



**Move On When Reading
Annual Report
2025**

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Section I: Executive Summary

The Move On When Reading (MOWR) legislation is designed to identify struggling readers and to provide them with specific, targeted interventions so they are reading at or above grade-level by the end of 3rd grade. The Move On When Reading team is comprised of members from the larger English Language Arts team. This MOWR/ English Language Arts team provides a plethora of professional learning, resources and technical support to educators and families across Arizona. This team has worked in tandem to create this annual report, which details the major elements of the program, provides a description of the activities undertaken by the Arizona Department of Education's MOWR team to improve kindergarten through 3rd grade literacy across the state, highlights the MOWR team's literacy partnerships with stakeholders, and provides national, statewide, and school/district level data.

Contact Information

For further information on MOWR, please contact the ADE MOWR team.

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Early Identification and Targeted Intervention Lead to Grade-level Reading

Section II: Move On When Reading: An Overview

Purpose of the Legislation

The Move On When Reading (MOWR) legislation is designed to identify struggling readers and to provide them with specific, targeted interventions so they are reading at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade. There is a heightened emphasis on early literacy practices in kindergarten through 2nd grades.

The MOWR team consists of employees funded by MOWR funds as well as other members of the English Language Arts team who are funded by other grant and legislative funding sources. Throughout this report, the term MOWR team refers to the complete team whose focus is supporting local education agencies in the design and implementation of a continuous improvement model in the form of a literacy plan. Literacy plans should be developed at a school level with school leadership to focus on specific literacy needs and plans for the school year in consultation with lead teachers and other stakeholders who together make the school literacy leadership team. This plan is a part of a continuous improvement plan connected to school and district improvement cycles as well as strategic plans. This literacy plan should be developed and thoughtfully designed based on current staff, students, and data. Each school literacy plan is reviewed by the LEA literacy leadership team to ensure that practices are aligned with the Science of Reading.

Although this literacy plan and beginning-of-the-year universal screening data are due to ADE on or before October 1st each year, the Move On When Reading team supports schools throughout the year with a variety of tasks including curriculum adoptions, MTSS guidance, site-level professional development, budget spending decisions and other needs as expressed by schools. Additionally, there are two more submissions of universal screening data throughout the year, which allows the MOWR team to provide additional check-ins and ongoing support.

History of the Legislation

The MOWR legislation was passed in 2010 and fully implemented in 2013 to support early literacy for all kindergarten through 3rd grade students across the state. The legislation allots approximately \$46 million per year to be disseminated amongst all public schools with kindergarten through 3rd grade students. On average, schools in the state receive approximately \$150.00 per kindergarten through 3rd grade student each year that is dedicated to improving early literacy.

The program was administered by the Arizona State Board of Education until 2015. During that time, the Arizona State Board of Education received \$1.5 million each year to administer the program. In October of 2015, the Arizona State Board of Education transferred responsibility

for the MOWR program to the Arizona Department of Education. Since that transition, the Arizona Department of Education receives \$500,000 per year to administer the program. The MOWR team at the Arizona Department of Education provides technical assistance on early literacy to more than 1,300 elementary schools in Arizona.

Requirements of the Legislation

Move On When Reading legislation facilitates a multi-tiered system of supports by providing all public schools with kindergarten through 3rd grade students with a systematic and comprehensive approach to literacy. The systematic approach addresses core instruction, assessment, strategic interventions, data collection, retention, and the appropriate use of funds to improve literacy. The components of MOWR are found in A.R.S. § [15-211](#), [15-701](#), and [15-704](#). These statutes contain the following requirements:

- The use of an evidence-based core reading program that addresses all pillars of early literacy: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension
- The use of evidence-based intervention programs for Tier II (At Risk), Tier III (Significantly At- Risk), and Special Education students
- The use of a comprehensive literacy assessment system to evaluate and monitor student progress in reading to include Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener, Diagnostic(s), Progress Monitor(s), Benchmark, and Summative Assessments
- The implementation of an ongoing professional development plan to improve instruction based on reading research
- Required parental notification of a student's area of struggle, the interventions being implemented at school, and strategies to be used at home
- The retention of a student who fails to meet the cut score on the reading portion of the statewide assessment and does not meet one of the four good-cause exemptions
- The implementation of multiple interventions for students who are retained
- The use of MOWR funds for the improvement of kindergarten through 3rd grade literacy

