



OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR READING ACHIEVEMENT

Read to Achieve
2026-2027



North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

State Board Of Education

State Board of Education Vision: Every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

State Board Of Education Mission: The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction is to use their constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right to a public education for every student in North Carolina and to support public school units in providing every student an excellent education that prepares them for success in their next phase of life.

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NC Department Of Public Instruction

Maurice “Mo” Green, State Superintendent / 301 N. Wilmington Street / Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

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Introduction: Read to Achieve Implementation Guide

This section includes:

1. NC State Board of Education Goals
2. NC Collaborative Guiding Framework for Early Literacy Education
3. B-3 Reading Definition
4. Purpose of the RtA Implementation Guide



NC State Board of Education Vision and Overarching Goals

Achieving Educational Excellence is the vision for the [NC State Board of Education strategic plan](#). This vision has three main components: high academic achievement, character development and making North Carolina public schools the best in the United States of America.

NC Collaborative Guiding Framework for Early Literacy Education

In 2019 the SBE approved the NC Collaborative Guiding Framework for Early Literacy Education based on input from internal and external stakeholders across the state. This framework consists of nine core elements that include: developing a statewide definition of high-quality reading instruction, improving and aligning teacher prep programs, improving reading camp quality, providing reading coach support in low-performing schools and districts, expanding partnerships to support BTs, ensuring high-quality curriculum and instructional materials, exploring training on the Science of Reading, providing flexible state funding to support district action and ensuring access to high-quality preschool in strong early learning environments.



High-Quality Reading Instruction Preface

A comprehensive approach to literacy encompasses reading, writing, speaking, and listening and occurs in a safe, nurturing, and culturally responsive environment. Learning to read is a continuum of knowledge and skills, beginning at birth with oral language development and progressing to the development of written language skills and knowledge of the world that continues into adulthood.

B-3 Reading Definition

High-quality reading instruction is grounded in the body of research known as the Science of Reading regarding the acquisition of language (phonology, syntax, semantics, morphology, and pragmatics), and skills of phonemic awareness, accurate and efficient word identification (fluency), spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. High-quality reading instruction includes explicit and systematic phonics instruction, allowing all students to master letter-sound relations, and it is guided by state-adopted standards and informed by data so that instruction can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. Ultimately, the purpose of high-quality reading instruction is to empower all children to become critical readers who have the foundational skills and word and world knowledge to read and understand increasingly complex text. (March 2021)

State Superintendent Maurice “Mo” Green unveiled his strategic plan, “Achieving Educational Excellence” in 2025 to support three main goals: high academic achievement, character development and making North Carolina public schools the best in the United States of America. These goals rest upon successful actions across eight pillars.

ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



[Click Image to Access "Achieving Educational Excellence" Document](#)

State of the State

Third-grade reading data has demonstrated the need for improvement of statewide reading practices.

RtA Accountability Measures	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Grade 3 Proficient EOG, EOG Retest, BOG	58%	58%	56%	57%	N/A	44%	47%	48%	49%	47%
Grade 3 Good Cause Exemption	27%	28%	28%	25%	N/A	25%	28%	29%	31%	33%

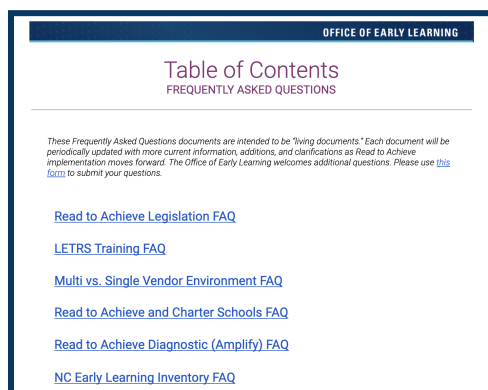
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2024



[Click image to access the 2024 NC NAEP Snapshot](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

The Office of Early Learning has created FAQ documents that contain the most current information, additions, and clarifications as to implementation and logistics of Read to Achieve.



Click image to access FAQ document

Purpose of the NC Read to Achieve Implementation Guide

The purpose of this implementation guide is to provide a guiding framework and thorough understanding for North Carolina educators and all education stakeholders with regards to the implementation of the Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. This guide is a resource to ensure instructional standards, practices, and interventions used to teach children to read in grades Pre-K-5 are in alignment with the Science of Reading. We focus on preventing reading failure with the ultimate goal of attaining statewide reading proficiency by third grade.

The Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve Implementation Guide contains the following sections:

Section I: *Legislative Components*

Includes the legislative components of the Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve and the responsibilities of the State Board of Education, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Regional Directors, Local School Districts, Individual Schools, Teachers, and details of Reports Due. A Quick Reference Guide is included as well to provide easy access to understanding the information within the legislation.

Section II: *Overview*

Includes the legislative definition of the Science of Reading along with supporting research and resources.

Section III: *Early Literacy Program & Professional Development*

Provides information about the establishment of an Early Literacy Program within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services. Specifications around the focus components of the Early Literacy Program

will be provided in this section as well. Provides timelines, training program specifications, and guidelines around the Science of Reading professional development for all Pre-K-5 educators and administrators across the state.

Section IV: *Educator Preparation Programs*

Includes details and specifications around Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) for elementary education and special educator teacher training that will include coursework grounded in the Science of Reading .

Section V: *Literacy Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to Read to Achieve*

Provides the literacy instruction standards necessary to ensure instruction methods throughout the state are consistent and closely aligned to the Read to Achieve legislative mandates. DPI-created literacy implementation plan an example and non-example with explanations will be included. A form for districts to submit explanations of local curriculum and instruction will also be provided.

Section VI: *Literacy Interventions (Including Reading Camps) & Individual Reading Plans*

Provides literacy interventions and support to ensure that difficulty with reading development is identified as early as possible. Appropriate literacy intervention guidelines (which includes reading camps), individual reading plan guidelines, and parent contact directions around students' academic needs and progress will be included.

Section VII: *Reading Camps, Bonuses & Excellent Public Schools Act Fund*

Provides a definition of reading camp, reading camp mandates, and information concerning teacher bonuses.

Section VIII: *Digital Children's Reading Initiative*

Includes the rationale for developing a Digital Children's Reading Initiative, descriptors of the resources provided through the initiative, and guidelines related to the implementation of the initiative.

Section IX: *Assessments*

Provides assessment guidance as defined by the Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve. Information about the NC Pre-K formative assessments, formative and diagnostic assessments, determined alternative assessment, EC alternative assessment, and screening and determining reading deficiencies.

Section X: *Enhanced Data Collection & Reports*

Provides a template for data collection along with mandated reports.

Section XI: *Glossary*

Provides a list of terms and definitions related to the Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve.

Section XII: *Appendices*

Includes resources, documents, and related forms that stakeholders can use to meet the legislative requirements of the Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve.

Section I: Legislative Components

This section includes:

1. Links to The Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve SB387 Summary and Legislation
2. Overview of The Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve

Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021

[SB 387](#) | [Bill Summary](#)

Overview

- Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes establishes the NC Read to Achieve Program (RtA). The program requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to create a comprehensive plan for reading achievement. All students entering kindergarten are required to receive a developmental screening in early language, literacy, and math skills, and students in grades K-3 must be assessed with valid, reliable, formative, and diagnostic reading assessments. These assessments are to be used to identify and assist students demonstrating difficulty with reading development, including offering reading camps as an option to students in grades first through third. A student must be retained in third grade if not demonstrating reading proficiency on the third-grade standardized test of reading comprehension but may be promoted if the student qualifies under certain exemptions or if the student demonstrates reading comprehension on an alternative assessment. RtA requires specific interventions for students retained in third grade, 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.

Part II: Definition of

- **Section 2** "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."

Part III: Early Literacy Program and Literacy Professional Development

- **Section 3.(A)** establishes the Early Literacy Program within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). DPI, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, shall use the Early Literacy Program to build strong foundational early literacy skills for children in the North Carolina Pre-kindergarten (NC Pre-K) program. The Early Literacy Program is required to focus on at least the following components:
 - o Providing a training program to NC Pre-K educators and administrators to ensure developmentally appropriate instruction. DPI would contract with a third-party independent teacher training program to deliver early literacy professional development.
 - o Providing integration of age-appropriate resources so that children in the NC Pre-K program meet reading achievement goals.
 - o Ensuring administration of a formative assessment at the end of a child's participation in NC Pre-K to determine kindergarten readiness. The results of the

assessment must be shared with the child's kindergarten teacher at the beginning of the next school year.

- G.S. 115C-270.30(b)(2) requires that elementary school teachers earn at least three continuing education credits related to literacy. SECTION 3.(b) requires that these continuing education credits be grounded in the science of reading.
- **Section 3.(C)** requires that educators working with children in the NC Pre-K program and educators working with K-5 students participate in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling training program contracted for as required by S.L. 2021-3. Completion of this training program satisfies the literacy continuing education credits for elementary school teachers.
- **Section 3.(D)** requires DPI to report on the establishment of the Early Literacy Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) by September 15, 2022.
 - The report shall include information on the required components of the Program, including at least the following:
 - (1) Participation rates of NC Pre-K educators and administrators in the third-party independent teacher training program.
 - (2) Examples of age-appropriate resources integrated into the NC Pre-K program.
 - (3) The formative assessment provided to children at the end of their participation in the NC Pre-K program, including the number and percentage of
 - (i) students who demonstrate kindergarten readiness and (ii) students who do not demonstrate kindergarten readiness.
- All of Sec. 3 applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

Part IV: Literacy Training Coursework for Educator Preparation Program Approval

- **Section 4** requires Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) for elementary education and special educator teacher training to include coursework grounded in the science of reading . This requirement would apply to EPPs applying for or renewing approval on or after July 1, 2022.

Part V: Align Literacy Curriculum and Instruction with Read to Achieve

- **Section 5.(a)** requires that the SBE develop literacy instruction standards to ensure that instruction methods are consistent and closely aligned with RtA. Only the most effective literacy instruction methods aligned with the Science of Reading may be incorporated into the standards. By May 15, 2022, the SBE shall report to the JLEOC on the standards developed. By June 30, 2022, the SBE would provide the standards to local boards of education.
 - DPI is required to develop a literacy implementation plan that implements the standards developed by the SBE. By June 30, 2022, DPI would provide this

model and an example plan that does not implement the standards to local boards of education.

- o Each local school administrative unit (LEA) is required to evaluate its literacy curriculum and instruction methods and modify as necessary to adhere to the standards and align with the model literacy implementation plan. By December 15, 2022, each LEA would submit to the SBE its literacy curriculum and instruction.
- **Section 5.(b)** requires Regional Case Managers, or other appropriate staff, to work to ensure that the standards developed by the SBE are implemented by conducting a statewide review of the curriculum and instruction methods of LEAs and providing consultation to LEAs as needed for compliance. By November 15, 2023, all review and modification of all literacy instruction statewide must be complete. Any modification has to be made as soon as possible, and all modified curriculum and instruction would have to be in place by the 2024-2025 school year.

Part VI: Literacy Interventions and Individual Reading Plans

- **Section 6.(a)** makes a conforming change, changing “instructional and support services” to “literacy interventions”
- **Section 6.(b)**
 - o Creates the following definitions:
 - *Individual Reading Plan*: a document outlining the specific reading skill deficiencies of a student who has demonstrated difficulty with reading development that includes the literacy interventions the student will receive.
 - *Literacy Interventions*: intentional strategies used to facilitate reading development and remediate emerging difficulty with reading development grounded in the science of reading, including (i) individual or small group instruction throughout the school year, (ii) reduced teacher-student ratios, (iii) frequent progress monitoring, (iv) tutoring in addition to the regular school day, (v) reading camps, and (vi) extended learning time before or after the school day.
 - G.S. 115C-83.3(4a) requires that reading camps must be offered to any 3rd-grade student not demonstrating reading proficiency and any 1st or 2nd-grade student reading below grade level. Sec. 6(b) would modify the definition of “reading camp” to clarify that reading camps are literacy interventions that must be offered to 3rd-grade students not demonstrating reading proficiency and 2nd-grade students demonstrating difficulty with reading development. A reading camp may be offered to a 1st-grade student demonstrating difficulty with reading development.

- o Eliminates the following definitions:
 - "Reading deficiency" means not reading at the third-grade level by the end of the student's third-grade year, demonstrated by the results of the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students.
 - "Reading interventions" mean evidence-based strategies frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies and include, but are not limited to, individual instruction, tutoring, or mentoring that target specific reading skills and abilities.
- **Section 6.(c)** makes a conforming change, changing "instructional and support services" to "literacy interventions outlined in the student's Individual Reading Plan.
- **Section 6.(D)** requires, no later than October 1 each year, beginning with October 2022, each LEA submit to DPI a plan for the literacy interventions it will offer during the next school year, including specific information about its reading camps. By February 15, DPI would review each LEA's plan and approve only those that (i) provide instruction closely aligned with RtA and (ii) comply with literacy intervention standards published by the SBE. By February 15, DPI would report to the JLEOC on which LEAs plans were approved or denied.
 - o Each LEA with a denied plan is permitted to submit an amended plan by March 15. DPI would notify the LEA by April 15 if the amended plan has been approved or denied. State-provided literacy intervention funds would not be released to any LEA that did not have an approved literacy intervention plan by April 15.
- **Section 6.(e)** requires, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, that any K-3 student demonstrating difficulty with reading development have an Individual Reading Plan (IRP). The IRP would identify:
 - o (i) specific reading deficiencies,
 - o (ii) goals and benchmarks for growth,
 - o (iii) means to monitor progress,
 - o (iv) specific literacy interventions for the student,
 - o (v) the science of reading-based instructional programming that will be implemented, and
 - o (vi) any additional services that will be provided.
 - o The student's parent would be given notice regarding the IRP, including specific strategies to assist the student, encouragement to use strategies at home, and direction to literacy resources.
 - o A multi-tiered system of support intervention (MTSS) could be used to satisfy the IRP requirements.
 - o DPI is required to develop model documentation for compliance, including an IRP checklist and an alternative document for use with a MTSS.
- **Sections 6.(f), (g), and (h)** makes conforming changes.

