. The State also offers [Multisensory Structured Language Education \(MSLE\)](#) training, an option that is beneficial particularly for interventionists and special education teachers, which can lead to certification as a [Dyslexia Therapist](#).

An Alabama certified educator who wishes to become a Dyslexia Therapist must complete an [International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council \(IMSLEC\)](#) endorsed training course and pass either the Academic Language Therapy Association’s [Certified Academic Language Therapy \(CALT\)](#) Assessment or the [Knowledge and Practice Examination for Effective Reading Instruction \(KPEERI\)](#) exam.

## Screening and Assessment

Universal [screening](#) and progress monitoring are the basis for data-driven instructional decision-making and continuous improvement in Alabama’s [Multi-Tiered System of Support \(MTSS\)](#). Alabama has a strong MTSS system which supports teachers in organizing instruction to meet the needs of all students. It also ensures that potential student learning difficulties are recognized early and addressed quickly.

- **Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring**

Universal screeners are [required](#) to be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year according to a specific [timeline](#). If screening shows a deficiency in one or more areas, the student is provided more targeted support through [tiered instruction](#) as described in the MTSS guidance document. Students who show a consistent deficiency on universal screening will receive a Student Reading Improvement Plan (see more on SRIPs below). This [Flow Chart](#) provides additional information about universal screening, progress monitoring and tiered support. Schools must report universal screening data to the ALSDE.

Written notification must be provided to parents/guardians of any K-3 student who exhibits a consistent deficiency in any area tested on the screener no later than 15 days after identification. The notification must include a description of the process to develop a SRIP. The State provides a [template](#) for this purpose.

- **State-Approved List: Universal Screeners and Assessments**

Alabama supports districts in selecting universal screeners and assessment tools for grades K-3. The Alabama Literacy Act requires the [Literacy Task Force](#) to annually provide a vetted list of assessments (see below) that are valid and reliable reading screening, formative, and diagnostic

assessment systems for selection and use by schools. Districts must select screening and assessment tools from the state-approved list in order to receive [funding](#).

Each approved assessment system must measure, at a minimum, phonological awareness, oral language, the alphabetic principle (including letter naming, letter sound, and sound letter correspondences), decoding, encoding, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension. It must also identify students who have a reading deficiency, including those with characteristics of dyslexia.

The ALSDE has [approved](#) the following screening and assessment tools for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic years:

aimswebPlus* (Pearson Assessments) mClass* (Amplify) iReady (Curriculum Associates) ISIP (Istation)	MAP (NWEA) STAR Early Literacy and STAR Early Reading (Renaissance)
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\*The Literacy Task Force has determined that aimswebPlus and mClass best meet all areas and requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act.

- **Dyslexia Assessment**

Alabama uses the results of [universal screening](#) to identify students with difficulty learning to read, as well as students with characteristics of dyslexia. The [Problem Solving Team](#) (PST), a grade-level team that helps teachers analyze screening and progress monitoring data, assists in planning and implementing instruction and intervention. These students must also receive an appropriate dyslexia-specific reading intervention program to address the specific deficiencies, as well as a Student Reading Intervention Plan (SRIP). See the Intervention section below for more on SRIPs.

If progress monitoring under the SRIP indicates insufficient response to intervention, the student must be tested for dyslexia using a [diagnostic](#) assessment. The [Dyslexia Resource Guide](#) identifies dyslexia-specific assessment instruments in Appendix A. An assessment for characteristics of dyslexia will also be provided upon parental or teacher request. In addition, parent resources are provided in Appendix D of the Dyslexia Resource Guide.

- **English Learners**

[English Learners](#) (EL) should not be referred to the Problem Solving Team if language is the only barrier to achievement. These students should be provided with differentiated instruction with accommodations for a reasonable amount of time in accordance with their Individual English Language Plan. Only when language has been eliminated as the barrier to achievement, and if the student is being considered for intervention or possible special education, then PST is the appropriate vehicle. EL staff members must be part of the Team. PST committees may need specialized training to write appropriate strategies and accommodations for students whose primary language is a language other than English.

## Supports for Schools and Educators

### *Adequate funding for literacy efforts*

Alabama provides funding to support state and local early literacy initiatives, including:

- [Alabama Literacy Act](#): \$94.2 million ([2024](#)) and \$142.8 million ([2025](#)) from the Education Trust Fund; [includes funding](#) for local and regional reading/literacy specialists, professional development for educators, early childhood classroom assessments, [summer reading programs](#),

purchase of curricular materials, and state administration; [continued funding](#) to schools is contingent on measurable performance growth.

- [Local reading specialists \(LRS\)](#)- \$85,000 to each school with any combination of K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students if a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/MOA) is signed by all parties (see ‘Literacy Coaches’ section below); \$84,100 is allocated to the LRS and \$900 is for supply money and additional funding for the LRS.
- [Reading Intervention Specialists](#)- \$85,000 per specialist for the 2024-2025 school year from ALSDE to the local education agency, plus \$10,000 start-up funds to support expenses prior to October 1, 2024; positions are limited and based on the number of students who demonstrated the need for support in 2nd and 3rd grades according to the statewide summative assessment.
- [Early childhood classroom assessments](#): \$2,750,000; [\\$6 per student](#) in each of grades K, 1, 2 & 3; district must use an [ALSDE-approved screener](#) to receive funding; in the 2024-2025 school year, Alabama has extended this to ALL 4th and 5th graders as well in an effort to continue support for these students who maintain their Student Reading Improvement Plan in these grades.
- [Alabama LETRS for educators](#)- \$1,200 per educator for FY2024 who achieves mastery status. Verified candidates receive a \$1,000 stipend, and \$200 is for employer benefit costs associated with the stipend. Any remainder is to be used to purchase high-quality instructional materials for that teacher’s classroom. Funding is provided by ESSER III federal appropriations; funding availability is limited and will expire. By May 2024, 9121 teachers applied to receive the stipend for achieving mastery status in LETRS Elementary or LETRS Early Childhood.
- [CALT stipends](#)- Certified Academic Language Therapists serving in public schools receive a stipend of \$5000.

#### *Literacy coaches – Local and Regional Reading Specialists*

Alabama received an “[above and beyond](#)” designation from ExcelinEd for its policies regarding literacy coaches. The Alabama Literacy Act of 2019 established and funded local and regional literacy [coaches](#) (specialists) to support reading instruction in K-3 public schools. In October 2020, the State developed the [Alabama Coaching Framework](#) to set standards of support for consistent, high-quality, evidence-based coaching across all subjects and initiatives. The Coaching Framework provides a foundation for the work of Alabama literacy coaches, including English Learner coaches hired through the Alabama Literacy Act.

- [Local Reading Specialists](#) (LRS) are funded by ARI for [each school](#) in the State. They are hired directly by that school to provide coaching and mentoring to teachers in classrooms daily, assist principals in creating a strategic plan for literacy coaching, facilitate schoolwide professional development and study groups, and monitor the reading progress of all K-3 students. A Memorandum of Understanding/ Agreement ([MOU/MOA](#)) must be signed by the LRS, school principal, ARI district contact, chief school financial officer and the superintendent to indicate their agreement to support and fulfill their role implementing the Alabama Literacy Act. In the FY24 school year, [757 out of 764](#) schools agreed to hire a local reading specialist.

Minimum [qualifications](#) to be a LRS include advanced coursework or professional development in reading/literacy science such as multisensory language instruction or state-approved comparable alternative training, knowledge of the science of early childhood education, special expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia-specific interventions, and data analysis.

- [Regional Literacy Specialists](#) (RLS) work under the direction of the State Department of Education ARI Director and ARI state staff, providing support to the LRS in K-3 schools, including virtual and charter schools, to fully implement all aspects of the Alabama Literacy Act. Their primary responsibilities are to collaborate with the school LRS, teachers, and administrators to ensure implementation of the MOU/MOA (described above) through careful analysis of data and in alignment with the [Alabama State Course of Study \(COS\): English Language Arts 2021](#). The RLS also helps develop and implement the school literacy coaching plan. In 2024, Alabama has 91 regional coaches.

The Alabama COS is the State's framework and standards for K-12 English Language Arts. It includes a comprehensive foundation for K-3 literacy in accordance with the Alabama Literacy Act. The standards set high expectations for student learning in all grades by requiring attention to foundational reading, explicitly teaching comprehension skills, and encouraging the development of advanced reading through increasing levels of complexity in literary and informational texts.

Minimum [qualifications](#) to be a RLS include advanced coursework or professional development in reading/literacy science and multisensory language instruction, knowledge of the science of early childhood education, special expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia-specific interventions, and data analysis.

- [Regional Literacy Leadership Specialists \(RLLS\)](#) support the principal, other school leaders, and district leadership. Their primary responsibilities are to collaborate with these leaders to analyze, plan, develop and implement the Alabama Literacy Act as agreed in the MOU/MOA.

The Alabama Literacy Act specifies that the ALSDE is to provide support to schools through a [gradual release model](#). Schools are identified for tiered levels of literacy support based on their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency scores from the state's annual summative assessment (ACAP).

- *Full Support Schools (FS)*  
FS schools represent the lowest 5% of schools based on their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores on the state summative assessment. An RLS is assigned primarily to one school and supports that school until it is no longer among the lowest 5% on state and federal testing. The RLS develops targeted daily coaching support, organizes and provides ongoing professional learning in reading/literacy science, monitors reading progress of K-3 students, analyzes students' reading data, makes instructional adjustments and recommendations, and monitors interventions that will impact reading achievement for all students.
- *Limited Support 1 Schools (LS1)*  
LS1 schools are those that had 49% to 75% of students score sufficient in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading (set in 2022). An RLS is assigned to provide a minimum of monthly visits to monitor the implementation and support of core reading and intervention instruction, make instructional adjustments and recommendations, provide ongoing professional learning in reading/literacy science, and monitor reading progress of all K-3 students a minimum of three times a year.
- *Limited Support 2 Schools (LS2)*  
LS2 schools are those that had 76% to 100% of students sufficient in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading. An RLS is assigned to provide a minimum of quarterly visits to provide onsite coaching support, monitor the reading progress a minimum of three times a year, adjust instruction according to student-specific needs, and provide ongoing professional learning in reading/literacy science.

## Intervention

The Alabama Literacy Act states that each student in grades K-3 who exhibits a reading deficiency or the characteristics of dyslexia based on the results of the early reading assessment shall be provided an appropriate reading intervention program to address his or her specific deficiencies.

- **Approved Intervention Programs**

The [reading intervention program](#) must be based on reading/literacy science and provide explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential, and cumulative in the areas of need, provide daily targeted small group reading interventions based on student need, and it must be implemented during regular school hours.