Other legislative actions brought additional changes to the literacy landscape in Arizona. These changes include requiring the screening of all kindergarten and 1st grade students for characteristics consistent with Dyslexia. These screening measures have been embedded within the universal literacy screening already taking place on each campus three times per school year. A list of approved tools has been published and is reviewed annually to make certain products continue to meet the requirements of the legislation.

Additionally, legislation requires each public-school campus that serves kindergarten through 3rd grade students to assign one kindergarten through 3rd grade teacher, or one K-3 Literacy Coach, or one K-3 Literacy Specialist as the Dyslexia Training Designee (DTD). The DTD is

required to participate in training courses focused on reading instruction, intensifying reading instruction, and understanding and recognizing dyslexia from a list of approved trainings that meet the legislative criteria. Each year, schools will identify their DTD and provide training documentation as a part of their annual MOWR literacy plan submission.

To further increase the foundational literacy knowledge of all educators who impact literacy growth in Arizona, recent legislation also requires that all current kindergarten through 5th grade teachers who teach literacy acquire the K-5 Literacy Endorsement by 2028. All pre-service teachers exiting teacher prep programs will also need this new endorsement by 2025. To meet the requirements of this endorsement, teachers will need to have completed 90 clock hours or two university courses (6 credits) along with passing the State Board adopted literacy assessment. Through an RFI process, vendors and educational organizations submitted training sessions that would meet the criteria. Those that meet all the criteria have been added to a list for educators to make selections for training. The list of approved trainings includes both virtual and in-person options.

With the support of AIM Institute, an external partner, the MOWR team has created coursework in the OnDemand Academy that meets the criteria for the required 90 clock hour training. The OnDemand course is offered at no cost to Arizona educators. Additionally, the cost for Arizona educators to take the State Board adopted literacy assessment has been waived for the first attempt.

Impact of Early Literacy

Literacy is key to a full and successful adult life. The demands of the twenty-first century economy call for strong reading comprehension skills more than ever before. MOWR focuses on the use of valid and reliable literacy assessments to identify a student's specific area of struggle with reading so that evidence-based strategies can be implemented immediately for any student not on target to read at or above grade level. The earlier a student's area of struggle is identified, the more successfully it can be remedied with targeted interventions. Reading scores in Arizona have steadily increased since 1998. However, less than half of Arizona third graders are proficient readers. Like every other state, Arizona lost ground through the pandemic, and only 36% of the state's 80,000+ third graders passed the most recent statewide ELA assessment.

It is important to understand the impact that early literacy instruction has on a student's future as Lesnick, Joy, et al. have reported (2010):

- 70% of inmates in prison cannot read above a 4th grade level
- 85% of juvenile offenders have difficulties with reading
- 88% of high school dropouts were struggling readers in 3rd grade

- Students who are reading below grade level at 3rd grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school
- High school dropouts are not eligible for 90% of jobs.
- African American and Hispanic students who are reading below grade level at 3rd grade are six times less likely to graduate from high school
- Low-income minority students who are reading below grade level at 3rd grade are eight times less likely to graduate from high school
- Nationwide, low-literate adults struggle to earn a living wage, participate in the democratic process, and manage their family's health and finances.

Clearly, the consequences of reading below grade level negatively impact a child's future. However, early identification and targeted intervention, as called for in the MOWR legislation, can help each child learn to live a rich, literate life. In fact, **85-90% of struggling readers can grow to read at grade level with the appropriate interventions implemented before the 3rd grade.**

Early Literacy

As part of A.R.S. [§15-704](#), the MOWR team is available to assist all LEAs in the review, adoption, and implementation of curriculum, as needed. The curricular materials include those designed for core literacy instruction and materials designed to support intervention. Each type of curricular tool has specific legislative requirements.

