

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Accelerating Early Literacy in Arizona: Phase 2

The following provides a policy framework to minimize learning loss for our youngest learners affected by the unprecedented disruptions and challenges of the pandemic and **accelerate progress toward closing the achievement gap in third-grade reading**. Implementation of *Move On When Reading* — the policy driving the first phase of Arizona’s early literacy plan — has resulted in steady improvements in K-3 reading. Building on this progress, these recommendations outline the next phase of our work. Informed by evidence-based, proven strategies that were key drivers of Mississippi’s impressive growth on the NAEP reading assessment — as shared during a three-day AZ-MS Literacy Leadership Learning Exchange — they reflect a **targeted approach focused on high-need schools serving the most struggling readers**.

1. Educator Capacity and New Teacher Prep. A key focus of Mississippi’s strategy was dramatically increasing the knowledge of educators and practitioners in the science of reading. Arizona has secured funding to take this crucial strategy to greater scale through the federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant — totaling \$20M over five years — to strengthen teacher preparation and provide professional development to schools with the highest percentage of disadvantaged struggling readers. Additional funding for Acceleration Academies — which leverage critical Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Funds — targets schools most impacted by COVID-19 to minimize learning loss.

	Implementation	Schools Served	Annual Budget
Year 1	CLSD Grant	180+	\$4M secured
	AZ Cares/Acceleration Academies		up to \$4.625M secured
Years 2-5	CLSD Grant	15-25 <i>subgrants</i>	\$4M secured

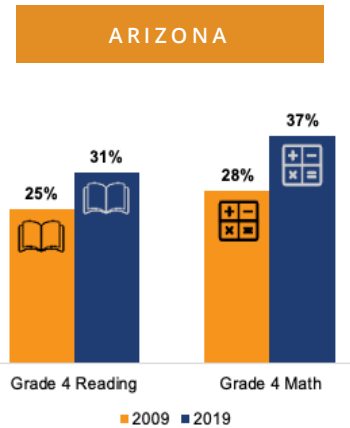
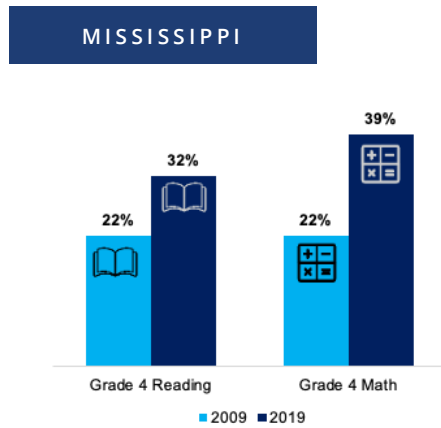
2. “Swarm” Literacy Coaching. Mississippi deployed master literacy coaches to their lowest-performing schools to provide PK-3 schools with intensive technical assistance to support, improve, and sustain effective teaching and literacy practices. Schools that received these intensive interventions demonstrated significant progress by the third year. To help close Arizona’s achievement gap among key student subgroups, additional funding is needed to deploy 75 regional literacy coaches — coordinated by ADE — to provide ongoing, evidence-based technical assistance in effective reading instruction at the lowest-performing schools (the bottom 10%, as identified by third-grade ELA assessment data, having a below-proficiency rate of 77% or higher.)

	Regional Coaches	Schools Served	Students Served	Annual Budget
Year 1	25	50	20,000	\$3.1M
Year 2	50	100	40,000	\$5.6M
Years 3-5	75	150	60,000	\$8.1M

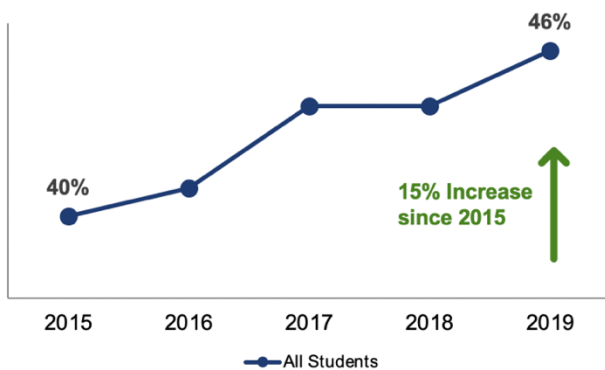
3. High-Quality Early Learning. Mississippi’s Early Learning Collaboratives Act expanded high-quality early childhood education programs in high-need areas and monitored progress with a standardized state kindergarten entry assessment to demonstrate school readiness for young learners receiving early literacy supports. Currently only 22% of Arizona’s 3- and 4-year-olds are in a quality early learning setting. Additional funding for access to high-quality early learning opportunities in high-need areas of Arizona is a critical driver for more children being ready to learn to read as they enter kindergarten and improving third-grade reading outcomes.

	Children Served	Annual Budget
AZ Early Childhood Block Grant	2,000 additional	\$20M ADE request
State Kindergarten Entry Assessment	80,000+	\$1.5M <i>fully funded by 2024</i>

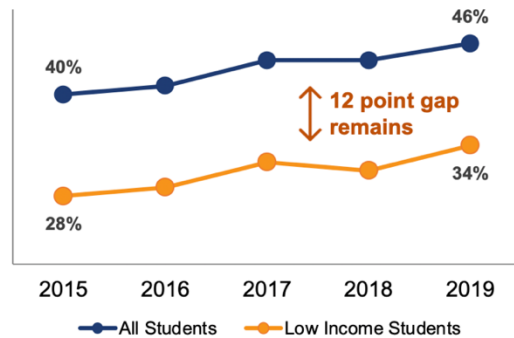
Data Behind Phase 2 Strategies



AZM2 3rd Grade ELA Passing Scores



AZM2 3rd Grade ELA Passing Scores No Decrease in Achievement Gap



#Ready4Phase2AZ

Phase 1 implementation of Move On When Reading focused on the heavy lift of improving early literacy for all AZ K-3 students. The improved results are evident by a 15% increase since 2015, but now, because of the pandemic, more students experienced a loss in early reading instruction than ever before. It means we will have much more to do to achieve our long-term goal for third-grade reading success: **90% proficiency for all students by 2030**.

Phase 2 Accelerating Early Literacy Outcomes calls for a targeted, tactical approach to scaling what works and providing effective supports where they're most needed so that eliminating the achievement gap becomes a reality in Arizona.



Read On Arizona is our state's early literacy initiative. Launched in 2013, partners in Read On Arizona take a collective impact approach to improving language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth to age eight, with strategic focus on school readiness and third-grade reading proficiency. Read On Arizona is a commitment among key stakeholders in education and philanthropy in Arizona to work together in coordination and alignment, share data, maximize investments, and take the strategic, comprehensive, collective approach required to drive large-scale change. Learn more at ReadOnArizona.org.