

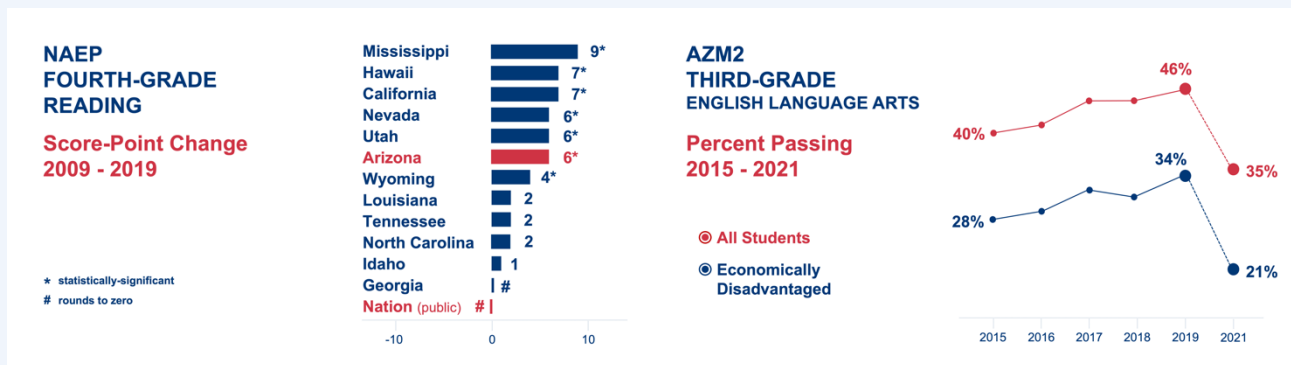


POLICY FRAMEWORK 2022

ACCELERATING EARLY LITERACY IN ARIZONA

Prior to the pandemic, Arizona was making steady progress in language and literacy outcomes. But our youngest students have experienced significant unfinished learning.

- From 2009 to 2019, Arizona was one of only seven states to show statistically-significant gains in fourth-grade reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- From 2015 to 2019, third-grade reading proficiency in Arizona increased from 40% to 46% (AzM2 ELA, all students).
- Third-grade reading proficiency dropped to 35% in 2021, and long-standing achievement gaps among economically-disadvantaged students grew even wider. (AzM2 was not administered in 2020 due to the pandemic.)



Partners in Read On Arizona developed this shared policy framework to accelerate progress in early literacy and third-grade reading in our state. In the wake of the pandemic, they reflect a strategic, targeted approach to **scaling what works** and providing effective supports where they're **most-urgently needed** — in economically-disadvantaged communities and schools with the most struggling readers. They also highlight the need to plan for the **long-term sustainability** of several key literacy initiatives currently funded with federal relief dollars.

1. Bring evidence-based literacy solutions to greater scale.

- Adopt the Arizona State Board of Education's recommendations on technical improvements to **Move On When Reading**, our state's K-3 reading policy. Proposed enhancements will improve implementation and strengthen comprehensive data collection to drive effective instruction at school and district levels and inform statewide policies.
- In September 2020, Arizona was awarded a federal **Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant**, totaling \$20 million over five years, to provide professional development for educators and high-quality language and literacy strategies to support our most-struggling readers in high-need communities; 750 educators and 13,000 students will be served. Now is the time to explore opportunities to bring these effective strategies to greater scale in the short term and secure sustainable funding for the long term.
- Support the successful implementation of Governor Ducey's **Summer Learning Camp initiative** to mitigate learning loss from the pandemic among Arizona public school students — prioritizing economically-disadvantaged students — with evidence-based curriculum in reading and math supported by trained educators/staff.

2. Build educator capacity in the science of reading.

Last year, as the first phase of our “swarm” literacy coaching plan, ADE began deploying 25 master literacy coaches to our lowest-performing schools (identified by third-grade ELA assessment data as having a below-proficiency rate of 77% or higher) to provide ongoing, evidence-based technical assistance to support, improve and sustain effective teaching and literacy practices. Launched with federal relief dollars, this model was part of a comprehensive set of new investments and policies — including a statewide **PK-5 literacy endorsement** and **teaching exam** — to strengthen professional development and teacher preparation in the science of reading across Arizona.

Now, we need to ensure future funding to scale up to 75 regional “swarm” coaches — and the number of schools, educators, practitioners and students to be served — to fully realize our five-year plan. (In Mississippi, schools that received these intensive interventions demonstrated significant progress by the third year; coaches then rotate to serve new schools and students.) Expectations for recruiting and hiring coaches are high, with strong interest in this important role among current master teachers and experienced educators in Arizona.

STATE FISCAL YEAR	LITERACY COACHES	SCHOOLS SERVED	STUDENTS SERVED	TOTAL BUDGET	FUNDING ALLOCATED	FUNDING NEEDED
2022 ¹	25	50	20,000	\$3.1M	\$3.1M ²	—
2023	50	100	40,000	\$5.6M	\$3.1M	\$2.5M
2024	75	150	60,000	\$8.1M	\$3.1M ³	\$5.0M
2025	75	150	60,000	\$8.1M	\$3.1M	\$5.0M
2026	75	150	60,000	\$8.1M	\$3.1M	\$5.0M

¹ First-year implementation delayed by lag in transfer of funds. ² Federal relief dollars through 2023. ³ State baseline funding in 2024-26.

3. Expand and sustain equitable access to quality early learning.

Develop an **early care and education strategic financing plan** to secure sustainable solutions — beyond the immediate three years of federal relief funding — to increase access to high-quality early learning opportunities in high-need areas of Arizona so that more young children are ready to learn to read as they enter kindergarten.

Current Arizona literacy initiatives funded with **temporary federal relief dollars** (ARPA) include:

- \$45M to expand **access to high-quality preschool programs in high-need areas**.
- \$47.2M for **professional development**, coaching and supports for early childhood providers in high-need areas, modelled on the “swarm” literacy coaching approach.
- \$74M to expand participation in **Quality First**, Arizona’s early learning quality rating and improvement system.
- \$4.5M for a state **kindergarten entry assessment** to monitor progress and demonstrate school readiness for young learners receiving early literacy supports; development of the assessment tool and professional development and training for practitioners is needed for successful implementation. (Part of state baseline funding starting in SFY24.)



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