A comprehensive core literacy system includes systematic, direct, and explicit instruction based on the Science of Reading that includes the five pillars of early literacy. In addition to the 5 pillars, Arizona requires oral and written language, spelling, and handwriting. This visual clarifies how all the elements of literacy support one another and are intertwined.

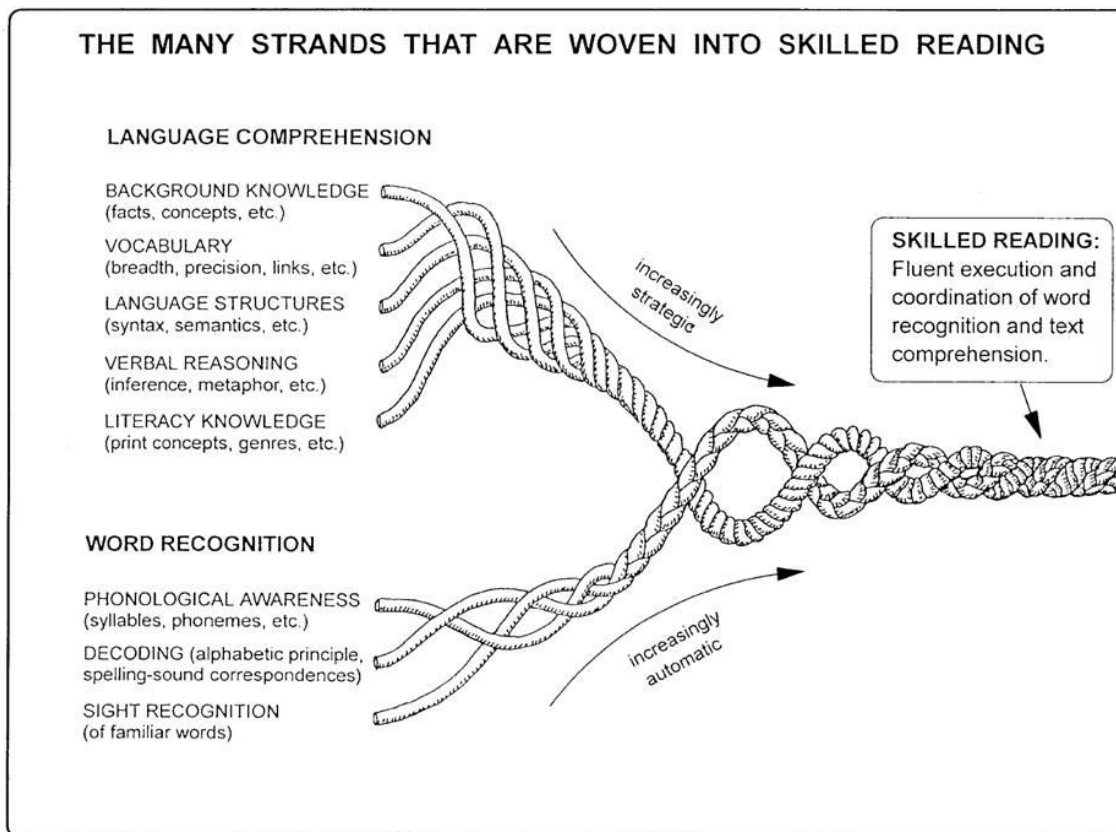


Image Credit: The image, courtesy of the author, originally appeared in the following publication: Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), Handbook for research in early literacy (pp. 97–110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

- Phonological Awareness: A global awareness of large chunks of speech, such as syllables, onset and rime, and sounds at the phoneme level
- Phonics: Study of the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent
- Fluency: The ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension. Fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, so they can focus their attention on the meaning of the text.
- Vocabulary: The words that one must understand to comprehend what is being heard or read
- Comprehension: The ability to make meaning from a text, to accurately understand the information presented
- Oral Language: Skills related to speaking and listening which are the foundation of reading and writing.
- Written Language: The written form of communication that requires an understanding of language use as well as reading and writing skills.