- o (f) keeps good cause exemptions, changes reading interventions language to literacy interventions.
- o (g) ensures reading camp instruction and tutoring are based in the Science of Reading.
- o (h) parent notification of retention and literacy interventions
- **Section 6.(i)** requires that LEAs report on the number of K-3 students with IRPs, beginning with reports developed based on the 2022-2023 school year.
 - o Local board of education is required to report by November 15 of each year, beginning with November 2022, on the number and percentage of retained 3rd-grade students placed in an accelerated reading class or transitional third and fourth class combination in the prior school year who were (i) promoted mid-year, or (ii) promoted directly to 5th grade for the school year following retention.
 - o Each local board of education shall report annually in writing to the State Board of Education by September 1 of each year the following information on the prior school year: (1) A description of all reading literacy interventions provided to students who have been retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a). (2) The number of first- and second-grade students attending a reading camp offered by the local board. (3) The license area or areas, years of licensed teaching experience, grade-level assignment, and any other specific subject-area assignments of each teacher providing instruction at a reading camp. (4) The number and percentage of teachers providing instruction at a reading camp who were paid a reading performance bonus during the school year immediately preceding the reading camp and the grade level on which the bonus was based. (5) The number of kindergarten through third-grade students with an Individual Reading Plan
 - o Each local board of education shall report annually in writing to the State Board of Education by November 15 of each year, for the prior school year, (i) the number and percentage of third-grade students who did not demonstrate proficiency upon entering reading camp and who became proficient after completing reading camp and (ii) for each grade level, the number and percentage of first and second-grade students who demonstrated reading comprehension below grade-level difficulty with reading upon entering camp and who demonstrated reading comprehension at or above grade-level after completing reading camp. (b2) Each local board of education shall report annually in writing to the State Board of Education by November 15 of each year the number and percentage of retained third-grade students placed in an accelerated reading class or transitional third and fourth class combination under G.S. 115C-83.8(b) in the prior school year who were (i) promoted midyear

as provided in G.S. 115C-83.8(c) or (ii) promoted directly to fifth grade for the school year following the retention.

- **Section 6.(j)** makes conforming changes, allowing locals to charge a fee for students to attend first and second-grade reading camp if they are on track with reading development.
- **Section 6.(k)** requires the SBE and DPI to conduct an analysis of literacy interventions, including reading camps, provided throughout the State to determine which literacy intervention activities and instructional methods are most effective in furthering reading development.
 - Based on this, SBE and DPI shall develop literacy intervention standards. By December 15, 2021, the State Board would (i) report to the JLEOC on the standards and any recommended legislation to further improve the effectiveness of literacy interventions and (ii) publish the standards.
- **Section 6.(l)** requires each LEA to submit to DPI a plan for the literacy interventions it will offer during the 2022-2023 school year, including specific information about the reading camps it will offer, by March 1, 2022.
 - DPI shall review each LEA's plan and provide feedback as necessary by May 15, 2022, to ensure that literacy interventions provided throughout the State are closely aligned with RtA and comply with the literacy intervention standards published by the SBE. DPI may provide a form for LEAs to use to submit the literacy intervention plans.
- **Section 6.(m)** Subsection (k) of this section applies when this act becomes law. Subsection (l) of this section applies to the 2021-2022 school year. The rest of this section applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

Part VII: Reading Camps, Bonuses, and the Excellent Public Schools Act Fund

- **Section 7.(a) and Section 7.(b)** recodifies certain reading camp requirements in a new statute.
 - (a) Reading camps shall 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.
- **Section 7.(b)** also creates two new bonus programs, beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, as follows:
 - *Signing bonus:*

- LEAs shall provide a signing bonus in an amount determined by the local board of education that is at least \$1,200 to any teacher who meets the following criteria:
 - Is associated with high growth in reading based on EVAAS data.
 - Was awarded a reading performance bonus during the current school year.
 - Accepts employment to provide instruction during a reading camp.
 - *Reading camp performance bonus:*
 - In a per-student amount determined by the local board of education that is at least \$150.00 per student, LEAs are required to provide a reading camp performance bonus to a teacher who provides instruction at a third-grade reading camp for each student assigned to that teacher who entered reading camp not demonstrating reading proficiency who becomes proficient after completing the reading camp.
 - Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, a teacher providing instruction at a full reading camp who has earned a reading performance bonus would be deemed to have completed two of the required literacy continuing education credits required for licensure renewal.
- **Section 7.(c)** requires that reading camps be offered as outlined in the LEA's literacy intervention plan, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. Reading camps shall 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."
- **Section 7.(d)** requires LEAs to use Excellent Public Schools Act funds, other than funds provided for reading camps, and federal funds received by the LEA for the purpose of responding to the impacts of COVID-19, to provide the signing bonus.
- **Section 7.(e)** requires LEAs to use Excellent Public Schools Act funds, other than the funds provided for reading camps, and federal funds received by the LEA for the purpose of responding to the impacts of COVID-19, to provide the reading camp performance bonus.
- **Section 7.(f)** requires that LEAs use available funds, including federal funds received by the LEA for the purpose of responding to the impacts of COVID-19, to carry out the elements of RtA.

- **Section 7.(g)** encourages DPI to maximize the use of Excellent Public School Act funds but would not allow funds provided for reading camps to be used for interventions other than reading camps.
- **Section 7.(h)** allows LEAs to use Excellent Public Schools Act funds, other than funds provided for reading camps, to provide literacy interventions described in the LEA's literacy intervention plan, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.
- **Section 7.(i)** for reading camps corresponding to the 2020-2021 school year, shall award two continuing education credits for any teacher who both (i) earns a reading bonus and (ii) teaches a full reading camp.
- **Section 7.(j)** Subsection (c) of this section becomes effective July 1, 2022, and applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. Subsections (f) and (i) of this section are effective when they become law. Subsection (h) of this section is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. The remainder of this section becomes effective July 1, 2021, and applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year

Part VIII: Digital Children's Reading Initiative

- **Section 8.** requires DPI to develop a Digital Children's Reading Initiative (Initiative) that provides selected links via DPI's website to high-quality resources for families categorized by skill deficiency and grade level. The Initiative shall be aligned with the science of reading and reflect the standards taught in each grade level.
 - The Initiative shall be disseminated to LEAs by January 15, 2022. Each LEA shall make the resources available prominently on its website by July 1, 2022. Each LEA can add additional high-quality resources. Printable activities shall also be provided in hard copy to students without digital access at home.

Part IX: Phase Out Certain Alternative Assessments

- G.S. 115C-83.3(2) requires the SBE to approve alternative assessments that are not the same test as the state-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to 3rd-grade students. The SBE is required to provide several alternative assessments to LEAs upon request, approve alternative assessments submitted by LEAs, and establish achievement level ranges for each approved alternative assessment. The SBE is required to annually review all alternative assessments to ensure ongoing relevance, validity, and reliability.
- **Section 9.(a)** requires the SBE to approve one alternative assessment for use beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.
- **Section 9.(b)** requires the SBE to analyze the passage rates for all alternative assessments in order to determine the comparative utility of each assessment.
 - By October 15, 2022, the SBE shall submit a report to the JLEOC on the results of its analysis, along with the one alternative assessment it recommends using.

- **Section 9.(c)** Subsection (a) of this section applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

Part X: Enhanced Data Collection

- **Section 10.(a)** requires DPI to create a uniform template for RtA data, beginning with data collected in 2013- 2014. The template requires clear designations of each data component and identification of information suppressed to protect student privacy. Data compiled in the template for each school year would be reported to the JLEOC by April 15, 2022.
- **Section 10.(b)** requires that the uniform template be used each time data is provided, beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, and including the reporting of required data from the 2020-2021 school year.
- **Effective Date:** Except as otherwise provided, SB 387 becomes effective when it becomes law.

[SB387 Recurring/Single Occurrence Due Dates for District Leaders](#)

Section II: Science of Reading Overview

This section includes:

1. Definition of Science of Reading as Stated in Legislation
2. Science of Reading Overview
3. Essential Components of Reading Instruction
4. Supporting Research and Resources
5. Webpage

Science of Reading as Defined by The Excellent Public Schools Act

Read to Achieve

North Carolina continues to acknowledge that reading is the foundation for student success and maintains that a student's ability to read proficiently by third grade is a critical milestone. As reading is the gateway to lifelong achievement; North Carolina students deserve a strong start on their path to success.

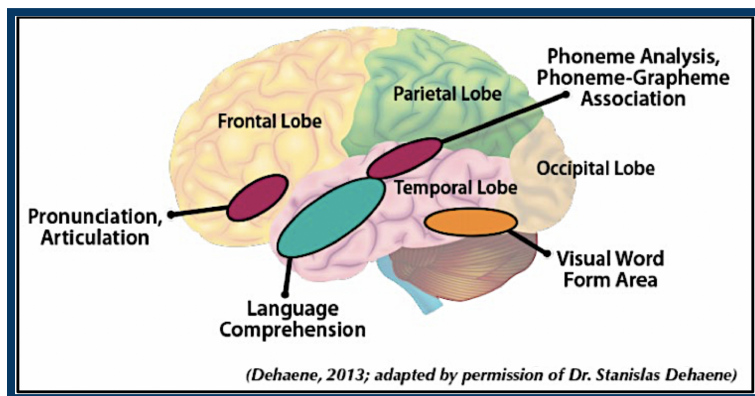
During the April 2021 legislative session, North Carolina legislators passed an act to modify the implementation of the Read to Achieve legislation in order to attain statewide reading proficiency by third grade. SESSION LAW 2021-8 SENATE BILL 387 identifies educators as pivotal in the role of reading instruction and requires every Pre-K-5 teacher to be highly equipped with the knowledge and skills to apply the Science of Reading. This legislation prioritizes the need for systemic and explicit reading instruction in the early grades and reinforcement of these practices in the higher grades. It also reiterates the need to provide additional support and offer intervention techniques for struggling students.

This student-centered legislation will ensure children develop the skills and techniques needed to become successful readers, through proven, evidence-based practices. North Carolina will write a new chapter, with a renewed focus on instruction, to create a new future for our state and improve outcomes for all students.

Per G.S.115C-83.3 the Science of Reading is defined 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.

Supporting Research and Resources

Learning to Read is not Natural



Major regions of the brain must work together to achieve reading. The processing systems engaged by the reading brain develop pathways as reading skills are learned. The processing systems and connecting pathways form an extensive “circuit” that transforms the brain as humans learn to read.

Language development is natural to the human brain, but reading is not. Reading research, modern technology, and human observation demonstrate that many children do not learn to read even when exposed to books and language. When literacy instruction fails to align with cognitive science, students will struggle and fall behind, often our most vulnerable students (Dehaene, 2013).

How can educators use systems decision-making and cognitive science to inform literacy instruction to meet the needs of all students?

Maryanne Wolf (2018) reports that perceptive, well-trained teachers, excellent prediction tools, and better-targeted evidence-grounded interventions are our best defense against any of the all-too-common errors that derail children’s development.

Language is Connected to Literacy Development

Oral language is a naturally developing process for which acquisition begins during infancy. Literacy is a developmental process that also begins in infancy and progresses throughout the life span; however, as explained above, literacy is not naturally acquired and requires instruction. Children achieve literacy by applying spoken language knowledge and understanding to written language (Paulson, Noble, Jepson, and vanden Pol, 2001). Language proficiency, reading, spelling, and writing skills are interrelated, and their impact upon each other increases after fourth grade. Converging evidence shows that children with delayed or poor language acquisition skills are very likely to be poor readers and writers (Catts, Adlof, & Weismer, 2006). However, students with strong verbal skills are more likely to compensate for any difficulties learning to read printed words (Kilpatrick, 2015). These students will still require direct instruction but are more likely to benefit and transfer their learning rapidly. Proficiency in language and verbal reasoning, or lack of proficiency, impacts how well students will comprehend what they read (Torgesen et al., 2001). Oral language development, academic vocabulary, and verbal reasoning skills are essential elements of literacy instruction from the beginning.

Research has demonstrated that oral language—the foundations of which are developed by age four—has a profound impact on children’s preparedness for kindergarten and on their success throughout their academic careers. The acquisition of language skills begins at a young age, before students begin focusing on print-based concepts such as sound-symbol correspondence and decoding. Because these skills are often developed early in life, children with limited oral language ability are typically at a distinct disadvantage by the time they enter

kindergarten (Fielding et al., 2007); which substantiates the need for providing vocabulary-rich classrooms.