The Literacy Task Force has approved the following [intervention programs](#) for grades K-3:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neuhaus Education Center</li> <li>- Phonics First (Brainspring)</li> <li>- Project Read (Language Circle Enterprises)</li> <li>- SPIRE (School Specialty)</li> <li>- Take Flight (Scottish Rite for Children)</li> </ul> |
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- **Reading Intervention Specialists**

The ALSDE has offered the opportunity for districts to apply for a full-time [reading interventionist](#) for the 2024-2025 school year. This teacher must be a [Certified Academic Language Therapist](#) (CALT), in CALT training currently, or commit to this two-year professional learning at the next opportunity. These teachers have a MOU/MOA similar to that of the Local Reading Specialists. Funding for this position is noted above under Supports for Schools and Educators.

- **Student Reading Improvement Plans (SRIP)**

A [Student Reading Improvement Plan](#) must be provided to any student in grades K-3 who demonstrates a consistent reading deficiency on universal screening. In the 2024-2025 school year, this is being extended to 4th and 5th grade students who demonstrate a consistent deficiency. A consistent deficiency is identified when students do not respond to explicit, systematic, core instruction (Tier 1). Parents/guardians must be notified no later than 15 school days after the student has been identified.

The SRIP is required to be developed no later than 30 days after the deficit is identified by the school team which includes the teacher, principal, parents/guardians and other involved school personnel. The SRIP describes the evidence-based reading services that the student is to receive including dyslexia-specific intervention, a description of Tier I and Tier II instruction and accommodations, explicit steps for evaluating progress after each grading period, and detailed adjustments that will be made to Tier I, II, and III instruction and intervention if sufficient progress is not being made at each progress monitoring check point.

The State [requires](#) schools to create reading portfolios (or [English Learner reading portfolios](#), as appropriate) for 3rd grade students who scored at the lowest achievement level on the reading subtest of the State Summative Assessment (ACAP) in 2nd grade. These are considered an option for promotion to 4th grade.

All students with a SRIP should receive an invitation to a summer reading camp by their local school district. In addition, the school must provide the parents/guardians a [Read-at-Home Plan](#) which includes family-guided home literacy activities.



- **Summer Reading Camps**

Alabama [requires](#) districts to offer [summer reading camps](#) to students in K-3 who have a SRIP, as well as students who did not score above the cut score on the summative state testing (ACAP). [Staff](#) at summer reading camps must be trained in reading/literacy science, and districts must provide assurances that summer personnel are highly effective teachers of reading.

Schools that are among the [lowest performing](#) 5% of elementary schools for reading and mathematics must provide camps for all K-3 students. In addition, summer reading camps must include at least 60 hours of scientifically based reading instruction and intervention.

- **Communication with Families**

Parents and legal guardians are essential stakeholders and team members in their children's education, and this is reflected throughout the Alabama Literacy Act.

As previously stated, written notification must be provided to parents/guardians of any K-3 student who exhibits a consistent deficiency in any area tested on the universal screener no later than 15 days after identification. The State provides a template for this purpose in Section IX of the [ALA Implementation Guide](#). The notification must include specific components as outlined in the Implementation Guide:

- Statement informing parent/guardian that the student has been identified with a deficiency in reading
- Notification that a reading improvement plan shall be developed by the teacher, principal, other pertinent school personnel, and the parent/guardian
- Description of current services being provided to the student
- Description of proposed evidence-based reading interventions and supplemental instructional services and supports to be proposed for discussion while establishing the SRIP
- Notification that parent/guardian shall be informed in writing at least monthly of the progress of the student towards grade-level reading
- Strategies and resources for parent/guardian to use at home to help the student succeed in reading
- Statement that if the reading deficiency of the student is not addressed by the end of third grade, the student will not be promoted to fourth grade unless a good cause exemption is satisfied
- Statement that while the statewide reading assessment is the initial determinant for promotion, the assessment is not the sole determiner at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

If progress monitoring of the SRIP indicates insufficient response to intervention, the student must be tested immediately for characteristics of dyslexia using diagnostic assessment tools.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Retention**

Alabama [requires](#) students to be retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade if they are unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the state test-based options provided. However, the State offers [multiple pathways](#) for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Score above the lowest achievement level on state testing (ACAP) in the spring  
(Note that the Alabama State Board of Education has raised the cut score for

spring of 2025 and 2026, and it will again raise in 2027 with the expectation of a higher degree of knowledge acquired by the third graders.)

- Earn an acceptable score for the ACAP Supplemental Assessment
- Master grade 3 Essential Reading Standards in the Student Reading [Portfolio](#)
- Meet one of the Good Cause Exemptions

Third grade students who are reading below grade level may receive a [Good Cause Exemption](#) to be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. They will continue to receive their interventions and others supports. Good cause exemptions include:

- English Learners with less than 3 years of instruction in English as a second language
- Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide English language arts reading assessment and who have an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive reading intervention for more than two years yet still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade.
- Students who have received intensive reading intervention for two or more years and who still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade for a total of two years.
- Students whose IEP indicates that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with state law.

If it is determined that a student does not meet the requirements for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade and also does not meet a good cause exemption, the school must provide [written notification](#) to the parents/guardians that their child will be retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This notification must clearly state the reasons why the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption and include a description of the proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the student during the retained year.

Students retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade must be taught by a highly effective teacher trained in reading/literacy science and multisensory language instruction, provided with a reduced student-teacher ratio, and provided with explicit and systematic instruction and intervention for most of the student contact time every day.

- **Dyslexia**

Dyslexia-specific [intervention](#) must be provided to students who have the characteristics of dyslexia and to all struggling readers using a state-approved program (see list above). Based on screening results, the [Problem Solving Team](#) (PST) will assist teachers in planning and implementing instruction and intervention based on the screening and progress monitoring results. The PST also notifies the family of the screening results, provides a copy of the goals for intervention, and updates the parents/guardians regularly of the student's progress with data-based documentation. Independent dyslexia evaluations provided by a parent/guardian must be considered by the members of the PST.

Classroom teachers receive professional development and instructional [coaching support](#) to ensure they are able to utilize effective, evidence-based strategies for students with dyslexia. In addition, dyslexia-specific intervention must be provided by an individual who has expertise in



providing such interventions. This interventionist must have successfully completed a certification training course or have completed training in the appropriate implementation of the evidence-based, dyslexia-specific intervention being provided.

Students in grades K-3 identified with a consistent reading deficiency will receive a Student Reading Intervention Plan (SRIP) as noted above. In addition, as of the 2024-2025 school year, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will also receive an SRIP if they demonstrate a consistent deficiency or have not eliminated a previous consistent deficiency in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Students in grades 4-12 will receive a dyslexia services plan developed by the PST. Students who are promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade with a good cause exemption should continue with a SRIP as required in the Alabama Literacy Act. The school team will monitor student response to intervention and communicate at least monthly with the family regarding the student's progress.

An Alabama certified educator who wishes to obtain certification as a [Dyslexia Therapist](#) must complete an International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council endorsed training course and pass either the Academic Language Therapy Association's [Certified Academic Language Therapy \(CALT\)](#) Assessment or the [Knowledge and Practice Examination for Effective Reading Instruction \(KPEERI\)](#) exam. Educators who become a CALT are eligible for a stipend offered by the State which is currently set at \$5000 per teacher.

Each local education agency must submit a [report](#) in writing annually to the State Superintendent of Education, by grade, the number and percentage of students identified as demonstrating the characteristics of dyslexia and receiving dyslexia-specific intervention, and the name of the dyslexia-specific intervention being provided. The report must also state the number of teachers who have completed training in dyslexia awareness, multisensory strategies, and satisfy the definition of dyslexia interventionist as defined by rule of the State Board of Education.

- **Supports and Resources for Families**

The Alabama Reading Initiative provides many supports and resources for families. ARI has a website with a section for [Family and Community Involvement](#) and a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) flyer in [multiple languages](#) for families with students in grades K-3. In addition, ARI has a website of [archived newsletters](#) for families, a [YouTube channel](#) with many videos specifically for families, and a list of resources for families in Section IX of [The Alabama Literacy Act Implementation Guide](#) and in Appendix D of the [Dyslexia Resource Guide](#).

ARI also publishes [The Alabama Family Guide For Student Reading Success: Kindergarten through Third Grade](#), in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#). This guide supports caregivers who have a child with a Student Reading Improvement Plan and includes family-guided home literacy activities to support learning in the specific areas of need.

- **Reporting Requirements**

The State uses a [statewide reporting system](#), Unified Insights, for monitoring and collecting data and information required by the Alabama Literacy Act. Information to be reported in the Unified Insights tool includes all SRIPs, portfolios, summer reading camp interventions, and professional learning of K-3 teachers and administrators in reading/literacy science training and dyslexia training. Additionally, [documentation](#) for dyslexia, interventions and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade promotion and retention must be reported in Unified Insights.

#### Resources:

[NCTQ State of the States 2024: Five Policy Actions to Strengthen Implementation of the Science of Reading](#), Mar 2024

[NCTQ- Alabama State Reading Profile](#), Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd- Alabama Implementation Report](#), updated Jan 2025

[www.evidenceadvocacycenter.org](http://www.evidenceadvocacycenter.org)

[ExcelinEd Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy- 50 state analysis, Jan 2024](#)  
[CCSSO Science of Reading Legislation and Implementation State Scan, Mar 2024](#)  
[NCIL State of Dyslexia, Mar 2025](#)

[Alabama State Department of Education Semi-Annual Reports \(2024\)](#)  
[Alabama Reading Initiative website](#)  
[Alabama Literacy Act Implementation Guide \(2020\)](#)  
[Alabama State Department of Education Multi-Tier System of Supports \(2023\)](#)  
[Alabama State Department of Education English Learner Guidebook \(2024\)](#)  
[Alabama Framework for English Learner Success \(2021\)](#)  
[Alabama Dyslexia Resource Guide \(2022\)](#)  
[Alabama Family Guide For Student Reading Success, K-3 \(2021\)](#)

The information in this report is current as of October 14, 2024 (updated March 26, 2025).

## MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi is a model for state legislation across many policy action areas.

