



MARYLAND STATE
BOARD OF EDUCATION

DRAFT Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy

Version 3, September 2024

Maryland State Board of Education

Stakeholder Engagement and Ongoing Revisions

Utilizing feedback from the Maryland State Board of Education (SBOE), the Literacy Advisory Panel, and over 1,200 comments of explicit feedback from the public comment period that ended on September 6th, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has revised the Draft Literacy Policy.

This second draft of the State Comprehensive Literacy Policy includes several revisions based on stakeholder feedback:

Feedback	Revisions Made to Draft Literacy Policy
Focus on Tier 1/Core Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on quality and purpose of core instruction • Defined Tier 1 instruction more clearly
Focus on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies explicit support for early intervention • Provides specific criteria for reading intervention programs for students in grades K-3
Shift to Asset-Based Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed deficit language and shifted to growth-minded language
Inclusion of All Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft policy supports all students in K-3
Clarification on Local School System Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates LEA policies for promotion and retention with MSDE guidance
Feature Parent/Guardian Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides multiple touchpoints to include parents in the educational process • Provided additional language on designated consent
Connection to Existing Regulation and Statute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to Read Act, COMAR 13A.08, §7-202 of Maryland’s Education Code
Timeline for Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A timeline is included regarding policy implementation

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I. Purpose

Since 2013, Maryland students have fallen from their ranking of third in the nation to forty-first according to the Grade 4 National Assessment of Educational Progress' Reading Assessment. This substantial gap in reading has profound implications on the academic success and future opportunities for our students, especially for those with reading deficiencies, students living in poverty, multilingual learners, and students of color. Therefore, the need for a statewide Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy is driven by the goal of providing equitable, effective, and evidence-based instruction to all students across the state of Maryland.

It is the intent of the General Assembly, the Maryland State Board of Education, and the Maryland State Department of Education that each student's progression from one grade to another be determined, in part, upon proficiency in reading; that local district school board policies articulate clear reading instruction and intervention services to address student reading needs, and that each student and his or her parent or guardian be informed of that student's reading progress.

The Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy is designed to ensure instructional equity, leading to increased literacy rates for all students across Maryland. This requires consideration for the unique needs of students engaging in early literacy development and those further developing and strengthening their literacy skills through adolescent literacy instruction. This effort will impact our communities' future social well-being, resulting in a more educated workforce, reduced poverty levels, and improved health outcomes for all students.

This policy aligns with and supports the Maryland State Board of Education's ambitious goal listed in SB 24-01 of improving outcomes for students from all backgrounds and, as a result, leading Maryland to rank as one of the top ten states in reading on the 4th and 8th grade NAEP exams by 2027.

II. Definitions

- A. “Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. Dyslexia can impact a student’s ability to display accurate and/or fluent word recognition. Students with dyslexia often display poor spelling and decoding abilities. Reading gaps caused by dyslexia typically stem from a delay in the phonological processing component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede vocabulary and background knowledge growth.” (Adapted from the International Dyslexia Association).
- B. “Dyslexia screening” assesses critical skills that are predictors of future reading success and helps to identify students who may have characteristics of dyslexia.
- C. “Educator Preparation Program” or “EPP” refers to any program based in an institution of higher education (IHE) that prepares individuals for licensure as elementary teachers, school leaders, or other school personnel.
- D. “Evidence-Based” means that the program or practice has been demonstrated to be effective through research. “Research-based” refers to the development or implementation of programs or practices that have been demonstrated to work through scientific studies, experiments, or academic research.
- E. “Good-Cause” Exemptions means students may be exempt from mandatory retention in 3rd grade for good cause but shall continue to be eligible to participate in reading camps and to receive instructional supports, services, and reading interventions appropriate for their age and reading level.
- F. “Instructional Equity” means cultivating the gifts and talents of every student to reduce the predictability of which students succeed and which fail, while interrupting practices that negatively impact all students (adapted from <https://keystoliteracy.com/blog/literacy-and-equity-in-education/>).
- G. “Intensive Support” refers to providing Tier III support for struggling students who are identified as needing the increased intensity and explicitness that constitutes Tier III instruction. Tier III should not be provided during core instruction time.
- H. “Literacy” is defined as the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, achieve goals, and develop knowledge and potential. It also involves the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in a way that allows people to communicate effectively and make sense of the world.
- I. “Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)” is a framework for supporting and increasing academic, behavioral, and social emotional outcomes for ALL students. MTSS provides opportunities for students that are experiencing reading challenges. MTSS supports shall address a student’s identified needs with varying intensity and durations. MTSS should not be viewed as a pathway to special education services. There are three tiers within the MTSS framework:
 - 1. Tier I – Tier 1 instruction is on-grade level, standards aligned general instruction. All students should receive Tier I instruction. It should occur within the core instructional block; be delivered in whole group or small group; and include direct and explicit instruction.