In addition to these reading elements, Arizona legislation requires core literacy programs to teach all the English Language Arts Standards and meet the ESSA requirements that show students are positively impacted by the product or tool at one of ESSA's identified top three tiers. A strong core reading program paired with direct and explicit instruction should meet the needs of at least 85% of students in learning to read.

To support schools in the process of reviewing literacy materials, the ADE MOWR team provided additional guidance to LEAs in the form of a vetted list of materials that meet the three main criteria of the law; the core is aligned to Arizona ELA Standards, specifically teach the key elements of reading; and meet the top 3 tiers of ESSA expectations. The result was three documents with lists of products that meet the criteria of the law for core reading, one for intervention, and one for supplemental core reading materials. While not exhaustive, these documents are continually updated and have supported LEAs in the selection and use of high-quality curriculum based on their need. Their understanding of legislative requirements and the nuances of ESSA expectations has also deepened in the process. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each school's leadership and literacy team to ensure curriculum in use continues to meet the highest standards.

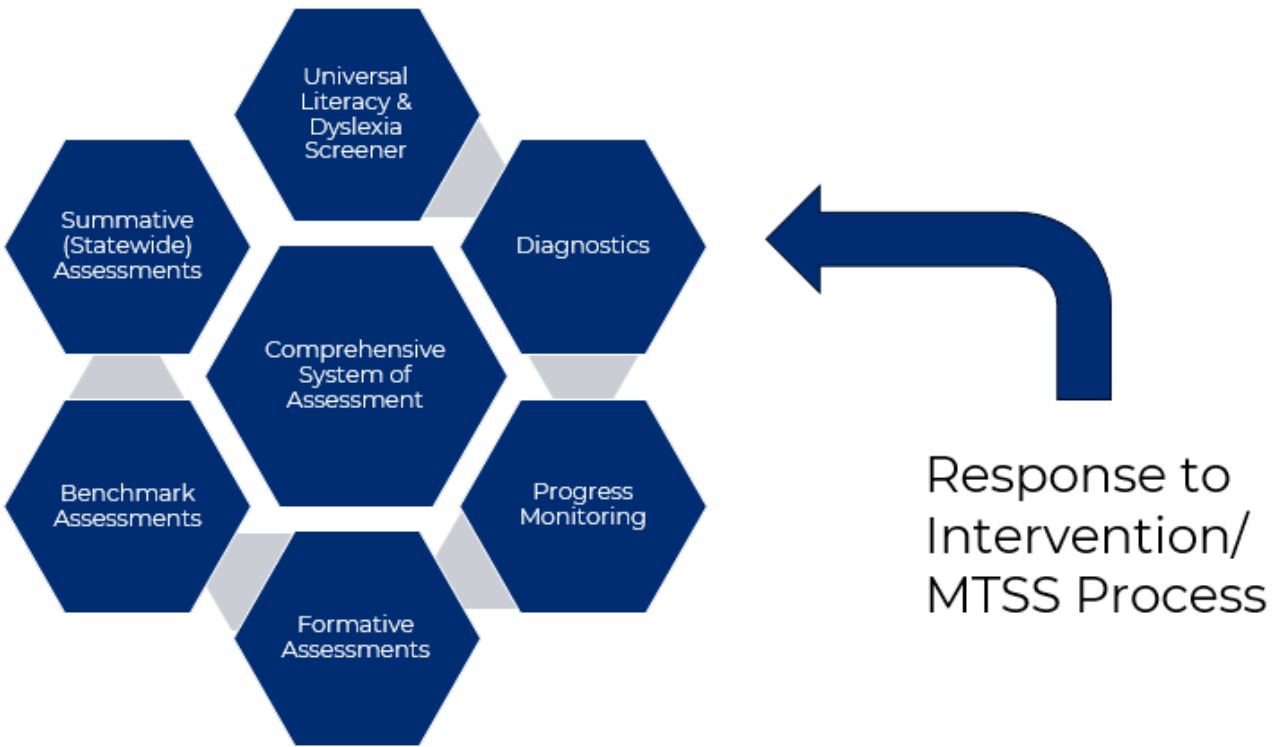
Comprehensive Assessment System

A [comprehensive assessment system](#) supports literacy achievement by providing data to inform decisions at the student, classroom, district, and statewide level. MOWR requires the following literacy assessment tools to identify need and monitor the progress of students who struggle with reading in kindergarten through 3rd grade. The MOWR team supports schools throughout the entire assessment process and in determining next steps of intervention for the needs identified.