Mississippi is unique among states in that it has had a comprehensive, targeted and sustained focus on improving reading achievement in elementary education for over two decades. This work began with the founding of the [Barksdale Reading Institute](#) (BRI) in 2000 through a \$100 million investment by Jim and Sally Barksdale. It had a singular mission and metric: to significantly improve early literacy as measured by 4<sup>th</sup> grade [NAEP](#) scores. Soon after, it started working in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Education, and in 2013, the [Literacy Based Promotion Act](#) (LBPA) was passed. The Act provided for universal professional development in reading/literacy science for K-3 educators, statewide literacy coaches, universal screening and targeted assessments, and a Kindergarten readiness assessment.<sup>1</sup>

With the support of the LBPA, significant state funding and an unwavering focus on the ‘[Barksdale model](#)’ which includes intensive educator professional development, provision of highly-trained coaches in schools, implementation of high-quality mastery-based core curricula, training in purposeful early literacy intervention, and training in delivering an effective structured literacy block, Mississippi raised its 4<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP scores from 49<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> in the country between 2013 and 2022. In addition, achievement of low-income and African American students rose from near bottom in the country to the top 5 between 2003 and 2022 on the NAEP test.<sup>2</sup>

The Barksdale Reading Institute closed in June 2023, but its legacy lives on in the [Reading Universe](#), a free web-based service to support pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade educators in reading and writing instruction, the [Mississippi Reading Clinic](#), which provides literacy assessments and interventions in the State, and [The Path Forward](#), a program run by The Hunt Institute to help states transform their teacher preparation and licensure programs to incorporate reading/literacy science.

### Standards for Educator Preparation Programs

Mississippi has strong standards for educator preparation programs that are aligned to reading/literacy science.

- **Standards**

Literacy coursework leading to licensure at [Mississippi educator preparation programs](#) (EPPs) must be aligned to the International Dyslexia Association’s 2018 [Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading](#) and to the 2017 standards of the [International Literacy Association](#). Standards also include how to teach reading to [English Learners and struggling readers](#).

- **Coursework**

According to the Mississippi Department of Education Guidelines for EPPs, programs preparing candidates in elementary education must include 12 semester hours across four courses in reading and literacy as follows:

- Literacy I or Structured Literacy I

<sup>1</sup> Butler, K. (2024). The Long View of Literacy in Mississippi: Major Components That Contributed to Reading Achievement in Mississippi... and Beyond! *The Reading League Journal*, May/June 2024, 51-59.

<sup>2</sup> “Ibid.”

- Literacy II or Structured Literacy II
- Integrating Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum
- Diagnosing and Assessing Reading Difficulties

Elementary education teacher candidates seeking licensure in K-6 must complete one 18-hour content area concentration and one 12-hour reading endorsement.

Candidates for licensure in grades 7-12 must take a 3-semester hour course in reading pedagogy and structured literacy.

Coursework for candidates seeking licensure in the area of Educational Leadership ensures development of knowledge and skills to support teachers' instructional practice in explicit, systematic and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

## Educator Preparation Program Approval and Renewal

The Mississippi Department of Education has sole responsibility for educator preparation program approval and renewal. The State conducts this process in [partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation \(CAEP\)](#).

- **Program Approval**

The State utilizes information generated from CAEP's review of an EPP to determine whether to grant program approval. Supporting documentation includes curriculum mapped to [CAEP K-6 Elementary Teacher Preparation Standards](#) and syllabi (licensure, pedagogy, methods, clinicals, student teaching).

CAEP standards include the ability to implement and evaluate instruction in concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, critical thinking, motivation and writing. Candidates must be able to differentiate instructional approaches to meet students' reading and writing needs. They must also be able to adapt instructional approaches and materials to meet the needs of English Learners.

- **Program Renewal**

The process for initial approval or renewal of CAEP accreditation of an EPP requires the program to complete a self-study process, a self-study report, a formative review and a multi-day site visit where a team reviews evidence, data and pedagogical artifacts. The site visit team also interviews EPP leaders, faculty, mentor teachers, candidates, students, P-12 administrators, and other relevant stakeholders.

While the State does not include reading specialists in the [review of reading instruction in elementary EPPs](#) as part of the program renewal process, it does include [licensure pass rate data](#) as part of the process. In addition, the State Department of Education publishes an [annual report](#) on teacher preparation program performance, which includes pass rate data on licensure exams.

## Elementary Reading Licensure Test

Mississippi uses a strong reading licensure test, Pearson's [Foundation of Reading test](#). All elementary (grades K-6, K-3 and 4-6) and special education (grades K-12) teacher candidates are required to pass the test. For an individual who [moves into the state](#) from another state, Mississippi will grant a standard 5-year license if the teacher has a valid, standard license from the other state and also meets minimum Mississippi license requirements.

Programs are [required to report annually](#) the number candidates who completed the program and scored at or above the minimum passing score by the number of attempts.

## High-Quality Curriculum

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) provides [guidance](#) and [tools](#) for the selection of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), as well as [supplemental materials](#) for interventions for English learners and for struggling readers. Mississippi's HQIM are [aligned](#) with the State's College- and Career- Readiness Standards.

- ### Curriculum Tools and Lists

The MDE publishes [lists of recommended, standards-aligned core curricula](#) for English language arts for grades K-12, as well as guidance documents for those programs. In addition, the MDE provides guidance on the [elements of effective implementation](#) of high-quality instructional materials.

*Please note that some items on the curriculum lists may not be fully aligned with reading/literacy science. In addition, Mississippi does not have a policy that bans three-cueing in instructional materials.*

The State's [lowest-performing \(targeted\) schools](#) are required to develop a school-wide literacy action plan using curricula from the state-approved list.

For districts that wish to evaluate curricular materials that are not on the state recommended lists, the MDE, together with teachers and school districts, developed [curriculum evaluation rubrics](#) for grades K-12. The rubrics consider text quality and complexity, alignment to standards, building knowledge, and usability. The rubrics also include questions to help identify whether a program supports teachers in teaching students who are English Learners and students who are striving readers.

### Supports for Administrators

The MDE provides a variety of resources to support [administrators](#) in implementing high-quality instructional materials in their schools including suggested instructional routines for teaching reading and guidance documents for using specific English language arts programs.

### Funding

The 2024 budget bill provides \$6.8 million in funding for the [Literacy Initiative and Assessment](#) to monitor and evaluate the adoption and implementation of high-quality instructional materials that have been reviewed through the approved state process.

In its report on Mississippi, [ExcelinEd](#) states “MDE should consider expanding policy to require all districts in the state to adopt high-quality instructional materials —while the state has provided many resources on HQIM, it is not clear that districts are required to adopt HQIM as part of their comprehensive literacy program.”

## Professional Learning

Mississippi has had a strong focus on professional development in reading/literacy science since 2013 when the State passed the [Literacy-Based Promotion Act](#) (LBPA).

- ### Professional Development

In response to the LBPA, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) provided and fully funded [training in reading/literacy science](#) and evidence-based instructional practices to all K-3 teachers and their school leaders, and K-8 special education teachers, using Language Essentials

for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS). This training was also offered to university faculty. In approximately 15 months, [18,000 teachers and school leaders received LETRS training](#).

In 2022, the MDE started offering [statewide training through AIM Institute](#) and it is [required](#) for teachers and principals at the lowest performing schools. MDE-sponsored training continues to be fully funded by the State. AIM offers two courses that are customized for the MDE, the *Pathways to Proficient Reading for Teachers* course and the *Pathways to Proficient Reading: Secondary* course. Both courses are accredited with the International Dyslexia Association. In addition, AIM Institute has a [Pathways for Literacy Leadership course](#) which is available to educational leaders to assist in developing and implementing a literacy plan for their school.

[To date, over 20,000 teachers, principals and higher education faculty](#) have completed state-sponsored literacy training, all fully funded by the State.

The MDE provides guidance to educators and administrators through their webpages [Literacy Professional Development and Resources](#), [Resources for Administrators](#) and [Literacy](#).

- **Professional Development – Dyslexia**

Legislation passed in 2021 mandated that all public school districts provide four hours of [in-service training on dyslexia and related disorders](#) every three years. This requirement applies to all licensed educators and paraprofessionals responsible for instruction.

Training must include content from Standards 1 and 2 of the International Dyslexia Association’s “[Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading](#)”, as well as information on indicators and characteristics of dyslexia, screening processes, evidence-based interventions and accommodations. Training must be delivered by an individual who holds a State Department of Education license in Dyslexia Therapy and a national certificate as a Certified Academic Language Therapist.

The MDE provides additional information, tools and resources on their [dyslexia webpage](#) including the [Dyslexia Support Guide](#), an [MTSS Self-Evaluation Tool for Implementing Evidence-Based Interventions](#), recordings of dyslexia training sessions, and a [Parent and Family Guide to MTSS](#).

## Screening and Assessment

Mississippi received an “above and beyond” designation from [ExcelinEd](#) for its policies regarding universal reading screeners.

- **Universal Screening**

Mississippi [requires](#) schools to administer a universal reading screener to all students three times per year. If a student scores below benchmark in a specific component of the universal screener, a [diagnostic assessment must be administered](#) to that student. The diagnostic assessment must be aligned to an endorsed or state-approved [reading intervention](#). These data inform whether an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) for the student is warranted (for more information on IRPs, see the Intervention section below).

- **Approved List of Screening Tools**

Schools must use a [state-approved universal reading screener](#) for students in grades K-3. The State monitors district adoption of universal reading screeners and the use of the data collected to identify at-risk students through its [PK-3 Reading Screener Grant Application](#).



If a school district is interested in using a screener that is not on the state-approved list, the district must complete the [Application for Approval of Other K-3 Screeners](#). If approval is obtained for one district, the screener will be approved for use in all districts.

- **Screening for Dyslexia**

Schools [must screen](#) all students for characteristics of dyslexia at the end of Kindergarten and again at the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> grade using one of the screeners from the [Mississippi Approved List of Dyslexia Screeners](#). [Data collected](#) from the dyslexia screener must be submitted to the Office of Intervention Services. If a student does not pass the screener, the parents/guardians must be notified.

## Supports for Schools and Educators

### *Adequate funding for literacy efforts*

[Mississippi provides direct funding](#) to support implementation of a number of early literacy fundamental principles:

The 2024 budget bill provides [\\$6,805,774 in funding](#) for the Literacy Initiative and Assessment, and monitoring and evaluating the adoption and implementation of high-quality instructional materials that have been reviewed through the approved state process

- Annual funding of \$15,000,000 for early literacy efforts
- Funding for literacy coaches- \$16,881,692 over 5 years (July 2022-June 2027)

### *Literacy coaches*

Mississippi has a strong model for literacy coaching support for schools and districts. In fact, their coaching model has been [critical to their success](#) in [raising student reading achievement](#) in the years since the enactment of the Literacy Based Promotion Act.