2. Tier II – Tier 2 support is in addition to core instruction and should be delivered in small groups. Supports should incorporate evidence-based approaches consistent with Tier 1 instruction.
 3. Tier III – Tier 3 provides interventions for students who are not showing growth on Tier 2 progress monitoring assessments. Supports must be diagnostic-based and direct and explicit instruction should be provided.
- J. “Reading Intervention” (also referred to as “supplemental instruction in reading” or “reading supports”) are evidence-based strategies that are frequently used to address reading challenges and include, but are not limited to, individual/small group instruction, multisensory approaches, tutoring, instructor-led, or the use of technology paired with face-to-face supports that target specific reading skills and abilities.
- K. “Science of Reading” refers to a body of research that encompasses various disciplines, including cognitive psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, and education, to understand how children learn to read. It provides evidence-based insights into the most effective ways to teach reading, particularly focusing on how the brain processes written language and how instruction can best support this process. The key components of the science of reading are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- L. “Structured Literacy” is an evidence-based approach to teaching oral and written language aligned to the science of reading. It is based on the science of how children learn to read and is characterized by explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- M. “System of Assessments” means a comprehensive assessment system that provides screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, formative, and summative assessments for use in an LEA. The system of assessments should be aligned to assess key indicators of future reading success including critical prerequisite skills.
- N. “Three-Cueing System” is any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, which may also be known as “MSV.” This system encourages children to guess and takes the students’ focus away from the word itself—lowering the chances that they will use the understanding of letter sounds to read through the word part-by-part and be able to recognize it more quickly the next time they see it.
- O. “Universal Screener” means an assessment that is administered three times per year (beginning, middle, and end) to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor reading outcomes. This assessment is typically brief and conducted with all students at a particular grade level to assess phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension as developmentally appropriate.

III. Policy Standards

A. SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS

1. Beginning in School Year 2024-2025, the Department shall provide professional learning for all general education, special education, multilingual learner teachers, administrators, and other staff who support literacy instruction for students in Pre- Kindergarten through 3rd grade to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to teach all students to read.
2. COMAR 13A.12.02 requires all applicants seeking initial licensure in early childhood education (Pre-K through 3rd grade), elementary education (grades 1-6), special education (birth through adult), and ESOL to demonstrate proficiency aligned with the science of reading.
3. Professional learning is required to be offered by the Local Education Agency (LEA) for administrators, classroom teachers, including special education, speech, and English language teachers as well as other key staff (content and program supervisors, coordinators, coaches, interventionists) on the system of assessments selected by school LEAs and approved by the Department to ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills to administer the assessment and analyze the collected data in a structured problem-solving model to inform instruction based on system and student needs.
4. Educator preparation programs are required to prepare candidates seeking licensure for elementary education and special education with training and instruction to:
 - a. Teach phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension effectively;
 - b. Implement reading instruction using high-quality instructional materials which do not include the three-cueing systems model ("guessing strategies") or leveled readers ("matching students to leveled-text");
 - c. Provide effective instruction and interventions for students with reading difficulties, including students with characteristics of dyslexia;
 - d. Understand and use student data to make instructional decisions including decisions about improving the effectiveness of classroom reading instruction in Tier 1 and intervention design in Tier 2 and 3;
 - e. Understand the negative impacts of the three-cueing systems model, how to identify it in curriculum or instructional material, and why it is a flawed model of teaching children to read; and
 - f. Pass a State Board-approved assessment for initial licensure which assesses the candidates' knowledge of the science of reading.
5. Coaching should be provided to support educators with the implementation of the science of reading:
 - a. School-based teacher training on evidence-based reading instruction and data-based decision-making to support the effectiveness of classroom reading instruction;

- b. Co-planning;
 - c. Co-teaching; and
 - d. Observations with timely feedback cycles for improving instruction.
6. Districts must report the number of general education teachers, special education teachers, multilingual learner teachers, and administrators in grades K-3 who have received foundational training in the science of reading during that academic school year by June 30 of each year.