- Oral Language is the ability to communicate through speaking. There are five components of oral language: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2020).
- Listening is the active process of receiving and responding to spoken (and sometimes unspoken) messages.

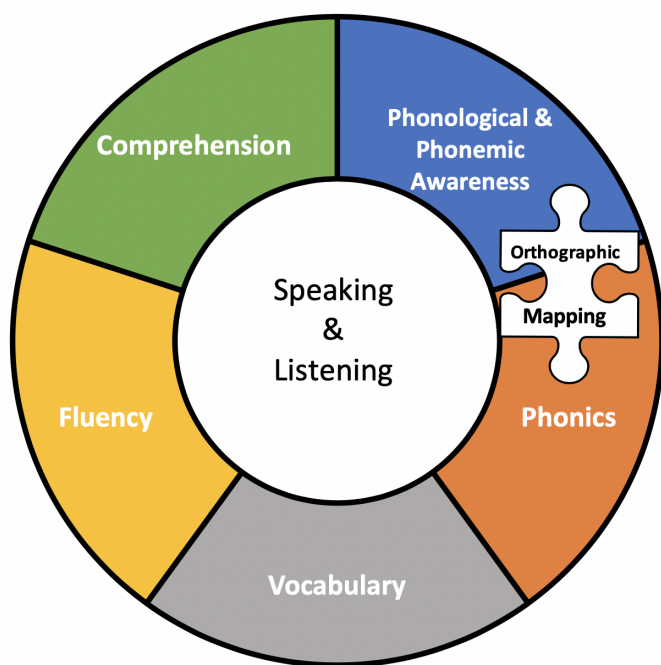
Dr. David Kilpatrick explains that “When people talk, the words they say are represented by sequences of sounds. We immediately recognize those sound sequences as familiar words. It works lightning fast and looks something like this:

Accessing Word Meanings Through Listening

- Phonological Awareness (PA) is one’s sensitivity to, or explicit awareness of, the phonological structure of words in one’s language. This is an “umbrella” term that is used to refer to a student’s sensitivity to any aspect of phonological structure in language. It encompasses awareness of individual words in sentences, syllables, and onset-rime segments, as well as awareness of individual phonemes (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2020).
- Phonemic Awareness (a subset of phonological awareness) is one's ability to notice, think about, or manipulate individual phonemes (sounds) in words (Kilpatrick, 2016)

The Essential Components of Reading Instruction

All children benefit from direct, explicit, systematic reading instruction in the five essential components of reading.

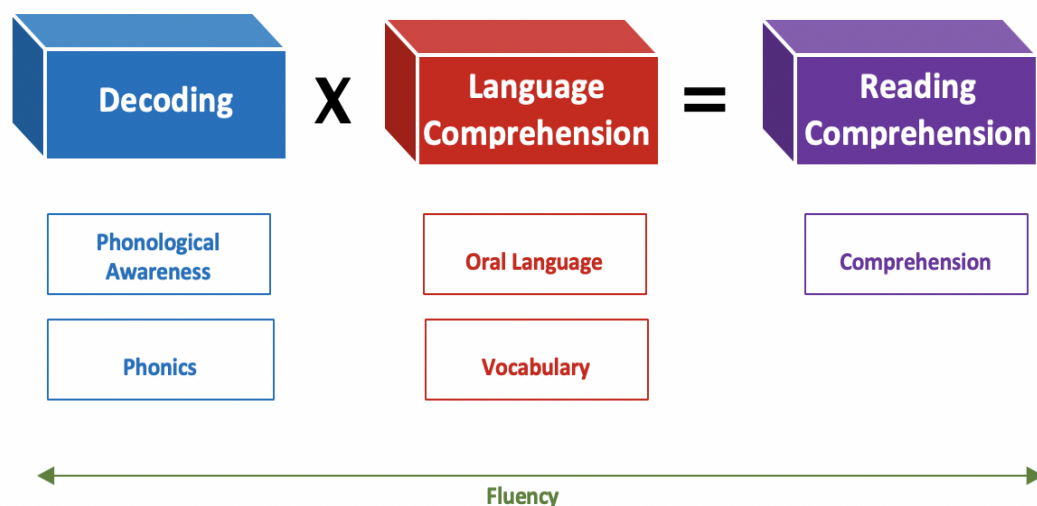


This image depicts the essential components of reading instruction based on the National Reading Panel report and ongoing research that has emphasized the importance of oral language in reading development. Speaking and Listening have been placed in the center to depict the receptive and expressive features of oral language. Oral Language is where the journey to reading development begins. The five components “surround” speaking and listening in a connected manner to demonstrate how they are all interconnected in achieving successful reading outcomes. The orthographic mapping puzzle piece demonstrates how it connects to phonological & phonemic awareness and phonics.

The Simple View of Reading

The “Simple View of Reading” (SVR) is a formula introduced by Gough and Tunmer (1986). The SVR formula demonstrates that reading comprehension is a product of decoding (word recognition) and language comprehension, which are separate and necessary skills. For example, a student with weak decoding skills and strong language comprehension will struggle with reading comprehension.

The Simple View of Reading: D (Decoding) X LC (Language Comprehension) = RC (Reading Comprehension)

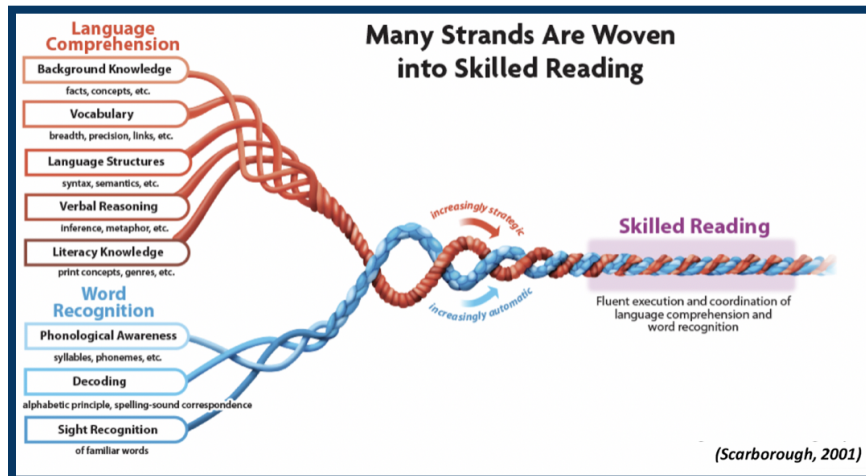


This framework conceptualizes the development across time and frames the elements for which it is necessary to provide instructional support. Weaknesses in either decoding or linguistic comprehension will reduce the ability for students to reach the ultimate goal of reading, which is comprehension (Petscher, Cabell, et al, 2020). The importance of decoding skills as a factor in reading comprehension decreases across grades as the importance of linguistic comprehension increases. By high school, the two essentially form a single dimension (Foorman et al., 2018) for readers.

The SVR formula directly aligns with Scarborough’s Rope which also identifies the key elements that contribute to learning how to read. Just like the SVR formula, Scarborough’s

Rope is divided into two components, Language Comprehension and Word Recognition. Within those components, one will find an interweaving of elements that are essential to developing skilled reading as they join together while becoming more strategic and automatic (pictured below). If any of the elements are lacking, it will impact one's journey to skilled reading.

Scarborough's Reading Rope



Structured Literacy

Structured Literacy instruction is explicit, systematic teaching that applies current Science of Reading research to focus on phonological awareness, word recognition, phonics and decoding, spelling, and syntax at the sentence and paragraph levels. Formal and informal assessments are used to diagnostically and prescriptively inform instruction. Content is taught to mastery to support automaticity in word recognition, which supports the cognitive ability to extract meaning from text.

Structured literacy is an approach to reading instruction that is beneficial for **ALL** students, including students with reading disabilities, English learners, struggling adolescents, and other at-risk students (Foorman et al., 2016; Gersten et al., 2008; Seidenberg, 2018).

Equitable, Inclusive Literacy Instruction for All

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law by President Obama in 2015. The purpose of ESSA is "...to provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps" (SEC. 1001).

Literacy is the gatekeeper to a better life. Literacy enables academic success, informed decision-making, improved self-esteem, personal empowerment, greater economic opportunities, and active participation in local and global social communities (Stromquist,

2005). A sense of urgency is needed to ensure the literacy learning needs of all students are met through the delivery of high-quality, direct, systematic, and explicit literacy instruction.

Webpage

DPI created resources and practice guides from the Institute of Educational Sciences can be found on the Office of Early Learning Science of Reading [webpage](#) on the NCDPI website. It is recommended that educators bookmark this page on their computers and reference it as their first resource.

Section III: Early Literacy Program & Professional Development

This section includes:

1. NCDPI Early Literacy Implementation Components - System of Support
2. Process for Supporting Literacy Improvement for All Schools
3. Professional Development for Teachers, Coaches, and School Administrators (Pre-K-5)
4. High-Quality Instructional Materials
5. Pre-K Formative Assessment Information
6. Pre-K Age Appropriate Resources Aligned to the Science of Reading

Early Literacy Implementation Components



Shifting data requires an intentional focus on the essential components within a system. While these components are independently defined and designed, they are interdependent for success! Literacy is one piece of a larger system and the above image shows examples of how the Office of Early Learning is approaching literacy support across North Carolina. It is important to recognize that literacy is not an isolated extension of the overall system, rather an essential component embedded within the overall plan. In other words, literacy should be layered into the organization's culture.

Process for Supporting Literacy Improvement for All Schools

The NC Read to Achieve Act requires the NCDPI to utilize statewide accountability assessment measures to improve early literacy instruction. Early literacy proficiency is critical in ensuring long-term success both in and beyond academics. Despite ongoing efforts, NC NAEP scores continue to indicate minimal improvements, as well as persistent and significant achievement gaps in reading across the state. NC is committed to continuous improvement for all staff and students. To meet the guidelines of Read to Achieve, NCDPI will ensure in-depth, high-quality professional development for all Pre-K-5 teachers, coaches, and administrators, as well as the NCDPI Early Learning and Early Literacy regional consultants. NCDPI will work in collaboration with the NC Department of Health and Human Services to ensure ongoing alignment for all NC Pre-K public and private teachers.

Additionally, regional literacy coaches will be hired to provide onsite, extensive literacy support for Pre-K-5 teachers, coaches, and principals. Literacy coaches must meet specific criteria for consideration and participate in ongoing training on the role of the NCDPI Literacy Coach, the development of school-wide literacy plans, and the Continuum of Coaching.

The principal-literacy coach partnership is vital to the success of the model. In an effort to communicate the role of the literacy coach, NCDPI will conduct regional meetings with district and school leaders throughout the state prior to NCDPI Literacy Coach deployment.

The support provided to NC Schools by literacy coaches includes, but is not limited to: modeling research-based best practices in reading instruction; providing professional development around the five key components of reading; conducting learning walks or classroom walk-throughs; and coaching teachers and local coaches in transforming literacy instruction in Pre-K-5 classrooms.

Self-Evaluation of Progress

Schools must have a method for self-evaluation and progress monitoring to determine instructional and programmatic steps to improve student outcomes. Administrators and school leadership teams are charged with setting goals and providing guidance for meeting them through established benchmarks. Schools should frequently review, re-evaluate, and revise goals based on the collected data. This cyclical process indicated below includes using multiple data points such as qualitative (anecdotal) and quantitative (score) measures to inform decision-making:

- Evaluate school-based goals for reading proficiency.
- Identify indicators that predict and assess these goals.
- Set target benchmarks for each indicator each year (or more frequently if needed).
- Collect literacy-focused assessment data, including data from standardized tests and the alternative assessment.
- Analyze the data for percentages of students scoring proficient or above in reading on the statewide assessment.

Gradual Release of Support

NCDPI will utilize a gradual release literacy coaching model to promote sustainability of best practices and to maximize and enhance instructional capacity. The following criteria will be considered to support the gradual release of identified schools:

- Increased teacher capacity
- Evidence of non-negotiables
- Evidence of growth (i.e., teacher knowledge, student outcomes, etc.)