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) [selects and trains its literacy coaches](#), known as [Educators in Residence](#) (EIR), and assigns them to schools or to other educational entities such as Institutes of Higher Learning and community colleges. EIRs are employed by the entity they serve but all parties sign a Memorandum of Understanding for their services (the MDE, the school district or other entity, and the EIR). Their salary and fringe benefits are covered through a grant from the State Board of Education. Their role is to identify the needs of assigned schools and provide [job-embedded training and technical assistance](#) (at least 85% of the school week) to K-3 teachers and principals so that students achieve grade level reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The MDE [maintains the quality of its coaching model](#) by requiring monthly reports from coaches and biannual ‘learning walks’, conducting annual reviews, and supporting coaches’ professional growth by providing targeted professional development and ongoing supports. [Regional literacy coordinators](#) support the literacy coaches, and state literacy coordinators support the regional coordinators, thereby providing a network of support throughout the system.

[Literacy coaches](#) must have a master’s degree in education with 3 years of experience teaching reading with a minimum of 3 years of literacy experience at the state, district or school level. Alternatively, they may have a bachelor’s degree with 5 years teaching reading with a minimum of 3 years of literacy experience at the state, district or school level, plus additional experience in teaching and training.

Additional information on Mississippi’s coaching model can be found in the [Literacy Coach Handbook](#) and in the [Leading in Literacy](#) guide.



## Intervention

Mississippi has required Individual Reading Plans (IRPs) for qualifying students since 2016 following [amendments](#) to the [Literacy-Based Promotion Act](#) (LBPA). Mississippi provides a list of [evidence-based academic interventions](#) to aid districts in supporting students with IRPs. Mississippi also provides information and guidance to districts in its [Multi-Tiered System of Supports Documentation Packet](#).

- **Individual Reading Plans**

IRPs are [required](#) for any student in grades K-3 who at any time exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, including students with characteristics of [dyslexia](#), unless the student currently has an [IEP with reading goals](#). IRPs are also required for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who were unable to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on state testing but were promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade with a good cause exemption.

The IRP must be developed and implemented within 2 weeks of identification of the reading deficiency. Students must be provided with immediate intervention and intensive reading instruction. The following information must be [documented](#) in the IRP:

- The student's specific, diagnosed reading skill deficiencies as determined (or identified) by diagnostic assessment data
- Goals and benchmarks for growth
- How progress will be monitored and evaluated
- The type of additional instruction services and interventions the student will receive
- The research-based reading instructional programming the teacher will use to provide reading instruction, addressing the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension
- The strategies the student's parent is encouraged to use in assisting the student to achieve reading competency;
- Any additional services the teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading skill development

Each year student data should be used to determine whether a student will need an IRP for that year. This meeting should be conducted by the teacher support team.

- **English Learners**

High-quality core instruction is essential to the success of English learners. Before referring students who are English learners (ELs) for intervention, the Teacher Support Team should [consider](#) issues such as the amount of time the student has been in this country, the similarity or dissimilarity of ethnicity or national origin to that of the U.S., the type of schooling received in their native country, and the degree of English language acquisition.

Multiple sources of data (state testing, universal screeners, benchmark scores and classroom grades), as well as English Language Proficiency Test assessment results, should be reviewed to determine whether the student's challenges are mainly due to academic, behavioral, or English language deficiencies. If the student's language acquisition is below that of EL peers with a similar language background and duration in the U.S., along with academic or behavioral difficulties, the student may require intervention as outlined in the MTSS process.

Additional information can be found in the [MDE English Learner Guidelines](#) and on the [MDE English Learner](#) webpage.

- **Progress Monitoring**

[Teachers must collect](#) baseline data within the first 30 days of school via a state-approved screener and monitor the progress of each student at the middle and end of the year. In accordance with MTSS guidelines, progress monitoring is recommended as follows:

- Tier 1: Formal monthly progress monitoring
- Tier 2: Bi-weekly progress monitoring
- Tier 3: Weekly progress monitoring

- **Communication with Families**

Teachers are [required to notify](#) parents/guardians in writing within 10 days when their child has been identified as having reading difficulties. The following information must be provided with the initial notification and in quarterly reporting to the parents/guardians:

- Determination of a substantial deficit in reading
- Description of student services and supports presently provided
- Description of proposed supplemental instruction and support to remediate the student's deficit areas
- Strategies for parents to use to help students at home
- Notification that a student will not be promoted to 4th grade if reading deficiency cannot be remediated by the end of 3rd grade unless a good cause exemption is met

Additional resources, tools and supports for teachers and families can be found on the [MDE Intervention Services](#) webpage and Dyslexia webpage. Families can also find resources to support reading at home through the [Strong Readers Strong Leaders](#) webpage.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Retention**

Students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who do not meet the academic requirements for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade are required by law to be [retained](#) in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, unless the student qualifies for a “Good Cause Exemption”.

Mississippi offers [multiple pathways](#) for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Earning a “met LBPA requirements” (level 3 or above) on the multiple-choice portion of state testing (MAAP-ELA)
- Achieving Level 3 or above on either of two retest opportunities on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Alternative Assessment \*
- Achieving Level 3 or above in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade MAAP-ELA Assessment after the writing is scored\*

\*These methods of promotion also qualify as “Good Cause Exemptions”.

Mississippi allows for “Good Cause Exemptions” in specific circumstances for students who haven’t qualified for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition to those noted above are the following:

- Limited English Proficient students with less than 2 years of instruction in an English Language Learner program
- Students with a disability whose IEP indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law
- Students with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who have received intensive reading remediation under an IEP or Section 504 Plan for 2 years but still demonstrate a deficiency or were previously retained in grades K-3
- Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education
- Students who received intensive intervention in reading for 2 or more years but still demonstrate a reading deficiency and who were previously retained in grades K-3 for a total of 2 years and have not met exceptional education criteria

Districts promoting students to 4<sup>th</sup> grade under a “Good Cause Exemption” must [document](#) the reasons for the promotion. In addition, they must continue to provide an Individual Reading Plan and intensive interventions to these students. If a student does not meet a “Good Cause Exemption” and is [retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade](#), the student should be provided daily scientifically based core reading instruction that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district, which may include:

- Small group instruction
- Reduced teacher-student ratios
- Tutoring in scientifically based reading services in addition to the regular school day
- The option of transition classes
- Extended school day, week, or year
- Summer reading camps

Districts must report to the State information regarding students promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and students promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade under a “Good Cause Exemption.” Literacy Based Promotion Act annual reports are available on the [MDE website](#).

#### Resources:

[NCTQ State of the States 2024: Five Policy Actions to Strengthen Implementation of the Science of Reading](#), Mar 2024

[NCTQ- Mississippi State Reading Profile](#), Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy](#)- 50 state analysis, Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd- Mississippi Implementation Report](#), updated Jan 2025

[CCSSO Science of Reading Legislation and Implementation State Scan](#), Jan 2024

[NCIL State of Dyslexia](#), Mar 2025

[Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide](#), revised 2016

[Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Frequently Asked Questions](#), updated Jan 2024

[The Reading Revolution: How States Are Scaling Literacy Reform](#)- L. Olson (2023)

[How to Build Strong Readers: Mississippi’s Guide to Developing Literacy Skills from Birth through Grade 12](#)

[Leading in Literacy: Overview of Programs and Special Projects](#), updated Aug 2024

[Mississippi Multi-Tiered System of Supports Guidance Document](#)

[MDE Literacy webpage](#)

[MDE Multi-Tiered System of Supports Documentation Packet](#), updated 2024

[Mississippi Universal Screener Companion Guide](#), updated Jan 2025

[MDE English Learner Guidelines](#)

[Mississippi Dyslexia Support Guide](#)

[Reading Universe website](#)

The information in this report is current as of August 14, 2024 (updated March 26, 2025).

## North Carolina

North Carolina is a model for state legislation across many policy action areas.

In 2012, North Carolina passed the Read to Achieve Act which established ambitious goals to ensure all students could read proficiently by the end of third grade through mandatory assessments, summer reading camps, and intervention programs for struggling readers.

The state further strengthened its commitment to literacy by passing the [Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021 \(SB 387\)](#), emphasizing evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with reading/literacy science. This Act expanded professional development requirements, including the extensive LETRS training for educators, mandated alignment of teacher preparation programs with scientifically based reading practices, and reinforced early identification and targeted support for students at risk for reading difficulties.

### Standards for Educator Preparation Programs

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) are required to provide training to elementary and special education teachers that includes instruction in reading/literacy science, referred to as the “Science of Reading”, as outlined in the Excellent Public Schools Act (2021). The “Science of Reading” is defined in the Act as “evidence-based reading instruction practices that address the acquisition of language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension that can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students”.

Instruction must also include the use of evidence-based [assessment and diagnosis](#) of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and reading deficiencies, as well as the application of literacy interventions.

- **Literacy Instruction Standards for Public Schools**

The [State](#) does not break down the components of literacy instruction for EPPs, however it does have detailed standards for literacy instruction in public schools. The [Literacy Instruction Standards](#) are a framework for the development and alignment of K-12 curriculum and instruction that aim to ensure that teachers across the State have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

- **Prohibited Practices**

EPPs are prohibited from teaching “[three-cueing](#)” as a method of reading instruction. Three-cueing is defined as a model of teaching students to read words based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues.

- **UNC System Literacy Framework**

In April 2020, the University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors adopted a [resolution](#) aimed at enhancing teacher preparation programs across the UNC System with a particular emphasis on improving literacy instruction. The Board required the establishment of uniform goals and metrics for teacher preparation programs within the UNC System. It also called for the creation of a common framework for literacy instruction grounded in evidence-based reading research and aims to ensure that UNC teaching candidates master the essential components of reading instruction.

The [Framework](#), published in February 2021, addresses the following eight components of literacy:

Concepts of Print	Fluency
Language	Vocabulary
Phonological & Phonemic Awareness	Comprehension
Phonics, orthography, and automatic word recognition	Writing

Each component has a matrix indicating the competencies and sub-competencies, instructional strategies, and recommendations for candidate field experiences and activities. The Framework also addresses diverse learners and English Learners.

The UNC System is the largest provider of public school teachers in North Carolina. Although this Framework was developed for the UNC System, it can serve as a useful guide for educator preparation programs outside the UNC System.

## Educator Preparation Program Approval and Renewal

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is responsible for educator preparation program (EPP) [approval](#) and makes the [final decision on the approval](#) of any EPP. In addition, the State requires national accreditation of EPPs.

- **State Process**

The [State process](#) for program approval includes an application process, peer review and technical assistance provided by the State Board. The approval period is five years. EPPs must meet minimum approval standards which include demonstrating that their students have a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline, provide high-quality clinical practice, demonstrate the impact of their graduates on elementary and secondary student learning, and meet the satisfaction of graduates in terms of the relevance and effectiveness of their preparation.