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B. READING INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

1. Per the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the Ready to Read Act, and COMAR 13A.03.08, it is the ultimate goal of the General Assembly that every student read at or above grade level by the end of grade 3.
2. All K-3 students must receive Tier 1 literacy instruction, also known as core instruction aligned to the science of reading. Tier 1 instruction is defined as evidence-based, systematic, differentiated, and explicit instruction, and shall not include the three-cuing systems model of instruction. Tier 1 instruction also:
 - a. Address one or more of the five components of reading with an intentional focus on the identified area(s) driven by the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for Literacy/ELA;
 - b. Require assessment of each student's reading competency throughout the year that includes the types of assessments as outlined in Section III.B.5, below;
 - c. Utilize a scope and sequence that is delivered explicitly with judicious review, allowing for active and engaged students;
 - d. Be delivered within literacy blocks that are sufficient to deliver effective and comprehensive instruction: and
 - e. Be comprised of an adequate number of daily instructional minutes for literacy Tier I instruction. LEAs should consult with State Superintendent's Guidance regarding the number of minutes for Tier I literacy instruction.
3. All Pre-K students must receive instruction and curriculum that is aligned to the science of reading in accordance with the Maryland Early Learning Standards.
4. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) shall provide a vetted and approved list of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for LEAs to adopt. These materials must be aligned with the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards, grounded in scientifically based reading research designed to reduce the risk of reading failure. These materials shall:
 - a. Address the core components of foundational literacy;
 - b. Integrate culturally and linguistically sustaining practices; and
 - c. Not include the three-cueing systems model.
5. The system of assessments school districts use must include statewide universal screening (Education Article 4-136), dyslexia screening, and progress monitoring of student growth toward grade-level reading. Beginning in SY25-26, the system of assessments shall:
 - a. Include a MSDE vetted and approved universal screener to be administered three (3) times per year (fall, winter, and spring: beginning of year, middle of year, and end of year) to be used as a progress monitoring tool that:
 - i. Measures, at a minimum, phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; and

- ii. Serves as diagnostic tool to support teachers with targeting instruction based on student need.
 - b. Accurately and reliably identify students who demonstrate a reading difficulty and are at risk for poor learning outcomes.
 - c. Include a vetted and approved dyslexia screener to be administered to all students. The dyslexia screener should be administered annually during the spring of kindergarten and at the beginning of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades to identify students who may demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. The dyslexia screener must assess, as developmentally appropriate, all of the following foundational reading skills:
 - i. Phonological and phonemic awareness;
 - ii. Sound-symbol recognition;
 - iii. Alphabet knowledge;
 - iv. Decoding skills;
 - v. Rapid naming skills including letter naming and letter sound fluency;
 - vi. Encoding skills; and
 - vii. Oral reading accuracy and fluency.
- 6. In determining which assessments to approve for use by LEAs, the Department shall also consider, at a minimum, the following factors:
 - i. The time required to conduct the assessment, with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time;
 - ii. The professional development needed to administer, analyze the data, and develop instructional pathways; and
 - iii. The timeliness in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians.
- 7. Per the COMAR 13A.03.08 (Students for Risk for Reading Difficulties): Each K-3 student who exhibits difficulties in reading shall receive supplemental instruction aligned to their identified needs through multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) which include:
 - a. A proactive, school-wide framework for supporting and increasing academic, behavioral, and social emotional outcomes for ALL students with areas of concern;
 - b. Program-specific monitoring tools that LEAs should use to collect and analyze intervention data to make instructional decisions;
 - c. Opportunities for students who are experiencing reading challenges to be identified early, receive targeted intervention to support their needs, and have their progress closely monitored over time;

- d. Home partnerships with parents and caregivers as an integral part of the decision-making team; and
 - e. Supports that address a student's identified needs with varying intensity and duration across the three tiers.
 - f. Provisions such that student participation in any tier of this framework does not delay or deny a student who may be suspected of having a disability from the appropriate evaluation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
8. Each K-3 student who exhibits difficulties in reading shall receive supplemental instruction through a reading program aligned to the science of reading. The reading intervention program shall:
- a. Be provided in addition to core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom;
 - b. Be implemented during regular school hours and shall not impede students' access to Tier 1, grade-level aligned instruction;
 - c. Be provided to all K-3 students demonstrating a reading difficulty or who need supplemental instruction in reading. This includes students with the risk factors of dyslexia as determined by the Department-approved assessment administered within the first thirty (30) days of school; and
 - d. Be provided in an explicit, systematic, sequential manner, with cumulative instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable.