NOTE: *The building administrator will be responsible for documentation, implementation, and follow-through of the next steps.*

Professional Development for Teachers, Coaches, and School Administrators

LETRS® Anticipated Timeline for Learning, Implementation, Change, and Outcomes

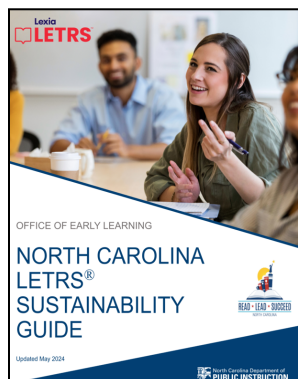


LETRS Implementation Timeline

Audience & Cohort	2021-2022 Project Year 1	2022-2023 Project Year 2	2023-2024 Project Year 3	2024-2025 Project Year 4	2025-2026 Project Year 5	2026-2027 Project Year 6
K-5, Coaches, EC, ELL Cohort 1	Learn Volume 1	Implement Volume 1; Learn Volume 2	Shift in K-1 Instructional Practices; Implement Volume 2	Outcomes in K-1; Shift in 2-3 Instructional Practices	Outcomes in K-3 Data	-
K-5, Coaches, EC, ELL Cohort 2	-	Learn Volume 1	Implement Volume 1; Learn Volume 2	Shift in K-1 Instructional Practices; Implement Volume 2	Outcomes in K-1; Shift in 2-3 Instructional Practices	Outcomes in K-3 Data
K-5, Coaches, EC, ELL Cohort 3	-	-	Learn Volume 1	Implement Volume 1; Learn Volume 2	Shift in K-1 Instructional Practices; Implement Volume 2	Outcomes in K-3 Data

Click image to view the timeline

LETRS Sustainability Guide



Professional Development for Teachers and School Coaches

All NC Pre-K and K-5 teachers will participate in the NCDPI-sponsored Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®) professional development sessions. LETRS® provides educators with a core understanding of language structure and helps them gain in-depth instructional information to complement their teaching practices. LETRS® brings deeper knowledge of reading instruction by addressing each component—phoneme awareness; phonics, decoding, spelling, and word study; oral language development; vocabulary; reading fluency; comprehension; and writing. This course of improving reading instruction:

- Builds a bridge between research and practice
- Cultivates knowledge about teaching literacy and language
- Develops teachers' ability to diagnose and overcome students' reading challenges
- Provides practical strategies that work for every type of learner
- Increases effectiveness of core reading and supplementary instruction
- Engages teachers with real-world application and interesting questions

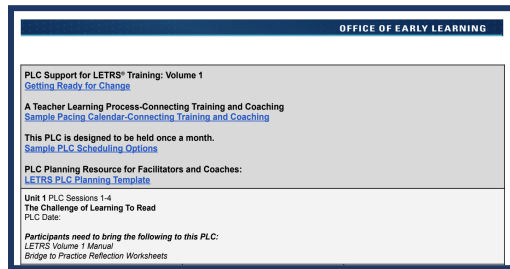
For elementary school teachers, at least three continuing education credits must be related to literacy. Literacy renewal credits shall include evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and intervention strategies for students not demonstrating reading proficiency, grounded in the science of reading , as defined in G.S. 115C-83.3.

Completion of LETRS professional development is considered a legislative requirement.

Incompletion may be used as part of the local evaluation process for individuals as needed.

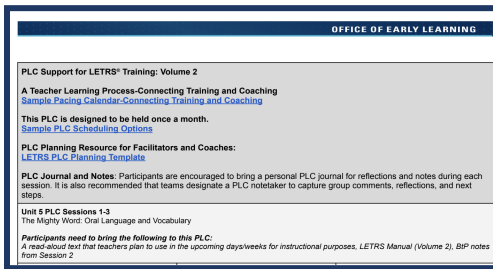
In an effort to support leaders, coaches, and educators with implementation of LETRS®, Pre-K and K-5 LETRS® PLC documents have been created. These documents contain suggestions for pacing the LETRS® coursework, ideas for scheduling monthly LETRS® PLCs and/or Pre-K conversations, and the resources a school leader needs to facilitate a professional learning community around the knowledge teachers gain from LETRS® training. The PLC documents contain strategies for reviewing content, facilitating discussions around Bridge to Practice activities, and a coaching component complete with exemplar videos and reflection tools supporting the transfer of knowledge to classroom practice. This is a living document that will continue to evolve as the needs of NC districts change over time. The PLC documents are written to include everything a facilitator may need, however, each component is optional and can be differentiated to meet the needs of the user.

LETRS® K-5 PLC Volume 1



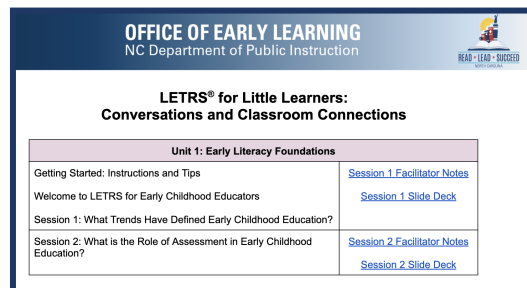
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LETRS® K-5 PLC Volume 2



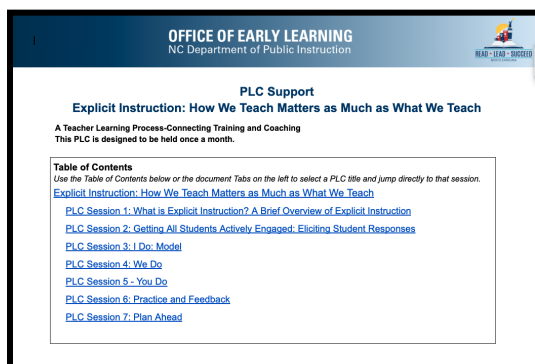
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LETRS® for Little Learners: Conversations and Classroom Connections (Pre-K)



Click image to access document

Explicit Instruction PLC



Professional Development for K-5 Administrators

Knowing how to support educators with implementation is essential to school culture and overall success for educators and students. In an effort to support all District and/or K-5 School Administrators, the Office of Early Learning is offering Literacy for Leaders professional development which takes a deeper dive into the essential components of literacy. These free sessions can be integrated into Elementary Principal meetings or scheduled as separate professional development sessions that can be used as an alternative

to participating in LETRS® for Administrators once districts have completed the initial contract phase.

High-Quality Instructional Materials

In an effort to support educators in selecting high-quality instructional materials, the North Carolina Science of Reading Alignment Tool provides guidance regarding the alignment of curricula to the body of research referred to as the science of reading. This is not a recommended list, but rather an informative guidance document that determines the level of alignment with evidence-based literacy practices. The alignment tool guidelines provide stakeholders with the information needed to determine if the materials provided in their PSU are in alignment with reading science research. In the event that materials are not aligned, this tool can inform stakeholders of the areas in the curriculum that need to be supplemented to achieve optimal alignment. Additional vendor information pertaining to resource accessibility and security are not within the scope of this review and are the responsibility of the PSU.

[NC Science of Reading Alignment Tool](#)

[NC Science of Reading Alignment Tool Guidebook](#)

Three-Cueing Legislation

HB 259, Section 7.64, of the 2023 North Carolina Legislative Session prohibits the use of visual memory and three-cueing, or the MSV instructional approach, during any instruction or intervention and within curriculum materials. Using the MSV instructional approach to teach reading has been proven ineffective and even detrimental to the reading process by empirical research.

Linked below is the North Carolina Three-Cueing support document which includes:

- Legislative Overview
- Three-Cueing Background
- Three-Cueing Instructional Practice FAQ

[Three-Cueing One-Pager](#)

Three-Cueing Legislation and Charter Schools

HB 259, Section 7.64, of the 2023 North Carolina Legislative Session names Charter Schools and prohibits the use of visual memory and three-cueing, or the MSV instructional approach, during any instruction or intervention and within curriculum materials.

The one-page Charter Three-Cueing document below includes resources designed to be shared with school leaders and educators as we work together to eliminate all three-cueing practices across North Carolina, per legislation. [The Charter Three-Cueing One Pager](#) includes the following:

- Legislative Overview
- Three-Cueing Background (video, slide deck, guided notes)

- Instructional Practice FAQ

Pre-K Formative Assessment Information

115C-83.4B. requires the Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to establish an Early Literacy Program in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). As part of this Program, NCDPI must ensure the administration of a formative assessment at the conclusion of the Pre-K year to determine their kindergarten readiness and the alignment of their literacy instruction with the Science of Reading. The results of each child's formative assessment will be shared with the child's kindergarten teacher at the beginning of the next school year.

Session Law 2016-94, Section 12B.5.(d) requires the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction, to develop methods to standardize quantifiable student transition information and recommendations for sharing data between pre-k teachers and kindergarten teachers and the parents or guardians of the children who are transitioning to kindergarten. This information is to be shared through an electronic information-sharing platform aligned with the State's kindergarten entry assessment (NC Early Learning Inventory) required by law under NC General Statute 115C 83.5. Establishing this data-sharing agreement between DHHS and NCDPI in turn will allow for the seamless sharing of data between the two state entities.

DPI provides [Teaching Strategies GOLD®](#) which is an early childhood (birth-3rd grade) assessment based on skill progressions in 5 domains of learning and development that can be measured and reported by teachers using observation-based formative assessment. This meets the requirement for an assessment to measure students levels of development prior to kindergarten entry.

DPI also provides the Teaching Strategies Finch™ Literacy Screener for pre-k which meets the requirement of determining the alignment of students' literacy instruction with the Science of Reading through direct assessment. These tools also provide teachers with instructional resources that can be used to individualize instruction aligned with skills on developmental progressions and reporting functions that provide just-in-time data to support instructional planning.

Teaching Strategies GOLD® and Finch™ assessment data is shared between pre-k programs and kindergarten teachers through the NC ELI Teaching Strategies GOLD® platform in the form of a printable *Transition Report* when the following school year begins.

This process will support smoother transitions from pre-k to kindergarten by providing kindergarten teachers with assessment information from children's pre-k year. This information will help kindergarten teachers better understand where children are in their growth and development as they enter kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers will use this information to communicate with families during the transition process and to plan for individualized instruction during the first weeks of school.

Pre-K Age Appropriate Resources Aligned to the Science of Reading

The Office of Early Learning worked in consultation with the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to develop age-appropriate resources to be integrated in the NC Pre-K program. The resources support teachers and caregivers as they introduce and promote an understanding of foundational literacy skills such as background knowledge, vocabulary, phonological awareness, print concepts, and alphabetic knowledge.

Throughout the resources, alignment to guiding works such as North Carolina's Foundations for Early Learning and Development, Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, Teaching Strategies GOLD® objectives and dimensions, and the NAEYC's Position Statement of Developmentally Appropriate Practices.

Resources for Leaders	Description
<u>Pre-K Science of Reading Alignment Tool</u>	In an effort to support early childhood educators in selecting high-quality instructional materials, the <u>North Carolina Pre-K Science of Reading (SoR) Alignment Tool</u> provides guidance regarding the alignment of curricula to the body of research referred to as the science of reading. The tool can be used when selecting a curriculum that specializes in addressing the domains of language and literacy development and/or to evaluate the language and literacy component(s) of a more comprehensive curriculum that addresses whole-child development. In the event that materials are not aligned, this tool can inform stakeholders of the areas in the curriculum that need to be supplemented to achieve optimal alignment.
<u>LETRS® Early Childhood Conversations and Classroom Connections (PLC)</u>	<i>LETRS® for Little Learners: Conversations and Classroom Connections</i> is a guide for leaders in Early Childhood who are supporting implementation of

	LETRS® professional development. Sessions include: reflective conversations based on knowledge gained through LETRS® coursework, application of LETRS® coursework to classroom practice, and leveraging documentation and data to inform classroom instruction.
Finch™ Literacy Screener	Beginning in Spring 2026, the Finch™ Literacy Screener will be administered in pre-k classrooms operated by public schools and NC Pre-K classrooms in non-public school settings. Literacy Screener Overview New! Frequently Asked Questions
Resources for Teachers	Description
OEL Pre-K Newsletter	This newsletter has been created to support prekindergarten teachers. Each issue contains tips, tricks, and reminders for the formative assessment process and a spotlight on age-appropriate literacy development for young learners.
PlaytoRead: Activities for Literacy Development in the Pre-K Classroom	This resource is intended to support teachers as they intentionally support children's development of literacy concepts and skills that are aligned to the science of reading. Similar activities should occur throughout the learning environment, providing multiple opportunities for children to authentically practice literacy skills.
PlaytoRead: Activities for Literacy Development with a Caregiver	This resource is intended to support caregivers as they support literacy development while engaging with young children. Teachers are encouraged to share the resource with caregivers and then highlight particular activities as the skills align to classroom activities. Teachers are invited to create more activities based on needs/interests in their classroom.
Read-Aloud Support for Pre-K	Intentional planning for read-alouds is essential. Templates and completed examples below

	demonstrate how each reading of a book focuses on specific literacy skills. In-Depth Interactive Read-Aloud Guide (template) Read-Aloud Example (Fiction) Read-Aloud Example (Nonfiction) Abbreviated Interactive Read-Aloud Guide and Planner (template)
Foundations Unpacking Guide	This resource unpacks NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development indicators for Language Development and Communication.
Early Childhood Education and the Science of Reading: Recipes to Last a Lifetime	This blog post by Lucy Hart Paulson, author of LETRS® for Early Childhood Educators, describes recipes for learning to read, oral language development, optimal learning, and learning through play.

Section IV: Educator Preparation Programs

This section includes:

1. Educator Preparation Program Approval Details
2. Comprehensive UNC System Literacy Framework and Implementation Guidance

Educator Preparation Program Approval Details

Ongoing collaboration and support are in progress with Dr. Clay Smith, Assistant Director of Education Preparation and Lab Schools at University of North Carolina System.

EPPs providing training for elementary education teachers shall include the following:

- Coursework in the Science of Reading, as defined in G.S. 115C-83.3. Assessment prior to licensure to determine if a student possesses the requisite knowledge in scientifically-based reading, writing, and mathematics instruction that is aligned with the State Board's expectations.
- Instruction in the application of formative and summative assessments within the school and classroom setting through technology-based assessment systems available in State schools that measure and predict expected student improvement.
- Instruction in the integration of arts education across the curriculum.