- **Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener:** Brief tests specifically related to early literacy indicators administered to every student at specific times (within the first 45 calendar days of school and two other times per year, depending on tool) to identify students who are likely to struggle to acquire basic reading skills. Due to Dyslexia legislation passed in 2019, dyslexia screening measures have been embedded within the 10 approved tools that schools may use. Guidance for Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screeners, along with the approved list of tools is available on the [ADE Dyslexia Page](#).
- **Diagnostic Assessments:** Targeted tests administered to students below benchmark on the universal literacy and dyslexia screener used to gather skill-

specific information to target intervention. Guidance for diagnostic assessments can be found on the [MOWR for Administrators](#) website.

- **Progress Monitor:** Brief assessments used continuously to monitor struggling readers to determine the impact of specific interventions on student mastery of specific skills and to adjust instruction in response to student need.
- **Formative Assessments:** Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners.
- **Benchmark Assessments:** Standards-based assessments (typically district created or provided with core curriculum) administered periodically during the school year (usually once per quarter or at the end of a unit) to supply teachers with individual student data aligned to specific standards.
- **Summative Assessment:** An end of year or end of course test, such as Arizona's statewide end of year assessments, used to evaluate the effectiveness of a program.



Section III: Arizona Department of Education Activities to Support K-3 Literacy

The Arizona Department of Education’s Move On When Reading team provides year-round professional development, technical assistance, guidance documents, and serves in an advisory capacity to support K-3 literacy across the state. Providing on-going training and support to almost 1,400 schools is the essence of the MOWR team. This support is manifested in real time technical support, guidance for literacy plans, legislative expectations, professional learning, curriculum adoption, and much more. The team is ready to support LEAs in any way possible to support improved literacy instruction across the state.

Professional Learning

Professional learning opportunities are critical in impacting educator knowledge and understanding of reading elements, reading processes, brain research and best practice. The MOWR team strives to provide relevant training in a variety of modes to meet the needs of educators in Arizona. We are pleased to present a variety of modes of learning including asynchronous courses, videos, webinars, face-to-face presentations, and guidance documents with most learning opportunities available at little to no cost to educators. In the past year, the MOWR team has had over 6,000 participants in the variety of learning sessions offered.

Reading Fundamentals OnDemand Academy

The [Reading Fundamentals OnDemand Academy](#) provides literacy related asynchronous training for educators at no cost. The courses developed span the k-12 continuum and are intended to be facilitated by school literacy leaders and completed with a team as a collaborative, shared learning experience. With the courses fully available online, educators can access them when they need them, without the need for substitutes, travel, or other costs. The MOWR team has added a course that teaches literacy practices and foundational literacy skills aligned with the science of reading and interventions to improve student reading proficiency for struggling readers, including students with characteristics of dyslexia. Many of these courses, when bundled together, will also meet the training requirements of the Dyslexia Training Designee and new K-5 Literacy Endorsement.

Since the launch of the OnDemand Academy in summer of 2021, there has been a huge response that validates the need for more of these learning opportunities. Since 2021, more than 4,600 participants have registered for the available courses, with approximately 55% of those participants completing the course with 80% or better on the final knowledge inventory. Participation and completion have risen due to the acquisition of AIM Institute's Pathways to Proficient Reading and Pathways to Structured Literacy coursework for the OnDemand Academy. These courses introduce the Science of Reading to educators and meet the course criteria for the K-5 Literacy Endorsement. These courses were made available in the OnDemand Academy beginning March 2024. Since that date, 1,800 Arizona educators have enrolled in this course. The MOWR team is excited about the response thus far and are aware of several school districts and charter schools using the OnDemand Pathways course as part of their professional learning plan. Participants that have completed the Pathways course have provided positive feedback on the course experience and learning.