The state review process [does not include](#) a review of syllabi of reading courses to determine the integration of reading instruction nor does it include reading specialists/experts in the review of reading instruction in elementary teacher preparation programs.

The [Excellent Public Schools Act](#) requires that coursework at EPPs must be grounded in the “Science of Reading” to receive program approval and renewal, and must include instruction in assessment and diagnosis of reading difficulties and in the application of literacy interventions.

[Accountability measures](#) for EPPs include performance measures and an annual performance report. Performance measures include the proficiency and growth of students taught by teachers with an initial professional license (to the extent practicable) and results from educator satisfaction surveys. The annual performance report includes data on performance measures,

data related to student internship and residency experiences, licensure pass rates, preparation of educators to effectively teach students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, and other EPP student metrics.

Annual EPP report cards are publicly available on the State's [EPP Dashboard](#).

- **National Accreditation**

The State requires EPPs have national accreditation, and has agreements with [CAEP](#) and [AAQEP](#) for that purpose. The agreements outline the partnership arrangement with the State and address items such as team composition, site reviews, data sharing, and opportunities for State input in the accreditation process. Full accreditation by CAEP or AAQEP is for a seven-year term.

## Elementary Reading Licensure Test

North Carolina uses a strong reading licensure test, Pearson's [Foundation of Reading test](#). All K-6 elementary and K-12 special education teacher candidates are [required](#) to pass this test. This test is also required for [out-of-state](#) applicants. The State publishes licensure pass rate and other data on the State's [EPP Dashboard](#).

## High-Quality Curriculum

All local education agencies in North Carolina must align their curriculum and instructional methods to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) [Literacy Instruction Standards](#). The NCDPI provides [guidance](#) and resources for the selection of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM).

- **Curriculum Evaluation Tool**

The NCDPI provides a [Science of Reading Alignment Tool](#) to support districts in evaluating and selecting instructional materials for their schools. This tool addresses the five major areas of reading instruction: phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. A section for writing is also included.

This tool does not specifically address the needs of English Learners or students with difficulty acquiring literacy skills.

- **Reporting Requirements**

Districts are required to submit information about the curriculum they use for each grade and each element of the "Science of Reading" to the State through the [NC Literacy Intervention Plan](#). Each district's Plan is shared statewide through the annual legislative report.

- **Consumer Information**

In 2023, North Carolina passed SB49, "[Parents' Bill of Rights](#)". Under the provisions of this Bill, parents may review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classroom.



- **Prohibited Practices**

North Carolina legislation specifically prohibits the use of the “[three-cueing system](#)” in curriculum, or in any instruction or intervention provided to students in grades K-3. Three-cueing is defined as a model of teaching students to read words based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues.

## Professional Learning

North Carolina received an “above and beyond” designation from [ExcelinEd](#) for its requirements for professional development and training for early elementary teachers and administrators in reading science and evidence-based strategies for effective reading instruction. The State’s strategic plan, [Operation Polaris](#), includes literacy and literacy training grounded in science, as a priority.

- **Professional Development**

In 2021, following the enactment of the Excellent Public Schools Act, North Carolina designated [Lexia LETRS®](#) to provide free professional learning to PreK-5 teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches. As of June 2024, the third and final cohort completed LETRS training. In total, [over 44,000 educators have successfully completed](#) this training. The State has an [implementation plan](#) for learning, implementation, change, and outcomes for LETRS training for educators, coaches, and administrators, beginning in 2021 through the 2026–2027 school year.

The NCDPI published this [LETRS® Sustainability Guide](#) as a resource to ensure LETRS training, implementation information, practices, and resources are consistently accessible across the State.

The NCDPI through its [Office of Early Learning](#) offers a [Literacy for Leaders](#) webinar series on YouTube for district and school administrators.

- **EPP Summit**

In June 2024, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) hosted its inaugural [Collaborative Educator Preparation Program \(EPP\) Science of Reading Summit](#). The Summit’s primary objective was to “help develop and implement aligned processes and resources to increase support for teacher candidates before they enter the classroom”. As part of that effort, participants learned about LETRS professional development implementation, early literacy specialists, legislative updates, and “science of reading” alignment tools. In addition, [select faculty](#) at EPPs have participated in LETRS training and receive a [stipend over two years](#) for their participation.

## Screening and Assessment

North Carolina has a strong model for universal literacy screening, assessment and progress monitoring.

- **Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring**

North Carolina [requires](#) schools to administer a universal reading screener to all K-3 students three times per year, at the beginning, middle and end of the year. The State has contracted with one vendor, [Amplify](#) mCLASS, which uses DIBELS 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, for purposes of formative and diagnostic reading assessments, and progress monitoring.

The mCLASS screener assesses the following skills: letter naming fluency, phonemic segmentation fluency, nonsense word fluency, word reading fluency, oral reading fluency; MAZE (basic comprehension), oral language, and vocabulary.

An Individual Reading Plan (IRP) must be developed for any student in grades K-3 demonstrating difficulty with reading development based on the results of either the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the school year, or the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the second semester of the school year.

- **Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties Including Dyslexia**

In 2017, North Carolina passed [HB149](#) which requires the screening and assessment of K-3 students to determine if they may have [dyslexia](#) or dyscalculia. In addition to the required use of Amplify mCLASS for universal screening, the State has approved the use of mCLASS for evaluating risk for dyslexia, using the tools mCLASS spelling and mCLASS RAN. However, districts do have the [option](#) to select another tool for dyslexia assessment. mCLASS spelling and mCLASS RAN may be included in the [fall and spring screener administrations](#) to meet dyslexia screening guidance.

- **Reporting Requirements**

North Carolina monitors districts' use of screeners to identify students who are at risk for reading difficulties. The State [requires](#) districts to use the [EVAAS](#) platform for collecting data from [DIBELS 8](#) screening and assessments.

- **Communication with Families**

Schools are [required](#) to provide parents of each K-3 student with the program-generated [written notification](#) of the student's progress after each administration of the assessment. This notification must include the assessment results, whether the student may not reach reading proficiency by the end of the third grade, and instructional support activities for use at home.

The State provides general information about dyslexia in its [Dyslexia Topic Brief](#).

## Supports for Schools and Educators

### *Adequate funding for literacy efforts*

North Carolina [provides funding](#) to support state and local implementation of early literacy initiatives including:

- **Literacy coaches and specialists-** The [2022 budget](#) included funds for 115 literacy coaches and bonus pay for reading teachers (\$16.5 billion for education total); the [2023 budget](#) included an additional \$750,000 for literacy coaches/specialists.
- **LETRS Professional Development-** \$12 million was provided from COVID relief funds (funding has expired).
- **Pre-K Literacy Funds-** \$969,000 was provided in the [2023 budget](#) to select and purchase a supplemental assessment that measures early literacy skills.
- **Funding** has been provided for [literacy intervention](#), professional development, and for 3rd grade students who have been retained twice for supplemental tutoring in evidence-based reading

services ([Literacy Intervention \(PRC 085\)](#)).

- **ELISS Competitive Grant Program-** In the 2023-2025 biennial budget, North Carolina [allocated \\$7 million per year](#) from the At-Risk Student Services Program for the [Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports \(ELISS\)](#) Competitive Grant Program to improve academic outcomes for at-risk students.

### *Literacy Coaches*

North Carolina provides statewide systems of support, coordination and oversight to ensure alignment of effective literacy implementation. The State coaching framework is described in the NCDPI guide, [NC Literacy Coaching: A Partnership Approach](#). The state model supports school, district and regional coaches.

- **School Literacy Leads-** These *school-based* coaches work with educators to implement evidence-based literacy practices, provide data analysis support, and encourage reflective practice. This position is designated by the district or school leadership.
- **Early Literacy Specialists (ELS)-** These *district-level* coaches support the school literacy leads and serve as a liaison within district and school leadership teams providing ongoing systems coaching and data-driven professional learning. This position is designated collaboratively by the State and the district.
- **Early Education Consultants-** these *regional-level* coaches are designated by the State and provide ongoing advice, services, ideas, and solutions in support of regions and districts.
- **Training-** Coaches must be trained in the “Science of Reading”. The State supported [Lexia LETRS](#) training for coaches from 2021-2025. The Education Consultants provide ongoing support and professional development to coaches through the Office of Early Learning.

## Intervention

Each student in grades K-3 identified with a reading deficiency or the characteristics of dyslexia based on the results of screening and assessment data must be provided with an appropriate reading intervention program to address specific deficiencies. The State provides guidance for the intervention process through the [NC Literacy Interventions Guiding Document](#), including standards for intervention and the connections to a [multi-tiered system of support \(MTSS\)](#), and an MTSS Alignment [Checklist](#).

- **Individual Reading Plans (IRP)**

An [Individual Reading Plan](#) must be developed for any student in grades K-3 demonstrating difficulty with reading development based on the results of either the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the school year, or the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the second semester of the school year. The IRP is developed by teachers in collaboration with the school [MTSS](#) team.

An IRP identifies the following:

- the student’s specific reading skill deficiencies identified by assessment data
- goals and benchmarks for growth

- means to monitor progress and evaluated
- specific literacy interventions the student will receive
- evidence-based instructional programming that will be implemented
- any additional services that will be provided

The goal of the IRP is to ensure educators are implementing support based on data as early as possible. Schools must report annually to the State the number of students with an Individual Reading Plan. Parents must be given notice regarding the IRP, including specific strategies to assist the student, encouragement to use strategies at home, and direction to literacy resources. Parents of students not proficient in reading should be encouraged to send students to summer reading camp.

- **Local (District) Literacy Intervention Plans (LIP)**

Districts are required to annually submit a [literacy intervention plan \(LIP\)](#) to evaluate their literacy intervention systems as well as reading camps. These plans must align with the “science of reading” and must include feedback received from NCDPI on the prior year’s Plan. They help guide literacy intervention practices and should be connected to the district Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. Funding is tied to approval of the Plan by NCDPI.

- **Reading Camps**

[Reading camps](#) are additional educational programs outside of the instructional calendar and are funded by the State. The local school must provide this literacy intervention camp to any third-grade student who does not demonstrate reading proficiency and to any second-grade student who demonstrates difficulty with reading development. Schools may choose to offer reading camps to any first-grade student who demonstrates difficulty with reading development.

The parents of students who are offered a reading camp for literacy intervention make the final decision about their child’s enrollment in the camp. The State provides this [implementation guide](#) and this [guidance document](#) to support schools in their implementation of the reading camp.