EPPs providing training for elementary and special education general curriculum teachers shall ensure that students receive instruction in early literacy intervention strategies and practices that are aligned with the Science of Reading and State and national reading standards and shall include the following:

1. Instruction in the teaching of reading, including a substantive understanding of reading as a process involving oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Instruction shall include appropriate application of literacy interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students.
2. Instruction in evidence-based assessment and diagnosis of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and of reading deficiencies.
3. Instruction in appropriate application of literacy interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students.

Comprehensive UNC System Literacy Framework and Implementation Guidance

The UNC System Office selected eight UNC System faculty who served as Literacy Fellows within the UNC System Literacy Framework Initiative per the requirements of the UNC Board of Governors Resolution on Teacher Preparation. The individuals were selected as Literacy Fellows from a robust pool of applicants that included many strong candidates from across the UNC System representing a wealth of experience, research, and knowledge of evidence-based literacy practice. Literacy Fellows collaborated with other literacy experts from within and outside the state, as well as UNC System Office staff, to develop a comprehensive literacy framework that reflects rigorous research on the essential components of reading and aligns with statutory requirements and other statewide literacy initiatives.



THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
SYSTEM

[Comprehensive UNC System Literacy Framework and Implementation Guidance](#)

Click on image above to access UNC System Literacy Framework and Implementation Guidance

Within the comprehensive framework, eight components were included to cover the critical knowledge and skills aligned with the science of reading. Within each component, competencies (language, fluency, concepts of print, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, comprehension, phonics/decoding, and writing) and sub-competencies of what teacher candidates should know and be able to put into practice were included.

To assess the current state of integration of evidence-based reading practice at each UNC System institution, the EPPs conducted an extensive self-study to determine the alignment with the new framework. Each created an action plan to address enhancement and/or changes within current courses to ensure that all competencies and sub-competencies are integrated into elementary and special education-general curriculum programs.

Momentum built across state policymakers and education agencies toward making a leap in evidence-based reading instruction. Focus shifted to implementation, coordination, and evaluation of these different efforts such that the two primary agencies—the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and University of North Carolina System—work together in complementary ways that reflect each agency’s core competency. While the UNC System Office had proposed to deliver LETRS® training to in-service teachers, the rapid momentum toward a much larger pilot funded by the General Assembly led to a series of conversations with the Department of Public Instruction about how to complement one another.

By coordinating our respective efforts to train in-service teachers in the science of reading (DPI) and integrate the science of reading into teacher preparation programs (UNC) in a subset of target districts, the UNC System launched an inaugural cohort of “Literacy Innovation Leaders”—EPP-LEA partnerships that can serve as prospective models in North Carolina. The Literacy Innovation Leaders Initiative served as a privately funded pilot to enhance the integration of evidence-based literacy practices within teacher preparation. This pilot concluded in the Summer of 2023.

Literacy Training for EPP Faculty:

Beginning in the fall of 2021, the UNC System began an immersive professional development opportunity to faculty at EPPs that were selected to be LIL partners. For this initiative, Lexia, the vendor who offers the LETRS training, was being utilized to create consistency across schools and educator preparation programs. EPP faculty received a stipend over two years for their participation in the training.

Additional training slots were utilized for EPPs that are not LIL partners such that each EPP within the UNC System had a sample of faculty participating in LETRS training.

Each EPP was also provided an opportunity to receive demo accounts in order to provide students with experience using a valid, reliable, formative, and diagnostic reading assessment. North Carolina chose Amplify as the vendor who provides mCLASS®, which uses DIBELS® 8th Edition to assess K-3 students.

Literacy Training for UNC System Lab School K-3 Teachers:

To ensure that our UNC System Lab School teachers are receiving training in the Science of Reading as it is being implemented across elementary classrooms facilitated by DPI, the UNC System has offered training in LETRS to a cohort of K-3 lab school teachers. This ensured Lab School teachers were sharing training space with faculty members who are being trained and may be working on the literacy program redesign and/or regularly assisting at the lab school. Lab school teachers also received a stipend over two years for their participation in the training. The intersection of EPP faculty who are working with pre-service candidates and lab school teachers in the area of literacy provides the opportunity for not only strengthened partnership around the mission of lab schools, but also provides a venue for future teacher candidates to engage with the lab schools with teachers who can model the components of evidence-based literacy practice.

Section V: Literacy Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to Read to Achieve

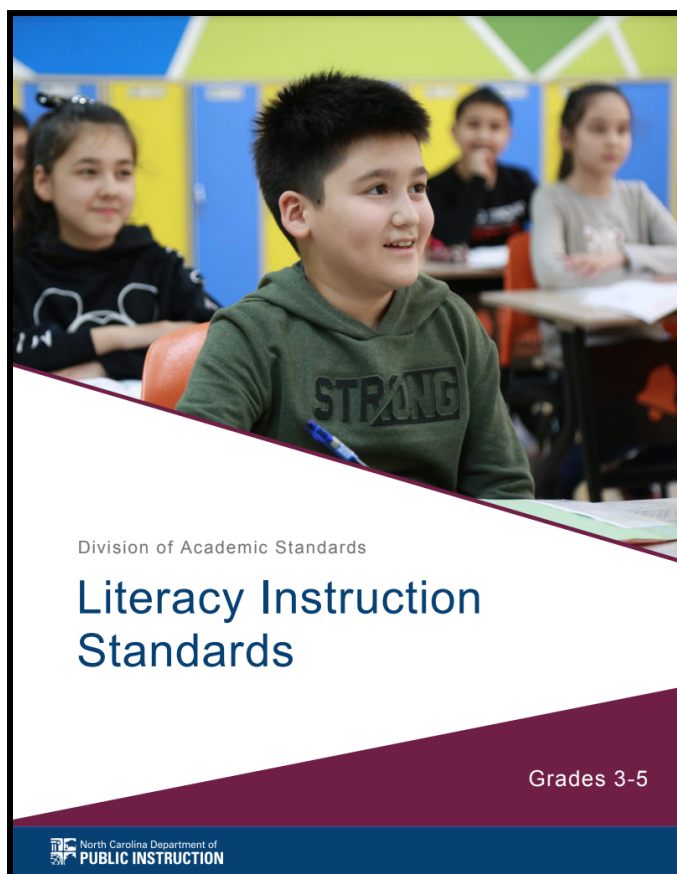
This section includes:

1. SBE Literacy Instruction Standards Development Process
2. NCDPI Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) Implementation

SBE Literacy Instruction Standards Development Process

On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of [SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021](#). The LIS serve as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide. While the [NC Standard Course of Study \(NCSCOS\)](#) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The LIS are organized by grade band and can be used to ensure that all teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

While the LIS have been developed by grade bands, they should be used in tandem with appropriate grade-level texts of increasing complexity in order for students to fully meet the demands of the NCSCOS. This LIS framework does not indicate an exhaustive list of literacy instruction practices and may not fully capture all instructional practices that have the potential to positively impact students' literacy achievement in K-12. New literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.



Click on image to access NC Pre-K-12 Literacy Instruction Standards.

NCDPI Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) Implementation

In December 2022, districts were required to complete a form regarding the measures taken by each LEA to implement the requirements regarding the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) and literacy implementation plan pursuant to SB387. As of November 9, 2023, NCDPI's review of these forms has been completed and returned to districts.

According to SB387, modifications shall be implemented into curriculum and instruction as soon as possible, and all modified curriculum and instruction shall be in place beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

Should you have any questions or need support regarding the LIS, please visit the [Literacy Instruction Standards \(LIS\) Toolkit](#) and/or [contact the NCDPI ELA Team](#).

Section VI: Literacy Interventions and Individual Reading Plans

This section includes:

1. Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency
2. Local Literacy Intervention Plans
3. Individual Reading Plan
4. Elimination of Social Promotion
5. Process for Decision-Making at the End of Grade 3
6. Support for Students Demonstrating Reading Proficiency
7. Accountability Measures

Overview

Educators have always recognized the importance of using data to improve achievement. Over time, educators have used data from nationally normed intelligence and achievement tests to identify students who are at risk of school failure. The implementation of Literacy Intervention Plans and Individual Reading Plans will ensure that:

- Difficulty with reading development is identified as early as possible.
- Students receive appropriate literacy interventions to address difficulty with reading development to remediate reading deficiencies.
- Each student and his or her parent or guardian is continuously informed of the student's academic progress.

Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency

Kindergarten, first, second, and third-grade students shall be assessed with valid, reliable, formative, and diagnostic reading assessments made available to local school administrative units by the State Board of Education pursuant to G.S. 115C-174.11

- (a) Difficulty with reading development identified through administration of formative and diagnostic assessments shall be addressed with literacy interventions. Parents or guardians of first- and second-grade students offered a reading camp as a literacy intervention shall be encouraged to enroll their student in the reading camp provided by the local school administrative unit. Parents or guardians of a student identified as demonstrating reading comprehension below grade level shall make the final decision regarding a student's reading camp attendance.
- (b) Formative and diagnostic assessments and resultant literacy interventions shall address oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension using developmentally appropriate practices. These assessments may be administered by computer or other electronic device.
- (c) Local school administrative units are encouraged to partner with community organizations, businesses, and other groups to provide volunteers, mentors, or tutors to assist with the provision of literacy interventions that enhance reading development and proficiency.

North Carolina continues to move forward with providing our youngest readers with research and evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with the science of reading. The state procurement process determined and approved Amplify as the vendor for the NC K-3 formative and diagnostic reading assessment. Amplify provides mCLASS®, which uses DIBELS® 8th Edition, as the assessment tool for all K-3 students enabling teachers to

automate scoring and receive instant targeted instructional recommendations. mCLASS® includes benchmark assessments and ongoing progress monitoring to comprehensively support each student's literacy development with foundational skills assessments, comprehension assessments, and dyslexia screening assessments.

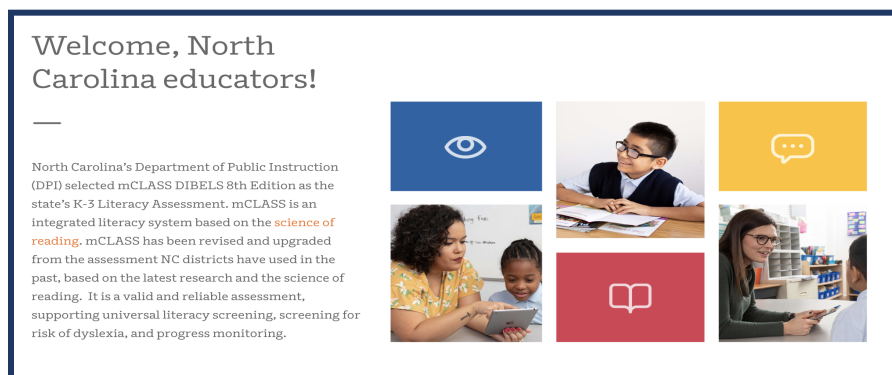
DIBELS® 8th Edition fulfills legislative requirements for K-3 students with sub-test measures for:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

Assessing Students with Disabilities using mCLASS® DIBELS® 8 Assessment

[The Office of Exceptional Children Guidance Document](#)

NC Amplify Website



Click on image to access NC Amplify Site

Local Literacy Intervention Plans

[Literacy Intervention Plan State Folder](#)

bit.ly/NCliteracyinterventionplan

Contents: Literacy Intervention & Reading Camp Guiding Documents

Fillable LIP Template for Submission

LIP Submission Process Overview

Virtual Support Session Recordings, Notes, and PowerPoints

Parent/Guardian Notification Letters

Literacy Intervention Plan

Each local school administrative unit shall submit to the Department of Public Instruction a plan for the literacy interventions it will offer, including reading camps (see reading camp

information in [Section VII](#) below), in the following school year no later than October 1. The plan shall include information about the local school administrative unit's efforts to staff reading camps with the most qualified teachers possible, including the unit's efforts to attract teachers associated with high growth in reading based on EVAAS data and teachers who have earned a reading bonus. The plan shall incorporate any feedback received from the Department on the previous year's plan. As part of their plans, local school administrative units are encouraged to partner with other local school administrative units and with community organizations to enhance literacy interventions.

Literacy Intervention Standards

Purpose:

The purpose of the [NC Literacy Intervention Guiding Document](#) is to utilize best practices for planning, implementing, and evaluating effective literacy intervention systems. This document will guide the local school administrative unit's completion of the District Intervention Plan and aligns literacy intervention practices to the NC Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework.

NC Literacy Interventions Guiding Document

Purpose:

The purpose of the NC Literacy Intervention Guiding Document is to describe best practices for planning, implementing, and evaluating effective literacy intervention systems. This document will guide the local school administrative unit's completion of the District Intervention Plan and aligns literacy intervention practices to the NC Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework.

Literacy Interventions Best Practices:

1. Screen all students for potential reading problems.
2. Provide differentiated core reading instruction for all students.
3. Provide systematic supplemental support (tier 2) for students who require intervention based on data decision rules.
4. Provide intensive support (tier 3) for students who demonstrate minimal progress with supplemental support.
5. Monitor the progress of students receiving supplemental and intensive support regularly.