C. PARENT NOTIFICATION AND STUDENT READING IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SRIP)

1. Beginning in School Year 2025-2026, any student in grades K-3 who is identified as demonstrating difficulties in reading at any time, based upon the Department's vetted and approved assessment system, and any 4th-grade student promoted for good cause or after waived recommended retention shall receive a Student Reading Improvement Plan (in accordance with COMAR 13A.03.08) no later than 30 days after the identification of the reading difficulty and the identified area(s) of need.
2. The parent/guardian(s) of any K-3 student who exhibits a difficulty in reading at any time during the school year must be notified in writing no later than 15 days after the identification of the reading difficulty, and the family-friendly written notification must include the following:
 - a. An explanation that their child has been identified as having difficulties in reading;
 - b. A description of the current services provided to the child;
 - c. A description of the proposed evidence-based reading interventions and supplemental instructional services and supports that will be provided to the child that are designed to remedy the identified area(s) of reading deficiency;
 - d. An invitation to collaborate on the development of an individual reading improvement plan with the teacher, principal or designee, and other pertinent school personnel; and
 - e. Notification for the possibility of retention – if the child's reading issues are not remediated by the end of the grade level year, retention and other supports established by the LEA may be instituted.
3. The Student Reading Improvement Plan shall:
 - a. Be created by the teacher, principal or designee, and other pertinent school personnel in partnership with the parent/guardian(s);
 - b. Describe the evidence-based reading intervention program the student will receive to remedy the reading deficit;
 - c. Include the necessary frequency and intensity of interventions to remediate the identified areas of need and accelerate learning;
 - d. Meet the requirements for core instruction and reading interventions outlined in section B above;
 - e. Be reviewed and updated annually with the parent/guardian(s) if a student exhibits the need for a reading intervention;
 - f. Describe how each student will receive intensive reading intervention until the student no longer demonstrates difficulty in reading as determined by the LEA's approved system of assessment; and
 - g. Provide more intensified interventions to remedy specific area(s) of need and accelerate progress for any transfer or newly enrolled student identified with a reading difficulty.

D. DEMONSTRATED READINESS FOR PROMOTION

1. Grade 3 students must demonstrate adequate reading proficiency on the MSDE-adopted State English Language Arts Assessment to be designated for promotion to grade 4 (See MD Code, Education, § 7-202. Minimum levels of reading ability).
 - a. Upon recommendation from the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education will set the performance level for adequate reading proficiency.
 - b. Students will demonstrate the following to be designated for promotion to grade 4:
 - i. Scoring above the required performance level, indicating adequate reading proficiency on the grade 3 MSDE-adopted State English Language Arts Assessment to be designated, or
 - ii. Scoring above the required performance level on an MSDE-approved reassessment.
 - c. Screener results should not be used for promotion purposes.
2. The LEA may designate a grade 3 student for promotion to grade 4 who does not demonstrate adequate reading proficiency if they qualify for a good cause exemption.
 - a. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:
 - i. Students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan indicates participation in the Maryland Alternate Education Framework
 - ii. Students who have received less than two years of instruction aligned to World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards or who have demonstrated to be on track to meet the English language proficiency as measured by WIDA.
 - iii. Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide English Language Arts assessment and who have an Individual Education Plan or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive reading intervention for more at least 2 years, but still demonstrates a reading difficulty, or was previously retained for 1 year in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade.
 - iv. Students who were previously retained for 1 year in kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade. No student shall be retained more than once as a result of this policy.
 - b. A student who is designated for promotion to grade 4 with a good cause exemption shall continue to receive intensive reading intervention that includes specific reading strategies prescribed in the Student's Reading Improvement Plan (SRIP) until the student no longer demonstrates reading difficulty.
 - c. Requests to exempt students from the mandatory retention requirement using one of the good cause exemptions shall be made consistent with the following:

- i. The school principal shall determine whether a student qualifies for good cause exemptions. If the school principal determines that the student has met one of the good cause exemptions, the school principal shall make such recommendation in writing to the district superintendent or designee.
 - ii. The district superintendent or designee shall review and approve the school principal's recommendation in writing.
 3. A third grader who does not demonstrate adequate reading proficiency and does not qualify for a good cause exemption is designated for retention in third grade.
 - a. At the end of 3rd grade it is required that LEAs and schools provide notification of the designation for promotion or retention and the informed consent process to the student's parent/guardian(s).
 - b. A student's parent/guardian(s) must either consent to 3rd-grade retention or waive the retention designation and opt for promotion to 4th grade before the beginning of the subsequent school year.
 - c. In order to waive the designation for 3rd grade retention, a parent/guardian must agree to ensuring their student enrolls and participates in a supplemental reading support program provided by the LEA and approved by MSDE.
 - d. In the case that a school or LEA does not receive a final decision regarding 3rd grade retention from the parent/guardians, it is incumbent upon the school to continue reaching out to parent/guardian(s) through multiple means of communication, including but not limited to mail, email, phone calls, and home visits prior to the school year.
 4. All schools must provide family-friendly written notification to the parent/guardian(s) of all 3rd grade students including whether their student has been designated for promotion to 4th grade.
 - a. The notification must include an explanation of the student's current performance level in reading and reference to the required adequate reading proficiency level required for promotion to 4th grade.
 - b. If the student does not demonstrate adequate reading proficiency, the notification must also include:
 - i. Whether the child has been approved for a good cause exemption resulting in designation of promotion to 4th grade; and
 - ii. A summary of all parent notification related to reading difficulties and any interventions implemented in grades K through 3 according to the student's SRIP
 - c. If a student is not designated for promotion to 4th grade, the notification must inform the parent of the process, which includes:

- i. An invitation to meet to discuss the recommendation for 3rd-grade retention;
 - ii. A letter designating that the student will be retained in 3rd-grade;
 - iii. An explanation of the risks and benefits of both promotion and retention for a child who does not demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade.
 - iv. An MSDE approved list of supplemental reading support program options for the parent/guardian of the student to choose from such as specific summer school programs, before or after school tutoring, or other instructional supports.
 - v. A document that captures the parent or guardians' final decision to:
 - a. Consent to the designation of 3rd grade retention, or
 - b. Waive the designation for 3rd grade retention opting for 4th grade promotion and agreement to ensure the student participates and attends a supplemental reading support program.
5. Beginning in the 2026 -2027 school year, students retained in grade 3 must continue to receive intensive reading intervention to remedy the student's specific reading difficulty. Each LEA shall conduct a review of Student Reading Improvement Plans for all students retained. The review shall address additional supports and services, as described in this subsection, needed to remedy the identified area(s) of reading difficulty. The district shall provide the following for retained students:
 - a. Access to core instruction that is aligned to the science of reading. Additional time shall not impede students' access to Tier 1 or core instruction.
 - b. Reading intervention services and supports to address the identified area(s) of reading difficulty, including, but not limited to more dedicated time than the previous school year in scientifically evidence-based reading instruction and intervention.
 - c. Use of reading strategies and/or programs that are scientifically evidence-based and have proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within the same school year.
 - d. Daily targeted small group reading intervention based on student needs, including explicit and systematic instruction with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice, and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.
 - e. Frequently monitoring the reading progress of each student's reading skills throughout the school year and adjusting instruction according to student needs.
 - f. Before and/or after school supplemental evidence-based reading intervention delivered by a teacher or tutor with specialized training grounded in the science of reading.

- g. A “Read at Home” plan outlined in a parental contract, including participation in parent training workshops and/or regular parent-guided home reading activities which are aligned to scientifically based reading research.