Reading camps must meet the following requirements:

1. Offer at least 72 hours of reading instruction to yield positive reading outcomes for participants
2. Be taught by compensated, licensed teachers selected based on demonstrated student outcomes in reading proficiency or in improvement of difficulties with reading development
3. Allow volunteer mentors to read with students at times other than during the 72 hours of reading instruction.
4. Be provided as outlined in the local school administrative unit's literacy intervention plan

Teachers may receive a [signing bonus and/or a performance bonus](#) for teaching at a reading camp if they meet certain criteria.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Retention**

Students must be [retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade](#) if they are not demonstrating reading proficiency on the third-grade state [standardized test of reading comprehension](#). North Carolina provides multiple [options for promotion](#) to 4<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Achieving a certain level on the Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading test
- Passing the retest of the end-of-grade reading test at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Passing the locally determined alternative assessment
- Successfully completing a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student [reading portfolio](#)

Students who are retained must be provided with specific interventions including the option of a reading camp, accelerated reading classes or transitional third-fourth grade classes, and the possibility of midyear promotion upon demonstration of reading comprehension. Parents must be notified of the decision for retention in writing and should be encouraged to enroll their child in reading camp. The school must provide parents written reports of progress toward reading proficiency at least monthly.

Students may qualify for exemption from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade retention if they meet one of the “good cause” exemptions:

- Limited English Proficient students who have less than two school years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program
- Students with disabilities who meet certain criteria
- Students who demonstrate 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency on an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education
- Students who demonstrate reading proficiency through a reading portfolio appropriate for third-grade students; student reading portfolio and review processes used by schools must be approved by the State Board of Education.
- Students who have received literacy interventions and previously have been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades

In order to receive a “good cause” exemption, teachers must submit evidence to the principal that promotion is appropriate. Schools must continue to provide intensive interventions to students promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade for “good cause”. Students who meet a “good cause” exemption are still eligible for the reading camp.

- **Supports and Resources for Families**

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) developed the [Literacy At Home: Digital Children’s Reading Initiative](#) website to support parents and families. This resource is [required](#) to be linked on every district’s local website. It provides resources for the essential early literacy skills for each grade, PreK-5. The NCDPI also has a [Science of Reading](#) webpage and additional resources on the [Parent’s Corner](#) webpage.

**Additional Sources:**

[NCTQ State of the States 2024: Five Policy Actions to Strengthen Implementation of the Science of Reading](#), Mar 2024  
[NCTQ- North Carolina State Reading Profile](#), Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd](#)- North Carolina Implementation Report, May 2024  
[ExcelinEd Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy](#)- 50 state analysis, Jan 2024  
[CCSSO Science of Reading Legislation and Implementation State Scan](#), Mar 2024  
[NCIL State of Dyslexia- North Carolina](#), Mar 2025

[North Carolina Excellent Public Schools Act \(SB387\) \(2021\)](#)  
[Comprehensive UNC System Literacy Framework and Implementation Guidance \(2021\)](#)  
[North Carolina DPI Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement \(2023-2024\)](#)  
[North Carolina DPI Literacy Instruction Standards, PK-12](#)  
[North Carolina DPI Science of Reading Alignment Tool Guidebook](#)  
[North Carolina DPI Operation Polaris 2.0](#)  
[North Carolina DPI LETRS® Sustainability Guide \(2023\)](#)  
[North Carolina DPI NC Literacy Coaching: A Partnership Approach \(2023\)](#)  
[North Carolina DPI Reading Camp Implementation Guide \(2024\)](#)  
[North Carolina DPI Dyslexia Topic Brief \(2019\)](#)

The information in this report is current as of March 26, 2025

## OHIO

Ohio is a model for state legislation across many policy action areas.

### Standards for Educator Preparation Programs

Ohio has strong standards for educator preparation programs. Recent [legislation](#) has further strengthened those standards.

- **Coursework:** Educator preparation programs (EPPs) in Ohio are required to provide [12 hours of coursework](#) for reading and literacy core standards which reflect the body of research in reading/literacy science. This coursework includes instruction in:

Foundational literacy knowledge	Comprehension
Phonological awareness	Writing
Phonics/word recognition	Assessment and data-based instruction
Vocabulary	Selection and use of high-quality
Fluency	instructional materials (HQIM)

In addition, EPPs must offer [3 hours of reading instruction](#) within content areas. These standards also reflect reading research and aim to enhance the ability of educators to build content knowledge from a literacy perspective.

- **Linguistically Diverse Students:** Ohio [standards](#) for training new teachers also address English learners and how to identify and teach struggling readers including those with dyslexia. In addition, House Bill 33, which passed in 2023, requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules regarding the identification, instruction, assessment, and reclassification of [English Learners](#).
- **Metrics:** House Bill 33 also requires the establishment of [metrics](#) to ensure educators complete coursework in evidence-based strategies for effective reading instruction. The metrics must ensure that clinical preparation of educators only occurs in classrooms where the local education agency has verified that the teachers have training in literacy instruction strategies aligned to reading/literacy science, use instructional materials aligned to reading/literacy science from a list established by the Department of Higher Education, and actively implement a structured literacy approach.

### Educator Preparation Program Approval and Renewal

The [Ohio Department of Higher Education](#) has full authority over [educator preparation program approval and renewal](#). In addition, under recent legislation, the Department has developed a strong audit process for ensuring programs are effectively preparing future teachers in evidenced-based reading and literacy instruction aligned to reading/literacy science.

- **Program Approval**  
The Ohio Department of Higher Education has full authority over educator preparation program (EPP) approval and is responsible for ensuring the quality of programs, verifying that programs meet state standards, and reporting on the quality of programs to the public. The process for program approval includes the consideration of the performance of graduates on state EPP metrics, a review of curriculum, and a review of faculty qualifications and development.



- Evidence of faculty credentials includes coursework in teaching [reading and phonics](#) (which includes assessment of reading skills, and diagnosis and remediation of reading difficulties) and training in all programs leading to primary (preK-5<sup>th</sup> grade), middle childhood, adolescence/young adult, and intervention specialist licensure on effective methods of instruction for individuals with dyslexia.
- **Program Renewal**  
Institutions offering an educator preparation program must submit data to the Department for inclusion in an [annual public report](#). The [report includes metrics](#) such as state licensure pass rate data, a growth metric including student growth data and linked to educator effectiveness, and continuous improvement indicators such as teacher candidate satisfaction survey results and survey results from alumni, mentors and employers. Approval of any EPP may be revoked if the follow-up review reveals insufficient evidence that the program is meeting all state requirements.
- **New Audit Process**  
State legislation [requires](#) the Ohio Department of Higher Education to develop an [audit process with metrics](#) that documents the degree to which every EPP is effectively teaching the “Science of Reading”. This audit process will begin on January 1, 2025, and will occur every four years for all programs. Programs found not in alignment have one year to address the findings in the audit, or program approval will be revoked. Summaries of the audit findings will be made publicly available by March 31 of each year.

## Elementary Reading Licensure Test

Ohio uses a strong reading [licensure](#) test, Pearson’s [Foundation of Reading test](#). All elementary teacher candidates are [required](#) to pass the test, as are elementary teachers moving into Ohio [from another state](#). Legislation requires [public reporting](#) of first-time pass rate data, by institution, on this test.

## High-Quality Curriculum

The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (DEW) provides [guidance](#) and [tools](#) for the selection of high-quality core instructional materials, as well as supplemental materials for [interventions](#) for [English learners and for struggling readers](#). In addition, the Department is required by law to [identify vendors that provide professional development](#) to educators, including pre-service teachers and faculty employed by EPPs, on the use of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials and reading intervention programs.

- **New Curriculum Lists (NOT FULLY ALIGNED with reading/literacy science)**  
Under Ohio’s [new legislation](#), HB 33, the DEW must establish a [list of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials](#) for preK-5<sup>th</sup> grade in English language arts, and a list of evidence-based [reading intervention programs](#) for preK-12<sup>th</sup> grade, that are aligned with reading/literacy science and strategies for effective literacy instruction. Districts are required to use materials from these lists. [Guidance](#) is provided for reviewing, selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials.

*Some of the core and supplemental curricular materials on the state lists are not high-quality instructional materials and therefore do not fully align with reading/literacy science. Consequently, Ohio’s curriculum lists should not be considered model lists.*

Beginning with the [2024-2025 school year](#), curricular and instructional materials [may not include the three-cueing approach](#) in grades K-5 to teach students to read, or any model that uses meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues to teach reading, except if it is required in a student’s individual education plan (IEP) or if a waiver is obtained.

- **Survey – Core Literacy Curriculum & Intervention Materials**

HB 33 also requires the DEW to conduct a [survey](#) about core literacy curriculum and intervention materials being used. All public school districts and community schools are required to complete the [survey](#). Participants are highly encouraged to complete the questions about materials and professional development for K-12 mathematics. [Survey results](#) will help the State guide the resources and support to schools and districts to ensure all students have access to high-quality instructional materials.

- **Reporting Requirements**

Districts are [required](#) to report annually to the State the core curriculum and instructional materials being used for English language arts in preK-5<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, districts are required to report reading intervention programs being used in preK-12<sup>th</sup> grade. The state Education Management Information System ([EMIS](#)) is used for these reporting requirements.

[Ohio law](#) requires the DEW to create a process for users of the system to review and [provide public comment](#) on new or updated EMIS guidelines. Options in EMIS for reporting core curriculum and instructional materials for English language arts will also be included in the public comment process. Status updates and opportunities for comment will be provided on the [DEW website](#).

- **Funding**

State funding is available to subsidize the cost for districts and schools to purchase high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials from the approved lists. The FY 2024-2025 budget includes [\\$64 million in funding](#) for districts to purchase new programs and materials.

## Professional Learning

Ohio received an “above and beyond” designation from [ExcelinEd](#) for its requirements for [professional development and training](#) for all educators in reading/literacy science and evidence-based strategies for effective reading instruction.

- **Professional Development Requirements**

Under new legislation (HB 33) all teachers, preK-12<sup>th</sup> grade, and administrators must complete a professional development course in the ‘science of reading’ provided by the Department of Education and Workforce no later than June 30, 2025. Each teacher who completes the course will be paid a stipend. Stipends will not be paid to administrators. Ohio offers ongoing training through its [Literacy Academy](#) and the [All Ohio](#) website.

- **Dyslexia Professional Development**

All K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers, as well as teachers providing special education instruction in grades K-12, must complete [professional development](#) on identifying characteristics of dyslexia and understanding how to teach students with dyslexia. Educators are required to complete 18 hours of professional development aligned with the [Ohio Dyslexia Guidebook](#).