Click on the image to access the NC Literacy Interventions Guiding Document

Information provided in this document is adapted from: Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C.M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., and Tilly, W.D. (2008). [Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to Intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades](#). (A practice guide.) (NCEE 2009-4045). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>

Reading Camp Best Practices and High Quality (HQ) Standards

Purpose:

The purpose of the [NC Reading Camp Guiding Document](#) is to utilize best practices for planning, implementing, and evaluating an effective reading camp program. This document will guide the local school administrative unit's completion of the District Intervention Plan and includes information to support efforts to staff reading camps with the most qualified teachers, mentors, and paraprofessionals while also ensuring the use of evidence-based

early literacy practices at all reading camps

OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING
NC Department of Public Instruction



NC Reading Camp Guiding Document

Purpose:
The purpose of the NC Reading Camp Guiding Document is to describe best practices for planning, implementing, and evaluating an effective reading camp program.

This document will guide the local school administrative unit's completion of the District Intervention Plan. It includes information to support efforts to staff reading camps with the most qualified teachers, mentors, and paraprofessionals while also ensuring the use of evidence-based early literacy practices at all reading camps.

Reading Camp Best Practices:
[Best Practice #1: Teacher Effectiveness and Qualifications](#)
[Best Practice #2: Student Selection and Enrollment](#)
[Best Practice #3: Communication with Administration, Staff, and Parents/Guardians](#)
[Best Practice #4: Instructional Time](#)
[Best Practice #5: Content and Instruction](#)
[Best Practice #6: Assessment Selection and Data Use](#)
[Best Practice #7: Mentoring and Paraprofessional Use](#)
[Best Practice #8: Camp and Classroom Environment](#)

Click on the image to access the NC Reading Camp Guiding Document

Information provided in the NC Reading Camp Guiding Document is adapted from: Smith, K. G., & Foorman, B. R. (2015). [Summer Reading Camp Self-Study](#) (Guide) (REL 2015-070). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

Process for NCDPI Review & Approval of Plan

The Department of Public Instruction shall review each local school administrative unit's plan and approve only those literacy interventions that:

- provide instruction that is closely aligned with the goals and meet the requirements in this Part and
- comply with the literacy intervention standards published by the State Board of Education.

LIP submission window opens yearly on August 1st and will close on October 1st.

[LIP Guidance Document](#)

Designation	Funding	Resubmission of Plan
Approved	Yes	Not Necessary
Approved with	Yes	Not necessary; suggested to

Recommendations		reach out to consultants for support to address recommendations
Not Approved	No	Yes, submit an <i>updated</i> plan by March 15th; DPI must respond by April 15th (Please note: you can submit an updated plan at any point up until March 15th, you do NOT need to wait until March 15th)

Individual Reading Plan

Determining Which Students Need an IRP

An Individual Reading Plan (IRP) shall be developed for any student in kindergarten through third grade 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 shall be continually adjusted based on multiple data sources as prescribed by the Department of Public Instruction, indicating that the student is not progressing toward grade-level standards in one or more major reading areas. Based on the most recently collected data, the IRP shall include the following information specific to the identified student:

- (1) The specific reading skill deficiencies identified by assessment data.
- (2) Goals and benchmarks for growth.
- (3) The means by which progress will be monitored and evaluated.
- (4) The specific additional literacy interventions the student will receive.
- (5) The -based instructional programming the teacher will implement.
- (6) Any additional services the teacher deems appropriate to accelerate the student's reading skill and development.

A multi-tiered system of support intervention may be used to satisfy the requirements of this section if all of the components (1-6) listed above are incorporated in the intervention.

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 NC Department of Public Instruction



Individual Reading Plan/MTSS Alignment Checklist

An Individual Reading Plan (IRP) shall be developed for any student in kindergarten through third grade demonstrating difficulty with reading development based on the results of either (i) the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the school year or (ii) the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the second semester of the school year. The Individual Reading Plan should be developed as a part of an Multi-Tiered System of Support. In an MTSS, students are identified as having difficulty with reading development as a part of a comprehensive assessment system. Literacy interventions are delivered to these students. Literacy interventions may occur at the supplemental or intensive levels. The legislative requirements of the Individual Reading Plan are described below.

Click on the image to access NC Individual Reading Plan/MTSS Alignment Checklist

Notifying Parents or Guardians

A student's parent or guardian shall be given notice that the student has been identified as having difficulty with reading development and that an IRP has been developed. The notice shall provide the parent or guardian the following:

- Specific strategies that can be easily understood and implemented to assist the student in reading at grade level.
- Encouragement to select one or more strategies for use at home that build on the student's interests and are most likely to engage the student and result in reading improvement.
- Direction to free online or hard copy literacy resources that can be accessed via a prominently displayed area on the homepage of the primary website maintained by the Department of Public Instruction and by the local school administrative unit.

Options for Meeting Required Written Notification:

Requirement	Option A (SB 387)	Option B (IDEA RtI)	Option C (SB 387 + IDEA RtI)
Amount and nature of student performance data that will be collected and general education services that will be provided	Not Required	Required	Required

Strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning/improvement	Required	Required	Required
Right to request evaluation if a disability is suspected	Not Required	Required	Required
Strategies for use at home to improve reading	Required	Not Required	Required
Free online or hard copy literacy sources	Required	Not Required	Required

- Sample letters for Options A,B, and C are provided.
- Letters may be customized locally as long as the required components for the purpose communicated are included.

Parent/Guardian Notification Letters

[Option A letter](#)

[Option A letter \(Spanish\)](#)

[Option B letter](#)

[Option B letter \(Spanish\)](#)

[Option C letter](#)

[Option C letter \(Spanish\)](#)

Elimination of Social Promotion

Good Cause Exemptions

Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause, but shall continue to be eligible to participate in reading camps and receive literacy interventions appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

- Limited English Proficient students with less than two school years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program.
- Students with disabilities, as defined in G.S. 115C-106.3(1), and whose individualized education program indicates (i) the use of the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment, (ii) at least a two school year delay in educational performance, or (iii) receipt of intensive reading literacy interventions for at least two school years.
- Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education.

- Students who demonstrate, through a student reading portfolio, reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade. Student reading portfolios and review processes used by local school administrative units shall be approved by the State Board of Education.
- Students who have (i) received literacy interventions and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades.

Supporting Retained Third-Grade Students

- Parents or guardians of students not demonstrating reading proficiency shall be encouraged to enroll their student in a reading camp provided by the local school administrative unit. Parents or guardians of a student not demonstrating reading proficiency shall make the final decision regarding a student's reading camp attendance. Local school administrative units shall provide at least one opportunity for students not participating in a reading camp to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on an alternative assessment or through a student reading portfolio process approved by the State Board of Education prior to retaining the student.
- Students retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a) shall be provided with a teacher selected based on demonstrated student outcomes in reading proficiency and placed in an accelerated reading class or a transitional third and fourth-grade class combination, as appropriate. Classroom instruction shall include at least 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted, evidence-based reading-based instruction, not to include independent reading time, and other appropriate literacy interventions, as outlined in each student's Individual Reading Plan.
- Parents or guardians of students who have been retained twice under the provisions of G.S. 115C-83.7(a) shall be offered supplemental tutoring grounded in the science of reading for the retained student outside the instructional day.

§ 115C-83.9. Notification requirements to parents and guardians.

- A. Parents or guardians shall be notified in writing and in a timely manner that the student shall be retained, unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause, if the student is not demonstrating reading proficiency by the end of third grade. Parents or guardians shall receive this notice when a kindergarten, first, second, or third-grade student (i) is demonstrating difficulty with reading development; or (ii) is not reading at grade level.
- B. Parents or guardians of any student who is to be retained under the provisions of G.S. 115C-83.7(a) shall be notified in writing of the reason the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption as provided in G.S. 115C-83.7(b). Written notification shall also include a description of proposed literacy interventions that will be provided to the student to remediate areas where the student has not demonstrated reading proficiency.

- C. Parents or guardians of students retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a) shall receive at least monthly written reports on student progress toward reading proficiency. The evaluation of the student's progress shall be based upon the student's classroom work, observations, tests, assessments, and other relevant information.
- D. Teachers and principals shall provide opportunities, including, but not limited to, information sessions, to discuss with parents and guardians the notifications listed in this section. (2012-142, s. 7A.1(b); 2014-5, s. 7; 2015-46, s. 3.)

Note: Daily, uninterrupted instruction does not require a student to be removed from their homeroom or require the student receive instruction from the same teacher for 90 minutes. 120 minutes is ideal for literacy instruction, including interventions.

Process for Decision-Making at the End of Grade 3

The flow chart below depicts the procedure for students at the end of their third-grade year

- Students take the 3rd-grade EOG.
- If they are proficient, they are promoted to Grade 4.
- If they are not proficient, they may qualify for a “good cause exemption” and be promoted to Grade 4.
- If they do not qualify for a “good cause exemption,” then they may take a retest of the EOG (different form) and/or the Read to Achieve alternative assessment.
- If they are proficient on one of these assessments, they are promoted to Grade 4.
- If they are not proficient on one of these assessments, they are encouraged to attend reading camp.
- The parent makes the decision regarding student attendance at reading camp.
- Students who received a good cause exemption may attend reading camp for free.
- After reading camp, the student may achieve proficiency by passing the Read to Achieve alternative assessment OR by passing with a completed student reading portfolio OR by passing the local alternative assessment approved by the SBE. The parent has an option of sending a student to a private reading support program. The parent may provide documentation to the LEA after completion of the reading support program. The LEA may use this documentation when considering placement of the student for the following year. Any funding for a private reading support program is the responsibility of the parent.
- Students not attending reading camp shall be provided an opportunity to take the Read to Achieve alternative assessment or state board approved alternative assessment on an LEA designated day.
- If students are proficient by any means (RtA alternative assessment, state board approved alternative assessment or student reading portfolio), then they are promoted to Grade 4.
- Students who are not proficient are offered the following opportunities:

- Students not demonstrating proficiency shall be encouraged to enroll in a reading camp prior to being retained.
- Students not demonstrating proficiency shall be provided with a selected teacher based on demonstrated student outcomes in reading proficiency and placed in an accelerated reading class **or**
- Students not demonstrating proficiency shall be provided with a selected teacher based on demonstrated student outcomes in reading proficiency and placed in a transitional third and fourth-grade class as appropriate.
- The decision for placement of the students should be made based on a comprehensive, balanced assessment system including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments; observations; historical data; student grades; and classroom and reading camp performance (if applicable).
- The SBE shall establish a mid-year promotion policy for any student retained who, by November 1, demonstrates reading proficiency.
- Parents or guardians of students who have been retained twice shall be offered supplemental tutoring outside of the instructional day.

Support for Students Demonstrating Reading Proficiency

- Parents or guardians of a third-grade student demonstrating reading proficiency or a second-grade student demonstrating appropriate developmental abilities in reading comprehension may choose to enroll the student in the reading camp but may be charged an attendance fee.
- If a local board of education offers a reading camp as a literacy intervention for first-grade students, parents, or guardians of a first-grade student demonstrating appropriate developmental abilities in reading comprehension may choose to enroll the student in the reading camp but may be charged an attendance fee.
- Local boards of education may establish a fee amount to be equal to the per-student program cost of participating in the reading camp, not to exceed eight hundred twenty-five dollars (\$825.00).
- Priority enrollment in the reading camp is for students offered a reading camp as a literacy intervention. Local boards of education shall establish application procedures and enrollment priorities for reading camps for students demonstrating reading proficiency.

Accountability Measures

September 1 - Annually, each local board of education shall report in writing to the State Board of Education the following information on the prior school year:

- A description of all reading literacy interventions provided to students who have been retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a).
- The number of first and second-grade students attending a reading camp offered by the local board.
- The license area or areas, years of licensed teaching experience, grade-level assignment, and any other specific subject-area assignments of each teacher providing instruction at a reading camp.
- The number and percentage of teachers providing instruction at a reading camp who were paid a reading performance bonus during the school year immediately preceding the reading camp and the grade level on which the bonus was based.
- The number of kindergarten through third-grade students with an Individual Reading Plan.

November 15 - Annually, each local board of education shall report in writing to the State Board of Education, for the prior school year:

- The number and percentage of third-grade students who did not demonstrate proficiency upon entering reading camp and who became proficient after completing reading camp and
- For each grade level, the number and percentage of first and second-grade students who demonstrated reading comprehension below grade level difficulty

with reading upon entering camp and who demonstrated reading comprehension at or above grade level after completing reading camp.

November 15 - Annually, each local board of education shall report in writing to the State Board of Education the number and percentage of retained third-grade students placed in an accelerated reading class or transitional third and fourth class combination under G.S. 115C-83.8(b) in the prior school year who were:

- Promoted midyear as provided in G.S. 115C-83.8(c) or
- Promoted directly to fifth grade for the school year following the retention.

No later than 90 days prior to the annual due date - The State Board of Education shall establish a uniform format for local boards of education to report the required information listed above and shall provide the format to local boards of education.

December 15 - Annually, the State Board of Education shall compile this information and submit a State-level summary to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. The State-level summary shall include, for each local school administrative unit, every component listed above.