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IV. Timeline for Implementation

Policy Component	Timeline
MSDE provides professional learning for Maryland educators and Literacy Coaches	Beginning School Year 2024-2025
MSDE provides LEAs technical assistance in designing MTSS model	Beginning School Year 2024-2025
MSDE releases the Student Reading Improvement Plan template and provides training on its use	Spring-Summer 2025
LEAs submit first annual report of the number of teachers who have participated in MSDE-approved Science of Reading professional learning programs	Beginning July 1, 2025
Implement K-3 Literacy Policy	Beginning the School Year 2025-2026 without retention requirements
LEAs must develop and report promotion policies to MSDE, that will go into effect in School Year 2026-2027	September 1, 2025
LEAs implement K-5 MTSS Model with MSDE support (which includes SRIPs)	Beginning School Year 2025-2026
MSDE provides technical assistance on promotion policies	Winter-Spring 2025-2026
Maryland State Board of Education reviews the policy implementation	July 2026
LEAs submit the first annual report on the district school board's policies and procedures for student promotion and retention if substantial changes are made	September 1, 2026
LEAs implement MSDE-approved universal screeners	Beginning School Year 2026-2027
Implement retention portion of Literacy Policy	Beginning School Year 2026-2027

V. Responsibilities

A. LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each LEA must annually report in writing to the Department of Education by September 1 of each year, the following information on the prior school year:
 - a. The number and percentage of all students not promoted in grades K-3 organized by grade level and student group;
 - b. The number and percentage of all students in grades K-3 performing below grade level on local assessments organized by grade level and student group;
 - c. The total number and percentage of students whose parents/guardians waived retention and agreed to another support offered by the LEA;
 - d. The proposed supports and interventions delivered for students who were promoted due to parent/guardian waiver;
 - e. By grade level and student group, the total number and percentage of students receiving evidence-based intervention based on the reported assessment(s) by grade level;
 - f. Any substantive changes made to the school board's district's policies and procedures for student promotion and retention;
 - g. The total number and percentage of students in grade 3 who were promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause as specified in previous sections; and
 - h. The total number and percentage of students in grade 3 who demonstrated sufficient reading skills for promotion on an MSDE-identified additional reading assessment.
2. LEAs are responsible for maintaining an updated list of all teachers who have received adequate professional learning in the science of reading as defined by MSDE.
 - a. By September 15 of each academic year, this list shall be submitted to MSDE.
 - b. Districts must ensure all general education teachers, special education teachers, multilingual learner teachers, and administrators in grades K-3 have training in the science of reading by September 1 of each school year.

B. MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. MSDE shall establish a uniform format for local education agencies to report the information required. The format shall be developed with input from local education agencies and shall be provided to each LEA no later than 90 days prior to the annual due date.
2. MSDE shall annually compile the information required along with state-level summary information and report such information to the Maryland State Board of Education, the public, the Governor, and the General Assembly by November 1 of each year.
3. MSDE shall provide technical assistance to aid local school boards in implementing the literacy policy developed by LEAs.
4. MSDE will provide examples of promotion policies for consideration.
5. MSDE will review the submitted promotion policies to ensure adherence to the requirements.
6. MSDE will develop a consistent system for parental request to waive retention.
7. The department shall provide technical assistance to LEAs around planning, scheduling, and identifying appropriate interventions for students at each grade band.
8. MSDE will create an MTSS Guidance document and professional learning series for administrators, ELA supervisors, and interventionists in grades K-3.
9. MSDE will provide sample parent notification letters, and a format for the Student Reading Improvement Plan (SRIP).
10. MSDE will develop an education/media campaign to increase families' and community stakeholders' knowledge about the importance of effective literacy instruction and science of reading practices from birth – 8th grade.

C. MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Maryland State Board of Education shall adopt regulations to implement the requirements of this section.
2. The Maryland State Board shall annually review the implementation of this policy including analysis of the following by district and student groups:
 - a. The number of students enrolled (K-3),
 - b. The number and percentage of students screened,
 - c. The number and percentage of students identified as at-risk for reading difficulty,
 - d. The number and percentage of students that received supplemental instruction, and percentage

- e. The number and of students demonstrating adequate reading proficiency
- f. The number and percentage of students who were promoted to grade 4 based on demonstrated reading proficiency, a good cause exemption, or by parent/guardian waiver
- g. The number and percentage of students who were not promoted to 4th grade.

