Reading is the foundational skill for school success, impacting every aspect of academic achievement across all subjects. That’s why learning to read is a student’s most important educational challenge. But less than half of Arizona’s third graders read at grade level. It’s not their fault, it’s not right, and we know what to do about it.

Decades of research provides a clear understanding of how skilled reading develops and how to effectively support children, including struggling readers, in learning to read. And everyone agrees that we all benefit when our students have the literacy skills they need to be successful in school.

Launched in 2013, Read On Arizona is our state’s early literacy initiative. Partners in Read On Arizona have identified and are implementing the comprehensive set of strategies required to drive large-scale improvement in reading proficiency. From 2013 to 2022, Arizona was one of only six states to make gains in fourth grade reading (NAEP).

We’re on the right course, but there’s a lot more to do. And doing everything we can to help our children read at grade level is not optional.

"Read On Arizona brings partners together to focus on what works. Now we need to build on the momentum."

Steve Zabilski, President and CEO | Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust
Read On Arizona was launched from the urgent, fervent belief that Arizona had to do more to help our young children develop the literacy skills they need to be proficient readers and successful in school.

Our founding partners understood from the beginning that progress is made incrementally, with no quick fixes or magical solutions.

Ten years later, our collaborative efforts have transformed the literacy landscape in the state of Arizona.

We are in position for long-term success, with the comprehensive set of policies, strategies, and targeted investments needed to improve school readiness and third grade reading.

Like every other state, we lost ground through the pandemic. But what was true before remains true now — with the right support and instruction, the vast majority of our children can learn to read at grade level.

"Read On Arizona has made a huge, positive difference for our students and our state."
Sean Ross, Executive Director
Arizona State Board of Education

Core Functions
- Collaboration
- Data Sharing and Analysis
- Policy
- Sustainability
- Communication
- Capacity Building
- Literacy Expertise

Advisory Board
*Founding Partner
- Arizona Community Foundation*
- Arizona Dept. of Economic Security
- Arizona Dept. of Education*
- Arizona Office of the Governor
- Arizona State Board of Education
- Arizona State University
- The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation
- The Burton Family Foundation
- City of Phoenix / Read On Phoenix
- Eyes On Learning
- First Things First*
- Helios Education Foundation*
- Maricopa Association of Governments
- Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
- The Steele Foundation
- Valley of the Sun United Way
- Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust*
Official launch of Read On Arizona
Terri Clark appointed AZ Literacy Director
11 Read On Communities formed as part of statewide early literacy initiative
ROA publishes Early Literacy Guide for Families

2014

Arizona Literacy Director chairs K-3 Literacy Ad Hoc Committee convened by State Board of Education for literacy policy recommendations
ROA releases Factors Related to Early Childhood Literacy research brief
25 Read On Communities across Arizona

2016

Arizona awarded $4.4M federal grant for family engagement and literacy programs in high-need areas
ROA publishes Dyslexia Resource Guide for Families
6 Read On Communities receive specialized technical assistance as part of Acceleration Zone project

2018

ROA leads Arizona’s successful application for $20M federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant
ROA convenes Arizona-Mississippi learning exchange on policies and practices to accelerate reading outcomes

2020

Arizona 1 of only 6 states with gains in NAEP 4th grade reading scores from 2013-2022
ROA receives $2.8M in philanthropic investments over 3 years for expansion and sustainability of backbone functions
Arizona Dept. of Education makes $10M grant for Project CALL, funding 5 local literacy hubs and a statewide online resource center developed by ROA
ROA kicks off Arizona-Florida learning exchange

2022

Arizona received $2M federal CLSD supplemental grant
ROA convenes Arizona Chronic Absence Task Force
Moving Forward
Our shared goals are for 72% of Arizona’s third graders to be reading proficiently by 2030 and 90% by 2040. Reaching these goals requires a comprehensive, collective approach. No single strategy, program, or policy will get us there.

We need to prioritize early literacy in Arizona.
That means working together to take the bold action required to get better literacy outcomes faster:

1. Build educator capacity in the science of reading.
2. Provide the evidence-based instruction, interventions, and support that each student needs.
3. Give families the tools to support their children’s language and literacy development.
4. Expand access to high-quality early learning.

Our success is not guaranteed. Chronic absence has spiked to unprecedented levels, and many other challenges remain. We won’t reach our goals without the commitment to collaborate and coordinate our efforts. Let’s get on the same page.

"We look to Read On Arizona for the leadership and vision to drive change, reduce achievement gaps, and improve literacy in Arizona."
Paul J. Luna, President and CEO
Helios Education Foundation

Join the Collaboration
Learn more at ReadOnArizona.org
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Lori Masseur, Director of Early Learning
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