The State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction shall conduct an analysis of literacy interventions, including reading camps, provided throughout the State in order to determine which literacy intervention activities and instructional methods are most effective in furthering reading development. Based on this analysis, the State Board and the Department shall develop literacy intervention standards, including reading camp standards, that incorporate the most effective activities and instructional methods.

Section VII: Reading Camps, Bonuses & Excellent Public Schools Act Funds

This section includes:

1. Legislative Definition
2. Reading Camp Requirements
3. Signing Bonus/Funds
4. Performance Bonus/Funds
5. Continuing Education Credits
6. Reading Camp Implementation Guide

Reading Camp Legislative Definition

"Reading camp" means an additional educational program outside of the instructional calendar provided by the local school administrative unit as a literacy intervention that shall be offered to (i) any third-grade student who does not demonstrate reading proficiency and (ii) any second-grade student who demonstrates difficulty with reading development. Local school administrative units may offer a reading camp as a literacy intervention to any first-grade student who demonstrates difficulty with reading development. Parents or guardians of the student offered a reading camp as a literacy intervention shall make the final decision regarding the student's reading camp attendance.

Continued support for students demonstrating reading proficiency and appropriate reading development.

SB 387 SECTION 6.(j) G.S. 115C-83.11 reads as rewritten:

§ 115C-83.11. Continued support for students demonstrating reading proficiency and appropriate reading development.

(a) Parents or guardians of a third-grade student demonstrating reading proficiency or a second-grade student demonstrating appropriate developmental abilities in reading comprehension may choose to enroll the student in the reading camp but may be charged an attendance fee. If a local board of education offers a reading camp as a literacy intervention for first-grade students, parents, or guardians of a first-grade student demonstrating appropriate developmental abilities in reading comprehension may choose to enroll the student in the reading camp but may be charged an attendance fee. Local boards of education may establish a fee amount to be equal to the per-student program cost of participating in the reading camp, not to exceed eight hundred twenty-five dollars (\$825.00).

(b) Priority enrollment in the reading camp is for students offered a reading camp as a literacy intervention. Local boards of education shall establish application procedures and enrollment priorities for reading camps for students demonstrating reading proficiency.

Reading Camp Requirements

Reading camps shall 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.

Reading Camp End Of Year Guidelines For Eligibility

Grade	DIBELS 8 BOY & MOY	DIBELS 8 EOY
1	Reading camp is optional for Grade 1 students and participation is determined at the discretion of the district. Eligibility is based on EOY benchmark data as indicated in the 1st-grade EOY column of this chart.	441 (students that do not obtain a 441 are eligible for RtA reading camp)
2	Reading camp is required to be offered for 2nd graders and is based on EOY benchmark data as indicated in the 2nd-grade EOY column of this chart.	439 (students that do not obtain a 439 are eligible for RtA reading camp)
3	* 725 Lexile	* 725 Lexile

****For RtA purposes third-grade students must obtain a 725 Lexile to demonstrate third-grade reading proficiency. This may be obtained during any benchmark. Any third-grader that does not demonstrate third-grade reading proficiency is eligible for reading camp.***

Funds provided for reading camps that are contained in Section 7A.1 of S.L. 2012-142 shall be used only for reading camps

Signing Bonus

PRC 085 FAQ

Each local school administrative unit shall provide a signing bonus in an amount determined by the local board of education that is at least one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200) to any teacher who meets all of the following criteria:

- (1) Is associated with high growth in reading based on EVAAS data. High growth is equivalent to an index score of 1 and above.
- (2) Was awarded a reading performance bonus administered by the Department of Public Instruction. A reading performance bonus refers to a bonus awarded to third-, fourth-, or fifth-grade teachers based on EVAAS student growth index scores.
- (3) Accepts employment to provide instruction during a reading camp.

To provide the signing bonus required under G.S. 115C-83.7A, as enacted by this act, local school administrative units shall use the funds contained in Section 7A.1 of S.L. 2012-142, other than the funds provided for reading camps.

Performance Bonus

[PRC 085 FAQ](#)

Each local school administrative unit shall provide a reading camp performance bonus to a teacher who provided instruction at a third-grade reading camp in a per-student amount determined by the local board of education that is at least one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) for each student not demonstrating reading proficiency assigned to that teacher who demonstrates reading proficiency on an alternative assessment at the end of the reading camp. Any bonus awarded pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of this section is not compensation under Article 1 of Chapter 135 of the General Statutes, the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System.

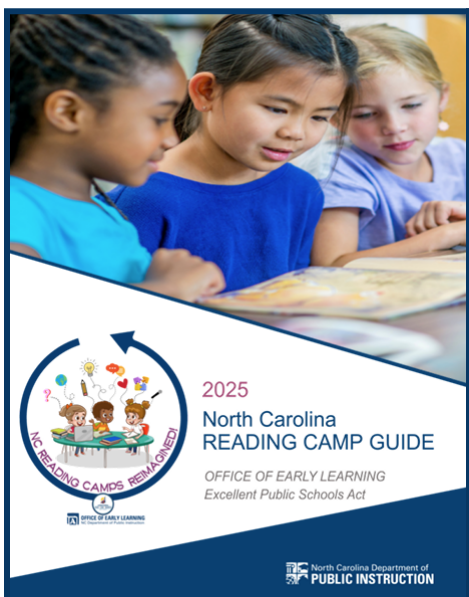
To provide the reading camp performance bonus required under G.S. 115C-83.7A, as enacted by this act, local school administrative units shall use the funds contained in Section 7A.1 of S.L. 2012-142, other than the funds provided for reading camps, and federal funds received by a local school administrative unit for the purpose of responding to the impacts of COVID-19.

[Finance Guidance for Summer Reading Camps](#)

Continuing Education Credits

A teacher who has earned a reading performance bonus and who provides instruction throughout a full reading camp shall be deemed to have completed two of the continuing education credits related to literacy required by G.S. 115C-270.30(b)(2).

RtA Reading Camp Implementation Guide



Click on the image to access the RtA Reading Camp Implementation Guide

Section VIII: Digital Children's Reading Initiative

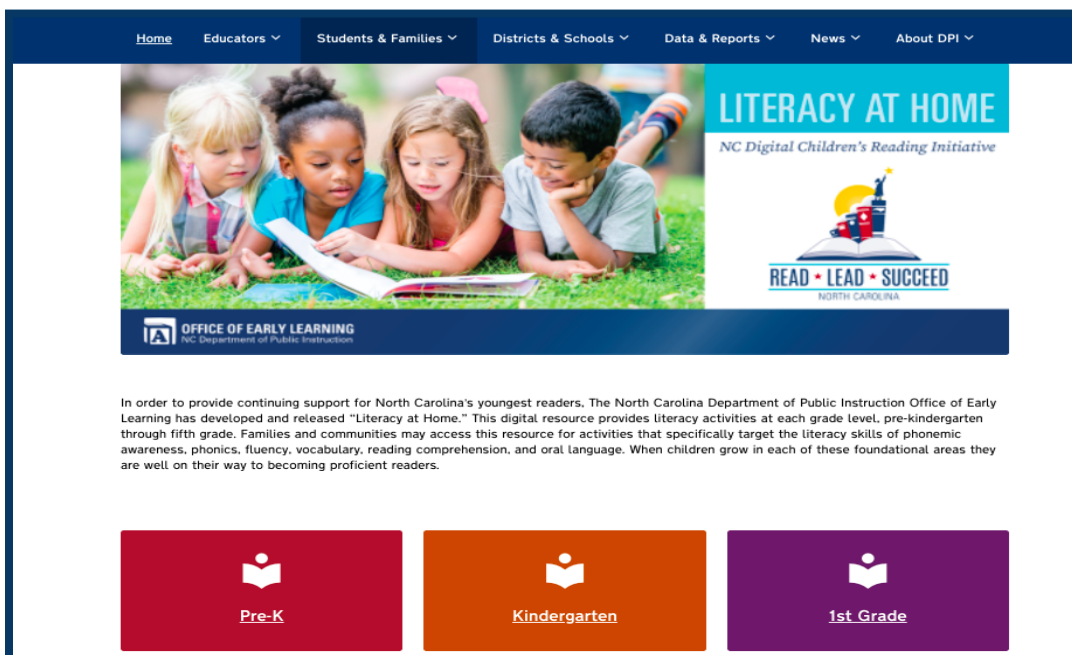
This section includes:

1. The Rationale for Developing a Digital Children's Reading Initiative
2. Descriptors of the Resources Provided through the Initiative
3. Guidelines Related to the Implementation of the Initiative

Rationale

The Department of Public Instruction shall develop and disseminate a fully developed Digital Children's Reading Initiative for the purpose of increasing the percentage of school children throughout the State who are reading proficiently by the end of third grade. The Initiative shall be aligned with the science of reading and shall reflect the standards taught in each grade level from kindergarten to third grade. The Initiative shall be designed to assist parents, guardians, and family members in cultivating confident, proficient, lifelong readers by providing free tools and resources that can be easily incorporated into everyday life.

NCDPI Digital Children's Reading Initiative



Click on the image to access the NC Digital Children's Reading Initiative

Descriptors of the Resources Provided through the Initiative

The Initiative shall make home activities, printables, and games available on the following literacy skills, as appropriate for each grade level:

- (1) Phonemic awareness
- (2) Phonics
- (3) Vocabulary
- (4) Fluency
- (5) Comprehension
- (6) Oral language

Guidelines Related to the Implementation of the Initiative

Each local school administrative unit shall make Initiative resources accessible directly through a prominently displayed area on the homepage of the unit's website. Printable activities shall be provided in hard copy by the local school administrative unit to students who do not have digital access at home and may be provided to all students as a supplement to digital resources.

Section IX: Assessments

This section includes:

1. NC Pre-K Formative Assessments
2. Alternative Assessment
3. EC Assessment Guidelines

NC Pre-K Formative Assessments

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides Teaching Strategies GOLD® to all NC Pre-K classrooms. NCDPI provides Teaching Strategies GOLD® to all public school Pre-K classrooms that are not funded through NC Pre-K, including separate setting EC preschool classrooms. Children are assessed in five areas of development: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics. Observation-based formative assessment includes the creation of a digital portfolio of notes, photographs, and/or videos that capture children's knowledge, skills, and abilities within all domains of learning. Portfolios and research-based developmental progressions are used to inform instruction.

Alternative Assessment

"Alternative assessment" means a valid and reliable standardized assessment of reading comprehension, approved by the State Board of Education, that is not the same test as the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students. The State Board of Education shall provide the valid and reliable alternative assessment to local school administrative units upon request and establish achievement level ranges for the approved alternative assessment. The State Board of Education shall annually review the alternative assessment to ensure ongoing relevance, validity, and reliability."

On Sept. 6, 2023, the State Board of Education approved Renaissance STAR Reading as the 23-24 Read to Achieve Alternative Assessment. This assessment serves as an alternative pathway for third-grade students as a good cause exemption reading proficiency measure. The alternative assessment does not replace the state-required assessments and is optional for districts to purchase.

Please note, legislation states local school districts must use the one State Board of Education-approved alternative assessment. The state board voted on Renaissance Learning, STAR Assessment, as the one approved alternative assessment.

Renaissance

See Every Student.

[Alternative Assessment Guidance](#)

[Using STAR Reading for the NC Alternative Assessment](#)

[Charter Guidelines for Alternative Assessment](#)

For the 2026-2027 school year, charter schools (at the charter school's expense) may use an alternative assessment and its achievement level (equivalent to a 725 Lexile) as a pathway for current third-grade students to meet the Read to Achieve legislative requirement. All charter schools with third-grade students must submit documentation to the Office of Accountability and Testing, no later than August 1 of the school year in which it intends to use the alternative assessment, indicating which alternative assessment(s) will be used with students. Submissions after the August 1 deadline will not be approved. To report assessments used by charter schools to meet Read to Achieve for the 2026-2027 school year, enter the name and minimum proficiency level in the blank fields within the Office of Accountability and Testing online platform. It is the responsibility of the charter school to vet an assessment. These assessments have not been vetted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), including for IT Security Compliance, and NCDPI does not endorse any assessments on this list.

EC Assessment Guidelines

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1177) requires all students to be assessed on grade-level content. Pursuant to 34 CFR 300.160, North Carolina's Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021 (Senate Bill 387), and NC 1501-12.4 in NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, all students with disabilities must be included in all state assessment programs. Therefore, all students, including students on the Extended Content Standards, must receive an assessment of early literacy.

[Exceptional Children Guidance for DIBELS 8[®] Assessment](#)

Section X: Enhance Data Collection and Reports

This section includes:

1. Criteria for Local Data Reporting
2. Criteria for State Board of Education Reporting
3. Criteria for Charter School Reporting
4. Data Template

Criteria for Local Board Reporting

Each local board of education shall report annually in writing to the State Board of Education by September 1 of each year the following information on the prior school year:

- (1) A description of all reading literacy interventions provided to students who have been retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a).
- (2) The number of first and second-grade students attending a reading camp offered by the local board.
- (3) The license area or areas, years of licensed teaching experience, grade level assignment, and any other specific subject-area assignments of each teacher providing instruction at a reading camp.
- (4) The number and percentage of teachers providing instruction at a reading camp who were paid a reading performance bonus during the school year immediately preceding the reading camp and the grade level on which the bonus was based.
- (5) The number of kindergarten through third-grade students with an Individual Reading Plan.