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VI. References

A. Laws & Regulations

1. [Literacy Standards Regulation](#)
2. [Ready to Read Act \(SB 734\)](#)
3. [Ready to Read Regulations \(COMAR 13A.03.08\)](#)
4. [Maryland Blueprint Transitional Supplemental Instruction \(TSI\)](#)

B. Board Policies and Resolutions

1. [State Board Resolution 24-01 – Statewide Adoption and Implementation of the Science of Reading](#)
2. [Maryland College and Career-Readiness Standards for ELA](#)
3. [Maryland Early Learning Standards](#)

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Maryland State Department of Education Draft Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy Update

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Presented By | Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Tenette Smith, Executive Director of Literacy Programs and Initiatives





Presentation Outline

1. Summary of Feedback on Version 2 of the Draft Policy
2. Organization of the Draft Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy and Revisions to Version 3
3. Additional Information Based on Questions from the State Board

Summary of Revisions to the Draft Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy

Since July, MSDE received over 1,200 comments of explicit feedback on the initial draft literacy policy. The chart below summarizes the feedback to date.

Focus on Tier 1/Core Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on quality core instruction • Defined Tier 1 Instruction more clearly
Focus on MTSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides specific criteria for reading intervention programs for grades K-3
Shift to Asset-Based Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed deficit language and shifted to growth-minded language
Inclusion of <u>All</u> Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft policy supports all students in K-3
Emphasis on Local Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates LEA policies for promotion with MSDE guidance
Feature Parent/Guardian Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides additional language on designated consent
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Organization of the Draft Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy and Revisions

Section I: Purpose	Section II: Definitions
Explains the overall rationale and purpose of the policy.	Defines the major concepts included in the policy.
<p>Revision for V2: Inclusion of the importance of grade level promotion based on proficiency and the need for early intervention.</p>	<p>Revision for V2: Clarified the definitions and expectations of Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), the science of reading, and Structured Literacy.</p>
<p>Revisions for V3: None</p>	<p>Revisions for V3: Revised the definition of "dyslexia" to reflect more asset-based language and added additional clarifying language to define Tier 1 instruction.</p>

Section III: Policy Standards

A. System of Support for Educators	B. Reading Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention	C. <u>Parent Notification and Student Reading Improvement Plan (SRIP)</u>	D. Demonstrated Readiness for Promotion
Prepare teachers with the tools that are needed to be effective teachers of literacy.	Clarity on the expectations of world class literacy instruction in Maryland.	Accountability for LEAs to document and deliver necessary instructional supports.	Explicit criteria that students must meet to be promoted from one grade to the next.
<p>Revisions for V2: Included more details on universal and dyslexia screeners.</p>	<p>Revisions for V2: Emphasis on Tier 1/Core Instruction.</p>	<p>Revisions for V2: Emphasis on family partnership in the development/review of SRIPs.</p>	<p>Revisions for V2: Revision to emphasize local control by mandating LEA policies for promotion with MSDE guidance.</p>
<p>Revisions for V3: Clarified the effective dates of COMAR 13A.12.2.</p>	<p>Revisions for V3: Restructured to include Assessments and align language. Included language to ensure that students are not denied access to evaluation for Special Education services.</p>	<p>Revisions for V3: Revised structure for better flow and alignment. Revised language to include designation of consent for promotion or retention.</p>	<p>Revisions for V3: Added clarifying language to ensure students with disabilities are held to the same standards and revised the parent waiver option to inform parents of risks</p>

POLICY REVISION: Additional Guidance for Parental Consent

Families of any student who has been identified as qualifying for retention must be notified no later than 15 days after the decision has been made by the LEA . The notification must provide:

- **An explanation for why the child has not met the reading level performance required for promotion;**
- If applicable to the LEA’s promotion policy, the reason the child is not eligible for a good cause exemption;
- A description of the proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remedy the identified area(s) of reading difficulty in the retained year;
- **An explanation of the risks and benefits of both promotion and retention for a child who does not demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade.**
- **A document that captures the parent or guardians’ final consent for the grade level designation; and**
- An MSDE approved list of supplemental reading support options the LEA will offer in lieu of retention for the parent/guardian of the student to choose from such as specific summer school programs, before or after school tutoring, or other instructional supports.

Additional Information: Universal Screener Assessments Currently in Use in Maryland

Universal Screener Assessment	Number of Local Education Agencies Using the Screener
DIBELS	16
I-Ready	7
Acadience Reading	2
NWEA MAP Fluency	2
MWEA MAP Growth	1
Amira	1

Please note, some LEAs report using a different screener for different populations of students. (For example, they may use Acadience for Kindergarten students and I-Ready for students in Grades 1-3.)

Questions and Discussion