“Thank you so much for all your support. This training has been incredible, and I've learned so much from it. I've already started using some of the materials with my students and noticed a positive change in their learning skills. I truly appreciate you and the team who made this possible for Arizona students. I wanted to share that, thanks to the strategies I learned, two of my four-year-old students began reading before fall break, and today, one of my dyslexic students could respond to all questions during progress monitoring. 'Thank you' doesn't seem enough for everything you've done for this training.”

“This experience has been incredible. When I began the program, I had little to no knowledge of the material, but it has greatly increased both my confidence and my skills as a teacher. I'm now even leading presentations at my school to share what I've learned about interventions with other teachers. The program was truly valuable. My

only suggestion would be to allow continued access to the documents and videos after the course ends, as they would be wonderful resources to revisit.”

“This was an EXCELLENT course! I feel refreshed and ready to incorporate what I have learned in my reading instruction. The layout of this course was very user friendly, especially someone like myself who gets frazzled with technology at times. I enjoyed the discussion posts at the end of the modules, because it gave me a chance to reflect and share my thoughts. I also find the textbook for this course very valuable! I am truly excited for this school year and feel my reading instruction just got a major boost! Thank you very much for this course!”

“My learning experience with this course was valuable and informative. I appreciated the clear structured approach that broke down the concepts into manageable steps at our own pace. The focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, and explicit instructional strategies gave me practical tools that I can immediately apply in my classroom when I return after summer break. I also like the combination of theory and real-life application examples which made the content more meaningful. I feel much more confident supporting my students foundational reading skills, and this training has strengthened my ability to provide targeted effective interventions, thank you for providing such a comprehensive and engaging learning opportunity!”

Office Hours

The experiences with COVID-19 offered many new learning opportunities for all educators, including the MOWR team. Soon after school closures in March 2020, the Academic Standards Unit began offering regular office hour sessions coordinated by each content area for educators across the state. The MOWR team used office hours to share current information, update educators on new legislation and provide ongoing guidance and support specific to literacy. It proved to be a useful and important time to learn about the needs and challenges facing educators with opportunities to share and learn collaboratively. Due to the successful and collaborative nature of these sessions and positive feedback from participants, ELA office hours have continued monthly and will continue moving forward. In addition to ELA office hours, MOWR office hours were added in 2023 for educators who have questions and/or need support with literacy plan writing, literacy and data submission guidance, and portal navigation assistance. Most recently, throughout the months of July, August, and September of 2025 the MOWR team provided ongoing training on the new MOWR portal. With assistance from ADE’s IT team, the MOWR team provided training, answering questions from the field, and provided in the moment technical assistance.

Book Studies

Book studies provide educators the opportunity to connect with one another in a virtual space to share learning provided within a predetermined text. Educators come together to share their thoughts on the text as well as related strategies and practices. In the past year, six books were shared with educators, covering the topics of reading instruction across K-12, dyslexia, interdisciplinary literacy in secondary, and reading interventions across K-12. Response continues to exceed expectations, and the participation numbers continue to grow even as new titles are shared. Interestingly, on all final surveys, 70% or more of responders share they prefer the virtual format and would not participate if the book study was conducted in person.

Recent Book Study Titles:

- *Literacy Foundations for English Learners* (2020) by Elsa Cardenas-Hagan
- *Overcoming Dyslexia* (2020) by Shaywitz, S. E., & Shaywitz, J.
- *Literacy Intervention in the Middle Grades: Word Learning, Comprehension, and Strategy Instruction, Grades 4-8* (2022) by Flanigan, K and Hayes, L, et al.
- *Better Conversations: Coaching Ourselves and Each Other to Be More Credible, Caring, and Connected.* (2015) by Jim Knight
- *The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Instruction in All Subjects* (2022) by Sedita, J and Hasbrouck PhD, J.
- *Thinking Reading: What Every Secondary Teacher Needs to Know About Reading.* (2019) by Murphy, J and Murphy, D.