Each local board of education shall report annually in writing to the State Board of Education by November 15 of each year, for the prior school year:

- (i) the number and percentage of third-grade students who did not demonstrate proficiency upon entering reading camp and who became proficient after completing reading camp
- (ii) for each grade level, the number and percentage of first and second-grade students who demonstrated difficulty with reading upon entering camp and who demonstrated reading comprehension at or above grade level after completing reading camp.

Each local board of education shall report annually in writing to the State Board of Education by November 15 of each year the number and percentage of retained third-grade students placed in an accelerated reading class or transitional third and fourth class combination under G.S. 115C-83.8(b) in the prior school year who were (i) promoted midyear as provided in G.S. 115C-83.8(c) or (ii) promoted directly to fifth grade for the school year following the retention.

Criteria for State Board of Education Reporting

The State Board of Education shall establish a uniform format for local boards of education to report the required information listed in subsections (a) and (b) of this section and shall provide the format to local boards of education no later than 90 days prior to the annual due date.

The Department of Public Instruction shall provide for EVAAS analysis all formative and diagnostic assessment data collected pursuant to this section for kindergarten through third grade. The Department shall use a uniform template for all data collected, and the

template shall be used each time data is provided. The template shall include clear designations for each data component reported.

Criteria for Charter School Reporting

Charters School Article 14A

Reading Proficiency and Student Promotion

(1) Students in third grade shall be retained if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency by reading at or above the third-grade level as demonstrated by the results of the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students. The charter school shall provide reading interventions to retained students to remediate reading deficiency, which may include 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted, evidence-based reading instruction, accelerated reading classes, transition classes containing third and fourth-grade students, and reading camps.

(2) Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause but shall continue to receive instructional supports and services and reading interventions appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

- a. Limited English Proficient students with less than two school years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program.
- b. Students with disabilities, as defined in G.S. 115C-106.3(1), and whose individualized education program indicates (i) the use of the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment, (ii) at least a two school year delay in educational performance, or (iii) receipt of intensive reading interventions for at least two school years.
- c. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on an alternative assessment of reading comprehension. The charter school shall notify the State Board of Education of the alternative assessment used to demonstrate reading proficiency.
- d. Students who demonstrate, through a student reading portfolio, reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students.
- e. Students who have (i) received reading intervention and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades.

(3) The charter school shall provide notice to parents and guardians when a student is not reading at grade level. The notice shall state that if the student's reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of third grade, the student shall be retained unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause. Notice shall also be provided to parents and guardians of any student who is to be retained under this subsection of the reason the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption, as well as a description of proposed reading interventions that will be provided to the student to remediate identified areas of reading deficiency.

(4) The charter school shall annually publish on the charter school's Website and report in writing to the State Board of Education by September 1 of each year the following information on the prior school year:

- a. The number and percentage of third-grade students demonstrating and not demonstrating reading proficiency on the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students.
- b. The number and percentage of third-grade students not demonstrating reading proficiency and who do not return to the charter school for the following school year.
- c. The number and percentage of third-grade students who take and pass the alternative assessment of reading comprehension.
- d. The number and percentage of third-grade students retained for not demonstrating reading proficiency.
- e. The number and percentage of third-grade students exempt from mandatory third-grade retention by category of exemption as listed in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

Data Template

As referenced in G.S. 115C-83.6(a2), the Department of Public Instruction shall provide for EVAAS analysis all formative and diagnostic assessment data collected pursuant to this section for kindergarten through third grade. The Department shall use a uniform template for all data collected, and the template shall be used each time data is provided by the vendor to NCDPI. The template shall include clear designations for each data component reported.

Section XI: Glossary

This section includes a glossary of terms and definitions related to the Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve.

Accelerated Reading Class - *A class where focused literacy interventions are provided to increase a student's reading level at least two grades in one school year.*

Alternative Assessment - *A valid and reliable standardized assessment of reading comprehension, approved by the state board of education, that is not the same test as the state-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students.*

Diagnostic Assessment - *Can be norm-referenced (used to rank test-takers to a national sample) or criterion-referenced (used to demonstrate mastery of skills), pinpoints area/skill of need, and can be part of a universal screener.*

Difficulty with Reading Development - *Not demonstrating appropriate developmental abilities in any of the major reading areas, including, but not limited to, oral language, phonological or phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, or comprehension, according to observation-based, diagnostic, or formative assessments.*

Formative Assessment - *A type of assessment that monitors student learning and provides ongoing feedback.*

Individual Reading Plan - *A document that outlines the specific reading skill deficiencies of a student who has demonstrated difficulty with reading development and includes the literacy interventions that the student will receive to address the reading skill deficiencies.*

Literacy Intervention - *An intentional strategy used to facilitate reading development and remediate emerging difficulty with reading development. Literacy interventions shall be grounded in the science of reading and include individual or small group instruction throughout the school year, reduced teacher-student ratios, frequent progress monitoring, tutoring in addition to the regular school day, reading camps, and extended learning time before or after the school day.*

Progress Monitoring - *Monitoring that is used to measure progress towards acquiring specific skills that have been taught. Progress monitoring can occur multiple times, often weekly, depending on need.*

Reading Camp - *Additional educational program outside of the instructional calendar provided by the local school administrative unit as a literacy intervention.*

Reading Proficiency - *Reading at or above the third-grade level by the end of a student's third-grade year, demonstrated by the results of the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students.*

Science of Reading - *means 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.*

Student Portfolio - *A compilation of independently produced student work selected by the student's teacher, beginning during the first half of the school year, and signed by the teacher and principal, as an accurate picture of the student's reading ability. The student reading portfolio shall include an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the State's reading standards that are assessed by the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students. A single piece of evidence may show mastery of up to two standards. For each benchmark, there shall be three examples of student work demonstrating mastery by a grade of seventy percent (70%) or above.*

Summative Assessment - *A type of assessment that evaluates student learning at the end of a specific time of instruction (EOG, end of course, end of unit).*

Transitional Third and Fourth Class Combination - *A classroom specifically designed to produce learning gains sufficient to meet fourth-grade performance standards while continuing to remediate areas of reading deficiency.*

Three-Cueing - *a model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, also known as "MSV."*

Universal Screener - *Also called a benchmark assessment, measures academic progress of large groups of students and identifies students who may need supplemental instruction and/or intervention.*

Section XII: Appendices

This section provides resources, documents and related forms that stakeholders can use to meet the legislative requirements of the Excellent Public Schools Act - Read to Achieve.

Appendix A: Amplify mCLASS® Assessment

Appendix B: Sample Parent/Guardian Letters

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Appendix D: NC SBE Kindergarten/Early Childhood (KNEC) Policies

Appendix E: State Resource/Webinar Links

Appendix A



North Carolina continues to move forward with providing our youngest readers with research and evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with the science of reading. The state procurement process determined and approved Amplify as the vendor for the NC K-3 formative and diagnostic reading assessment. Amplify provides mCLASS®, which uses DIBELS® 8th Edition, as the assessment tool for all K-3 students enabling teachers to automate scoring and receive instant targeted instructional recommendations. mCLASS® includes benchmark assessments and ongoing progress monitoring to comprehensively support each student’s literacy development with foundational skills assessments, comprehension assessments, and dyslexia screening assessments.

DIBELS® 8th Edition fulfills legislative requirements for K-3 students. DIBELS 8 assessment measures include: Letter Naming Fluency, Oral Reading Fluency, Phonemic Segmentation Fluency, MAZE (Basic Comprehension), Nonsense Word Fluency, Oral Language, Word Reading Fluency, and Vocabulary.

The state began using DIBELS® 8 data for EVAAS purposes effective 2021-2022 school year. MOY - EOY data will be used for all K teachers. BOY-EOY data will be used for all 1-2 teachers. Third grade will continue to use BOG-EOG for EVAAS.

Each subtest included within DIBELS® 8th Edition is designed to assess component skills involved in reading. The subtests change across grades in a manner that parallels student development and instructional focus.

2026-2027 Benchmark Dates

Recognizing that districts and schools' start dates range from the first week in July through the last week in August, it is essential that we use a formula for establishing benchmark assessment windows. Assessments are to be administered within 15 consecutive instructional days, not including holidays. BOY assessments are to be administered on days 6-21. MOY assessments are to be administered on days 80-100. EOY assessments are to be administered the 15 consecutive instructional school days, not including holidays, immediately preceding the start of EOGs. Districts will be asked to submit testing windows to NCDPI and Amplify at a later date. See the reference chart on the next page.

DIBELS® 8 Benchmark Cut Scores (Core Support/Minimal Risk)

Grade	BOY	MOY	EOY
K	306	371	420

1st	330	389	441
2nd	329	389	439
3rd	*725 Lexile	*725 Lexile	*725 Lexile
4th	331	399	442
5th	335	394	449

**For RtA purposes third-grade students must obtain a 725 Lexile to demonstrate third-grade reading proficiency.*

There is a specific formula used to calculate composite scores for each grade level and each probe is weighted.

(ie. 1st grade has 7 probes while 2nd grade only has 6 which impacts the overall composite score)

The [DIBELS® 8th Edition Admin/Scoring Guide](#) (pages 129) offers a more in-depth explanation depicting how each composite score is calculated.

Weights are consistent to be used within the same grade level, across the benchmark periods. However, they are not consistent for comparison across vertical grade levels based on the differentiated probes and weights.

For more information, refer to [Understanding DIBELS® 8th Edition Composite Scores](#).

DIBELS® 8 Assessment Invalidations

The process for invalidations will be as follows:

- Teacher requests approval for an invalidation from school administration
- School administration submits to District
- District approves invalidation

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is still required and should occur between each benchmark window to guide instruction. The frequency of progress monitoring should be based on student data to inform and determine instructional adjustments and supports. Please refer to guidelines as stated in the [2020 DIBELS® 8 Edition Administration and Scoring Guide](#). (pgs. 94-98)

Appendix B

SAMPLE Parent/Guardian Letters

[Notification of Concerns with Reading Development/Progress](#)

[Camp Interest-Areas of Concern in Reading-Winter/Spring Letter](#)

[End of Year Notification \(Below Proficiency in Reading in 3rd Grade\)](#)

Appendix C

The [Read to Achieve Frequently Asked Questions documents](#) (FAQs) can be found on the Early Literacy and Science of Reading pages of the NCDPI website. These FAQs are intended to be “living documents”. Each document will be periodically updated with more current information, additions, and clarifications as Read to Achieve implementation moves forward.

Appendix D

Click the link below to directly access all KNEC policies through the state board policy manual.

[KNEC Policies - State Board Policy Manual](#)

Appendix E

State Resource/Webinar Links

Resources from DPI	Description
FAQs (Read to Achieve, PRC Funds, LETRS®, Amplify, NC ELI)	The FAQ documents provide answers to the most frequently asked questions. There are linked FAQ documents for: Read to Achieve Legislation, LETRS® Training, PRC Funds, Multi vs. Single Vendor Environment, Read to Achieve and Charter Schools, Read to Achieve Diagnostic (Amplify), NC Early Learning Inventory, and Teaching Strategies GOLD® for Preschool
PLC Support for (K-5) LETRS® Training: Volume 1	This document includes structured guidance for coaches/administrators to lead PLCs around each Unit and Session in LETRS® (K-5) Volume 1. Each session includes: Overview of Learning, Bridge to Practice Review, and Application and Coaching for All.
LETRS® Early Childhood Conversations and Classroom Connections (PLC) LETRS® for Little Learners Webinar Part 1 LETRS® for Little Learners Webinar Part 2	<i>LETRS® for Little Learners: Conversations and Classroom Connections</i> is a guide for leaders in Early Childhood who are supporting implementation of LETRS® professional development. Sessions include: reflective conversations based on knowledge gained through LETRS® coursework, application of LETRS® coursework to classroom practice, and leveraging documentation and data to inform classroom instruction. Part 1 Notecatcher and Slide Deck Part 2 Notecatcher and Slide Deck
NC District Support Planning Document	This District Support Planning Document includes North Carolina district implementation responsibilities, LETRS® supporting information, and a scheduling template to support district implementation.
District & NC Pre-K Support Planning Document for Early Childhood	This District & NC Support Planning Document for Early Childhood includes North Carolina district implementation responsibilities, LETRS® supporting information, and a scheduling template to support district implementation.

Overview Volume 1 Overview Volume 2	These infographics provide an overview of the Science of Reading. Volume 1 includes the following sections: an overview, benefits, pedagogy, and moving forward. Volume 2 shines a spotlight on the two theoretical reading models, The Simple View of Reading and Scarborough's Rope.
Literacy at Home: Digital Children's Reading Initiative	The Literacy at Home webpages are home to easily accessible resources in the foundational areas of reading supported by the Science of Reading. Developed for each grade level, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, resources are available to support phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language. <i>Literacy at Home is required to be posted prominently on each district website by July 2022.</i>
From Amplify: Making the Shift Ebook	This resource from Amplify shares information about utilizing evidence-based practices.