- **Structured Literacy Certification Process**

Districts are [required](#) to establish a [Structured Literacy Certification](#) process for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers. The Department provides a [planning tool](#) that district leaders can use to support discussions and decisions related to this process. Districts decide which of their educators will become certified. There are a number of pathways to certification. Several certification pathways require passing the [Knowledge and Practice Examination for Effective Reading Instruction \(KPEERI\)](#).

- **Science of Reading Toolkit**

The DEW provides a toolkit of resources through the [Read Ohio](#) webpage that educators and families can use throughout the year. The toolkit includes tips for superintendents, principals, educators and families.

## Screening and Assessment

The DEW supports districts in selecting screening and assessment tools. The DEW also requires progress monitoring, reporting of data collected, and communication with families.

- **Universal Screening**

Ohio [requires](#) schools to administer Tier 1 universal screening (also referred to as Tier 1 Dyslexia Screening) to identify students who may be at risk of reading difficulties such as dyslexia. This screening must be done once for all kindergarten students between January of the kindergarten year and January of 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, screening is required for any kindergarten student who transfers into a district midyear (unless this screening was already completed), and for students in grades 1-6 upon parent request, or upon teacher request with parent permission.

- **Progress Monitoring**

Students identified as at risk must be **progress-monitored** for up to 6 weeks and an intervention-based diagnostic (tier 2) screener must be administered to students who continue to exhibit risk for dyslexia. Schools and districts must [report the results](#) of Tier 1 and Tier 2 screening to the Department of Education and Workforce.

- **Approved List of Screening Tools**

The Tier 1 universal screener must be chosen from an [approved list](#), but there is no approved list for Tier 2 screeners. Schools can refer to Ohio's [Dyslexia Guidebook](#) and the [Literacy Assessment Selection Tool K-6](#) for guidance in selecting a diagnostic assessment tool (referred to as a Tier 2 dyslexia screener) for students who demonstrate a need or are at risk of dyslexia.

- **Communication with Families**

Districts are required to maintain consistent [communication with families](#) regarding students' screening results and reading progress. They must share with families the results of the universal (Tier 1) screener, the results of progress monitoring for those who continue to demonstrate risk, and the results of the Tier 2 screening. Districts must also provide families with information about reading development, the risk factors for dyslexia and a written explanation of the district's or school's structured literacy program. The [OSU Family Engagement Center](#) provides [sample communication tools](#) that schools can use to share information with families as well as other informational resources.

## Supports for Schools and Educators

### *Adequate funding for literacy efforts*

Ohio provides direct [funding](#) to support state and local implementation of early literacy fundamental principles, including:

- Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant: \$42 million 5-year grant
- State funding: FY24 budget provides \$86 million for educator training, \$64 million for curriculum and instruction materials, and \$18 million for literacy coaches

- State funding: Model Demonstration Projects for Early Identification of Students with Dyslexia Grant (\$1.2 million over 4 years for dyslexia screener) & expanded by the [Each Child Reads Grant](#) (\$1 million in 2022–2023 biennial budget)
- State funding: [Reaching All Students Through Language and Literacy](#): \$200,000 per participating site
- [Student Wellness and Success Funds and Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid](#): Funds initiatives to support wraparound services for Ohio’s students

### *Literacy coaches*

Ohio is a strong model for literacy coaching support to schools and districts.

- New legislation provides up to [\\$18 million in funding](#) for literacy coaches in FY 2024-2025 to support schools and districts with the lowest rates of proficiency.
- Coaches must be [trained in reading/literacy science](#) and in evidence-based strategies for literacy instruction and intervention.
- Coaches must follow [Ohio’s Coaching Model](#) as set out in the [Ohio Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#).
- Ohio includes coaches in the State’s suggested [Structured Literacy Certification Process](#)
- [Guidance](#) is provided for evaluating the coaching system.
- [Ohio monitors](#) the use of coaches in districts and schools that are required to submit reading achievement plans.

## **Intervention**

Ohio requires districts and schools to create [Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans](#) (RIMPs) for any student in grades K-3 who is reading below grade level as determined by diagnostic testing. The Plan must continue annually until the student is reading proficiently for their grade level, [through grade 12](#), as determined on the Ohio State Test for English Language Arts.

- **Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans**  
RIMPs outline reading instruction and support for students and require parents and teachers to work together to understand the student’s reading difficulties. The Plan must be created [within 60 days](#) of receiving the test results. Parents/guardians must be included in the process of developing the RIMP. Resources are provided to [families](#) to support reading at home. Intervention services must be aligned to reading/literacy science.
- **Plan Templates**  
Guidance for creating and monitoring a student’s Plan is provided through [templates](#).
- **High-Dosage Tutoring**  
Districts and schools are required to provide high-dosage tutoring for students with a RIMP at least three days a week or at least 50 hours over 36 weeks. This tutoring must continue beyond 4th grade for students still testing below grade level.
- **Implementation Monitoring**  
The RIMP must include a process to monitor the implementation of the student’s instructional

services. This progress monitoring must be conducted within the State's multi-tiered system of supports. Ohio also monitors the administration of [dyslexia screening](#) by reporting Tier 1 and Tier 2 screening results to the State.

- **Approved List of Intervention Programs and Reporting Requirements**

Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, Ohio [law](#) will require each district and school to use evidence-based reading intervention programs in preK–12th grade only from an [approved list](#). Districts must also [report](#) the types of reading intervention services provided in K–3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the Department's Education Management Information System. (Also see the High-Quality Curriculum section above.)

- **Mandatory 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Retention**

Schools must [retain](#) students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade if they score below the promotion score on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade state ELA testing unless those students are exempt from retention under the [Third Grade Reading Guarantee](#). Ohio does have the following exemptions from retention:

- English learners enrolled in school for fewer than three full school years and with fewer than three years of instruction in an English as a second language program
- A student whose IEP specifically exempts the student from retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee
- A student who demonstrates competency on an alternative assessment for reading approved by the Department of Education
- A student whose IEP shows the student received intensive remediation in reading for two years and the student previously was retained in any of grades K-3
- A student who received intensive remediation in reading for two years and previously was retained in any of grades K-3 \*
- A student's parent, in consultation with the reading teacher and principal, requested promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade regardless of the student's score on state 3<sup>rd</sup> grade testing \*

\*Students promoted under these exemptions have [specific reading instruction requirements](#).

Intensive interventions are required to continue in 4th grade for students promoted for good cause due to previous retentions. In addition, the State offers [multiple pathways](#) to promotion including achieving a predetermined level on the state reading assessment, passing an alternative assessment or retest, or parent request.

**Resources:**

[NCTQ State of the States 2024: Five Policy Actions to Strengthen Implementation of the Science of Reading](#), Mar 2024

[NCTQ- Ohio State Reading Profile](#), Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy](#)- 50 state analysis, Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd- Ohio Implementation Report](#), updated Jan 2025

[CCSSO Science of Reading Legislation and Implementation State Scan](#), Mar 2024

[NCIL State of Dyslexia](#), Mar 2025

[Ohio DEW website: Literacy](#)

[Ohio Dyslexia Guidebook](#), Jan 2024

[Ohio DEW Third Grade Reading Guarantee](#)  
[Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#), Jan 2025

All information in this report is current as of July 22, 2024 (updated March 26, 2025).



## TEXAS

Texas is a model for state legislation across many policy action areas.

### Standards for Educator Preparation Programs

Texas has strong [standards](#) for educator preparation programs to ensure teachers are well-prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners, including English learners and students with exceptional needs. These [standards](#) are designed to align with the [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills](#) (TEKS), the standards for what children should know and be able to do across all subjects of the required curriculum, and include the [English Language Proficiency Standards](#) (ELPS).

- **Coursework** for candidates in early childhood and elementary education must include evidence-based literacy instruction with a focus on:
 

Oral language	Word analysis & decoding
Phonological & phonemic awareness	Reading fluency and comprehension
Alphabetic principle	Written language development
Literacy development and practice	Use of literacy assessments
- **Prohibited practices:** Instruction on the use of materials that incorporate the method of “[three-cueing](#)” in foundational skills reading instruction is specifically prohibited. Three-cueing is defined as a method of reading instruction for identifying words by drawing on context and sentence structure rather than by sounding out the words or using a phonics-based approach.
- **Dyslexia:** Programs are [required](#) to provide instruction to teacher candidates in the detection and education of students with [dyslexia](#), including developing knowledge in the characteristics of dyslexia, identification of dyslexia, and effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.
- **HB 3 Reading Academies:** Beginning in September 2024, [educator preparation programs](#) may opt-in to provide the [HB 3 Reading Academies](#) for elementary teacher candidates. The Academies are a required professional development program for all K-3 teachers, principals and special education teachers on evidence-based instructional practices (see additional information on the Reading Academies under Professional Development below).

### Educator Preparation Program Approval and Renewal

Texas has strong standards for educator preparation program approval and renewal. The state maintains full authority over program approval and renewal through the [Texas Education Agency](#) (TEA). The Agency reviews proposals then makes a recommendation to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

- **Program Approval:** The process for program approval includes a review of a number of components including program curriculum, coursework, and certification procedures. Once approved, programs are [reviewed](#) at least once every five years.
- **Program Renewal:** Programs applying for renewal must submit a report to the TEA regarding compliance with existing standards and requirements. The TEA also reviews [syllabi](#) for integration of all reading standards and science of reading as part of the renewal process, and includes [licensure pass rate data](#) when considering program renewal. The State does not include reading [specialists/experts](#) in the review of reading instruction as part of the program renewal process.

- **Consumer Information:** The TEA provides [consumers](#) with important information about educator preparation programs to help individuals find a program that meets their needs, and to help school districts with their staffing and recruitment needs. The [Educator Preparation Data Dashboard](#) provides information on a range of topics, from general information to specific data about each preparation program.

## Elementary Reading Licensure Test

Texas uses a strong reading licensure test, the [Science of Teaching Reading](#) (STR) test. This test is [required](#) for certification in the fields listed below. It is also required for individuals who are [certified in another state](#) and seeking certification in these fields in Texas.

- Early Childhood: EC-Grade 3
- Core Subjects with Science of Teaching Reading: EC-Grade 6
- Core Subjects with Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4-8
- English Language Arts and Reading with Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4-8
- ELA and Reading/Social Studies with Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4-8

As stated above, Texas uses licensure test [pass rate data](#) to make decisions about program renewal, and considers the percentage of candidates who pass the test within the first two attempts.

## High-Quality Curriculum

The TEA provides [guidance and tools](#) for the selection of high-quality instructional materials, as well as supplemental materials for interventions for English learners and for struggling readers.