Science of Reading Webpage

To make certain educators have access to the most current and relevant literacy research and information, the MOWR team has created and curated a [Science of Reading Webpage](#). The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. (The Science of Reading: A Defining Movement Coalition, 2021). The webpage shares the latest information from researchers and literacy experts to include videos, info graphics, cognitive models, relevant books and articles, support for English language Learners, podcasts, tools for administrators, and more. The goal in developing this page is to provide a plethora of information in a single space to support educators.

Guidance Documents and Videos

To facilitate understanding of Move On When Reading policies and to assist schools with providing early identification and targeted interventions for struggling readers, the MOWR team develops guidance documents along with support videos and disseminates them directly to all Arizona MOWR contacts throughout the year. Support videos are short videos that walk school leaders through the processes for completing the MOWR Literacy Plan and data submissions.

All support videos and guidance documents can be found by all stakeholders on the [Move On When Reading](#) page of the ADE website.

These MOWR resources provide guidance on early literacy, best practices in literacy instruction, information about cognitive development, dyslexia, MOWR legislation, MOWR requirements, use of MOWR funds, and submitting MOWR Literacy Plans, among other literacy topics.

Funding for Professional Learning

From 2013-2015, the State Board of Education allotted \$500,000 to the ADE solely to facilitate the delivery of literacy trainings across the state, retaining \$1,000,000 for the administration of the Move On When Reading legislation. When full responsibility of the MOWR program was transferred to the ADE, \$500,000 was allotted for both the delivery of trainings and the administration of the MOWR program. This reduction in funding significantly reduced the number and types of trainings offered. The transition to the Reading Fundamentals OnDemand Academy provides free learning opportunities to participants while keeping course development and administrative costs down for the MOWR team. Securing additional funding will enable the MOWR team to expand its capacity by developing and supporting new content and courses, while maintaining rigorous oversight of existing offerings through ongoing monitoring, grading, support, and continuous improvement

In December 2024, the State Board of Education approved a list of recommendations provided by the Early Literacy Subcommittee, who spent months investigating and analyzing the current state and need of Arizona's literacy initiatives. The recommendations included 13 items for the Arizona Department of Education, specifically the ELA/MOWR team. The subcommittee also prioritized three high leverage recommendations:

1. Literacy Coach in every K-5 school by 2028
2. All K-5 teachers trained in the Science of Reading by 2028
3. All schools that serve K-3 students are using high-quality instructional materials by 2026

Additionally, the Early Literacy Subcommittee provided the Arizona Department of Education with several recommendations on training, guidance, and resource development needed for early literacy. The MOWR team has implemented the following recommendations in 2025:

1. Provide state-level professional development, resources, and guidance for K-3 schools and educators detailing the effective selection and use of diagnostic assessments as part of the MOWR balanced-assessment system;
2. Provide state-level professional development, resources, and guidance for K-3 educators illustrating best practices in building comprehension skills;

3. Facilitate communities of practice for MOWR for different types of schools (charter, urban, rural, high-performing, and in need of support);
4. Provide state-level professional development, resources, and guidance for K-3 schools and educators illustrating how to effectively analyze and act upon student subtest data from valid literacy assessments to improve student achievement in reading;
5. Continue to build on its provision of state-level professional development, resources, and guidance for K-3 schools and educators detailing evidence-based practices in effective Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction;
6. Make public for schools its rubric and process for evaluating evidence-based K-3 reading curricula for both core reading and intervention programs;
7. Develop and provide training, guidance, and resources related to ways that LEAs can efficiently meet the instructional reading requirements of both the Language Development Approach for English language learners and the requirements for MOWR;
8. Produce guidance on the braiding of multiple funding sources to support early literacy in the P-3 space.

With these additional responsibilities, securing additional funding for early literacy in Arizona is imperative to effectively administer and oversee the implementation of the recommendations. Adequate funding must be a top priority to ensure effective implementation and impact on student success.

