

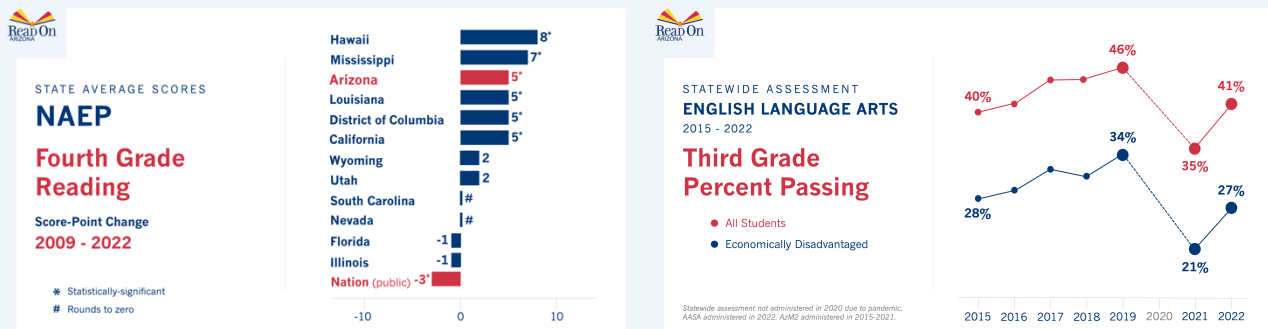


POLICY FRAMEWORK 2023

ACCELERATING EARLY LITERACY IN ARIZONA

From 2009 to 2022, Arizona was one of only five states to show statistically significant gains in fourth grade reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Third grade reading proficiency, measured by Arizona's statewide assessment, was improving steadily prior to the pandemic and rebounded in 2022, but long-standing achievement gaps persist.



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, these **priorities** 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 key literacy initiatives currently funded with federal dollars.

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

- Implement improvements to **Move On When Reading**, our state's K-3 reading policy administered by the Arizona Department of Education.
- Explore funding opportunities to sustain and expand strategies currently implemented through Arizona's **Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) federal grant**. Arizona is now in the third year of the \$20 million/5-year grant 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 (birth through grade 12) will be served.
- Support the continued development of a **state literacy hub** (Read On Arizona) focused on: sustaining an integrated population-level **data center** (MapLIT); developing a centralized literacy website for easy access to **best practices and literacy resources**; and promoting effective strategies for student re-engagement and reducing **chronic absenteeism**.

2. Build educator capacity in the science of reading.

Over the last few years, a comprehensive set of new investments and policies have been implemented to increase access to high-quality literacy instruction in our most in-need schools and communities. These include: a network of **literacy coaches**; targeted **professional development** for K-3 teachers and early learning providers; and a statewide **PK-5 literacy endorsement** and **teaching exam**.

Ensuring the continued, successful implementation of these strategies is critical to the success of Arizona's **five-year plan** to drive improved student outcomes. (In Mississippi, schools that received these types of intensive interventions and support demonstrated significant progress in the third year and beyond.)

These strategies were initiated with funding from federal relief dollars. Now, allocations need to be sustained as intended in **state baseline funding starting in SFY24**:

- **Literacy professional development:** \$1.0M
- **Teaching reading exam:** \$1.0M
- **Dyslexia training grants:** \$1.28M
- **KEA tool and training:** \$1.5M
- **Literacy coaching grants:** \$3.1M

3. Expand equitable access to quality early learning.

Arizona collaborated on a successful federal **Preschool Development Grant** application in 2022 and was awarded \$42M over three years to help more young children in high-need areas of Arizona be ready to learn to read as they enter kindergarten. The shared priorities and focus of the grant activities are: **language and early literacy**; strengthening **family engagement**; increasing **inclusive settings**; supporting the **ECE workforce**; and increasing the number of children participating in **high-quality early learning programs**.

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

- **High-quality early learning grants** (HQEL) for professional development and coaching for providers and to expand access to quality preschool in high-need areas.
- Expanding participation in **Quality First**, Arizona's early learning quality rating and improvement system for child care and preschool providers, administered by First Things First.
- A state **kindergarten entry assessment** (KEA) to monitor progress and demonstrate school readiness for young learners receiving early literacy supports.



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