*Please note that core and supplemental curricular materials on the state lists may contain programs that do not fully align to reading/literacy science.*

- **Phonics Curriculum**

Under [House Bill 3](#) (2019), all schools are required to use a phonics curriculum that provides systematic and direct instruction in K-3. The TEA publishes a list of [compliant phonics programs](#) that districts may choose from, as well as rubrics in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) to assist in evaluating phonics materials.

If a chosen product [does not comply](#) with statute and rule, the district may use it as long as it has a strong evidence base and they update it for the reasons it did not comply.

- **Other Instructional Materials**

The TEA publishes a list of [currently adopted instructional materials](#). However, a new process is being developed to identify approved instructional materials. See IMRA below.

- Districts must [certify annually](#) that students have access to instructional materials covering all Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for all subjects except physical education, whether or not the materials are on the ‘adopted materials’ list.
- Districts must [report](#) the curriculum they use to the State.
- TEA provides rubrics for evaluating K-2 foundational literacy supplemental programs in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) through the [Texas Resource Review](#).
- TEA also provides a full [review](#) of curricula including whether they cover state standards, encompass foundational literacy skills, and include support for all learners.
- Legislation in 2023 ([HB 1605](#)) prohibits three-cueing in K-3 instruction and materials.

- HB 1605 provides for [parents](#) to have access to an online parent portal in order to view instructional materials adopted by their child’s district. The bill also requires a process to be established for parents to request an instructional material review.
- The TEKS standards address English Language Learners including the importance of scaffolded supports to meet standards in a second language and use of a student’s first language to ensure development in English. The TEKS also note the importance of integrating second language acquisition with quality content area education. Furthermore, the TEKS state that instruction must be “linguistically accommodated in accordance with the [English Language Proficiency Standards \(ELPS\)](#) and the student’s English language proficiency levels to ensure the mastery of knowledge and skills in the required curriculum is accessible”. The ELPS have been undergoing review, and [final recommendations](#) for grades K-12 were posted to the TEA website in June 2024.
- **Instructional Materials Review and Approval (IMRA) Process:**  
[HB 1605](#) also established a new process for identifying [high-quality materials](#).
  - The State Board of Education (SBOE) developed rubrics for the IMRA process.
  - Districts will not be required to choose instructional materials from the list, but those that do will receive additional funding (see below).
  - [Members of the public](#) can review any of the content and [submit feedback](#) to the State Board of Education.
  - Public testimony will be taken on materials under consideration (expected in September 2024). In November 2024 the SBOE will vote and decide to place reviewed instructional materials on the approved list, rejected list, or take no action.

Beginning in 2025-2026, districts may use [Bluebonnet Learning](#) for teaching reading and math. Bluebonnet instructional materials cover 100% of the TEKS and provide a full suite of resources including scope and sequence. They have been approved through the IMRA Process.

- **Funding:** Districts that choose instructional materials approved through the IMRA process will be eligible for new funding entitlements. The state has allocated \$540 million for this purpose, which is in addition to existing funds allocated through the [Instructional Materials and Technology Allotment](#) (IMTA).

## Professional Learning

Texas has a strong model for professional development in literacy for educators. House Bill 3 (2019) requires all K-3 teachers, including K-3 special education teachers and principals, to attend the [HB 3 Reading Academies](#). Districts may exempt special area teachers such as art, music, theater and PE teachers.

- **Highly trained educators:** The Academies seek to ensure that educators are highly trained in the science of teaching reading, provide evidence-based literacy instruction, and promote critical thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
- **Pathways:** Districts determine which of several pathways aligns most closely with a teacher’s role and district needs. Each pathway provides specialized content divided into 12 modules aligned to the science of teaching reading.

- [Content](#) covers foundational literacy skills including oral language development, comprehension, composition and using assessment data to inform instruction.
- **Content** also includes instruction of English learners, students with dyslexia, students receiving intervention services, and students in special education.
- **Compliance:** TEA monitors compliance to attend the Academies by maintaining a [database](#) of individuals who have successfully completed the training.

Teachers who have taken and passed the Texas [Science of Teaching Reading certification exam](#) are still required to attend the HB 3 Reading Academies, as it continues the teacher’s learning and knowledge of the science of teaching reading in the school setting.

Beginning in 2023-24, [educator preparation programs](#) in Texas will have the opportunity to offer Reading Academies in their programs.

## Screening and Assessment

The TEA supports districts in selecting preK-2 [screening and assessment tools](#) aligned to state requirements, and also has specific requirements for [progress monitoring](#).

- [Prekindergarten](#) (4 years old)
  - Data is collected at the beginning (BOY) and end of the year (EOY) using approved tools from the [Commissioner’s List](#).
  - Data must be collected on student progress in health and wellness, language and communication, emergent reading & writing, and math.
  - Families must be notified of the results of the BOY assessment within 60 days of administering the tool.
  - Progress monitoring data is submitted to TEA’s Early Childhood Data System (ECDS).
  - Progress monitoring in the middle of the year (MOY) is strongly encouraged and is required at the end of the year.
  - Districts are strongly encouraged to communicate the results of MOY and EOY progress monitoring to families.
- [Kindergarten](#)
  - Districts must conduct a BOY reading assessment using one of two approved [screeners](#) (free to districts), the [Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment](#) and [mCLASS Texas](#), and report the data collected in the ECDS.
  - Families must be notified of the results within 60 days of administering the tool.
  - Progress monitoring throughout the year is strongly encouraged, along with communication to families of the results.
  - School districts are required to administer EOY “[universal dyslexia screening](#)” and report results in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

- Choosing one of the two free assessment tools available to all districts will meet the dyslexia screening requirements.
- **Grades 1 & 2**
  - For students in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, a state-approved reading assessment must be administered within 60 days of the start of the school year.
  - The TEA provides the following free assessment tools: [mCLASS Texas](#) and [TPRI/Tejas LEE](#) (all vendor versions meet state requirements).
  - Families must be notified of the results within 60 days.
  - “[Universal dyslexia screening](#)” must occur by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade year and reported in PEIMS.
  - Progress monitoring throughout the year is strongly encouraged, along with communication to families of the results.
  - Choosing one of the free tools available to all districts will meet the dyslexia screening requirements. Dyslexia screening is not required in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- **Family Resources**

The TEA has a section of their website for [Family Resources](#). Here parents can find information on kindergarten readiness, guides for preK-2 on enhancing and extending learning at home, free developmental screening tools, information on children with disabilities and more.

Although *universal screening* for [dyslexia](#) and related disorders is not required after first grade, the law does require that students should be screened or tested as appropriate. In addition, [State law](#) requires school districts to administer a reading instrument at the beginning of 7<sup>th</sup> grade to students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade state reading assessment, and provide those students with additional reading instruction and intervention.

## Supports for Schools and Educators

### *Adequate funding for literacy efforts*

Texas provides [funding](#) to support state and local early literacy initiatives, including:

- [Comprehensive Literacy State Development](#) (CLSD) grant- \$20,962,706 5-year grant. This is a grant program through the U.S. Department of Education to create a comprehensive literacy program for children from birth through grade 12, with an emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities.
- [HB 3 \(2019\)- \\$6.5 billion](#) was allocated to early education initiatives including a focus on literacy and math learning and improving outcomes. HB 3 established a [Dyslexia Allotment](#), an Early Education Allotment, and a Teacher Incentive Allotment (see below). HB 3 also provided a substantial increase in the [Bilingual Education Allotment](#). Also, teacher wages were increased through an increase in the Basic Allotment.
- [FY24 Early Education Allotment](#) is expected to total over \$760 million and provides support for students who are educationally disadvantaged or have limited proficiency in English. In addition, districts can use their allotment to help pay for HB 3 Reading Academies as the [Academies are not funded directly](#).

- [Teacher Incentive Allotment](#) (TIA)- over \$290 million was awarded to nearly 25,000 Texas [high performing teachers](#) during the 2023-2024 school year who improve student growth and success in their classrooms. Local education agencies receive [greater funding](#) for designated teachers who work on rural and/or high-needs campuses.
- [Instructional Materials and Technology Allotment](#) (IMTA)- provided to all districts in the State to support purchases of instructional materials and technology-related items.
- [Math and Literacy Frameworks grant- \\$10 million](#) available to all districts; provides technical assistance to help districts develop a strong literacy and/or math framework aligned to current research and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- [2023-2025 Texas Reading Initiative-Literacy Coach Professional Development](#)- This project provides funding for professional development for Texas Reading Initiative literacy coaches.

### *Literacy coaches*

Texas has not adopted a policy relating to [literacy coaches](#), but it does provide grant funding for literacy coaches (see above). Districts must apply for funding specific to literacy coaching.

## **Intervention**

Students in grades 3-8 who do not achieve “approaches” or higher on state testing (STAAR), or who fail to achieve “approaches” or higher on two consecutive assessments in the same subject area, are required to be provided [accelerated instruction](#). These students [must be provided](#) with a [TIA](#) designated teacher for the subsequent school year in the applicable subject area, or provided supplemental instruction aligned with the research on high impact tutoring in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the applicable grade level and subject area.

- **Intervention Teachers - Dyslexia**

School districts are encouraged to employ highly trained individuals to deliver instruction to students with dyslexia. Teachers, including reading specialists, master reading teachers and special education teachers, who provide intervention to students with dyslexia are not required to hold a specific license or certification. However, they are required to have additional documented dyslexia training and deliver the instruction with fidelity.

Opportunities to pursue a license or certification in dyslexia instruction are available through several professional organizations and the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. A list is provided in the [Texas Dyslexia Handbook](#), and includes certification options with [ALTA](#), [Wilson Language Training](#), [Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators](#), and the [Center for Effective Reading Instruction](#) (requires passing the [KPEERI](#) exam).

- **Reporting Requirements**

Texas requires educators to monitor student academic development within the classroom as part of the [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#) (MTSS). The Texas Education Agency has partnered with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk and the University of Texas to develop academic pathways that provide evidence-based tiered interventions that educators can use to support students.

- **Reporting to Families**

Districts are [required](#) to administer screening and assessment tools to determine which students may be at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia and related disorders, and report the results to families. See the Screening and Assessment section above for more detail.



**Resources:**

[NCTQ State of the States 2024: Five Policy Actions to Strengthen Implementation of the Science of Reading](#), Mar 2024

[NCTQ](#)- Texas State Reading Profile, Jan 2024

[ExcelinEd](#)- Texas Implementation Report, updated Jan 2025

[ExcelinEd Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy](#)- 50 state analysis, Jan 2024

[CCSSO Science of Reading Legislation and Implementation State Scan](#), Mar 2024

[NCIL State of Dyslexia](#), Mar 2025

[The Texas Dyslexia Handbook](#)- [English](#) and [Spanish](#), 2024

All information in this report is current as of July 1, 2024 (updated March 26, 2025).