Arizona Literacy Road Show

In June 2025, the ELA Team conducted four day-long trainings based on the science of reading. These trainings occurred in Tempe, Yuma, Coolidge, and Flagstaff. This year, educators participated in comprehensive whole-group training complemented by targeted cohort sessions designed to address the distinct needs of K–2 teachers, 3–5 teachers, 6–12 teachers, and school leaders, including administrators and principals. The Literacy Road Show well-received, and the ELA team had great feedback from these events. Comments from participants included:

“I have my Reading specialist endorsement and have been a reading specialist but now have moved to admin and have been a Director of Spec Ed for the past 10yrs. I have learned so much from this training - one of the most important is that moving a school’s teaching team to be teaching all the SOR core concepts as a unified front is the most effective yet challenging part. This will take a team - not just one person. Our teachers will need coaching and openness to move in the same direction. I also want to retrain to improve my knowledge in K-5 literacy. That way I can provide coaching and support to all the team members doing this important work .”

“I have gained more ideas for scaffolds and enrichments to implement with all learners to meet their individual needs within the Tier I instruction.”

“I am new to the elementary world and I loved seeing that simple changes and practices can make purposeful and impactful change. I hope to remove barriers for my team to be more purposeful.”

“I feel like this was a very important learning day with supports that help me start preparing for next school year. I’m definitely going to tell my administrators that we should be sending teachers to these meetings. It was very valuable.”

“One key takeaway from the Literacy Road Show was the importance of aligning instruction with clearly defined success factors—especially the need for fidelity of implementation and using diagnostic data to guide targeted intervention. As a Reading Specialist who trains teachers on foundational skills, I found the session both affirming and inspiring. It deepened my understanding of how critical leadership and data-driven decisions are in building a strong school-wide literacy culture. I plan to apply these principles immediately by refining how we track and analyze DIBELS data to adjust instruction in real time. The session was highly engaging and provided practical strategies that I can use to further support teachers and improve student outcomes. It also reminded me how powerful it is to be part of a larger movement committed to literacy success for all students.”

Foundational Literacy Coach Training

The deployment of foundational literacy coaches trained in the science of reading to the highest need Arizona elementary schools serves a critical role in supporting teachers by providing job-embedded professional development to improve classroom practice, and ultimately, student reading achievement. Repeated studies by Joyce and Showers have shown the impact that coaching has on application of effective instructional practices (Joyce, B. R., and Showers, B., 2002).

The Foundational Literacy Coaching Initiative was established in 2021 as the P-3 Literacy Coaching Initiative to advance instruction in early literacy skills and promote student learning through targeted deployment of well-trained literacy coaches. This coaching model is designed to help close the achievement gap among key student subgroups in Arizona through ongoing, evidenced-based training and support in effective literacy instruction within a coaching model. This targeted coaching supports the state’s plan to increase the percentage of third graders passing the state assessment to 73% as defined by the Arizona Progress Meter and to have every student reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

Through participation in the monthly ADE trainings, foundational literacy coaches learn adult learning theory, a variety of coaching techniques and strategies, and approaches that can be utilized to provide teachers with specific feedback on evidence-based reading instruction in the classroom. This training also offers the literacy coaches a structured process to address rigor and instructional practices by facilitating grade-level meetings, professional learning sessions, and one-on-one coaching conferences. Comments from participating schools, districts, and charters included:

- “The Foundational Literacy Coaching grant for Glendale Elementary School District has impacted our teachers and students by adding an extra layer of support to help close literacy gaps and set up teachers for success. We can focus on early literacy data, specific needs of students and teachers, and provide personalized coaching cycles to meet direct goals. The collaboration of literacy coaches working together is powerful with teacher retention, building relationships, and impacting students.” -Cristina LaNuez, Early Literacy Coach, Glendale Elementary School District
- Phoenix Elementary School District #1 has recently hired Foundational Literacy Coaches in 2024 and are already seeing an added benefit to the sites where they have been placed. A struggle our district was facing was strengthening Tier I instruction in K-3 classrooms around foundational literacy. Due to staff constraints, teachers were not getting the regular support they needed to answer instructional and content-related questions and improve their practice in K-3 literacy. Our coaches now participate and collaborate in professional learning communities regularly and are helping build capacity and content knowledge within our K-3 teams. In just the short time they have been on campuses, we are already seeing improvements in student growth on early literacy measures when progress monitoring and teachers have a better understanding of best practices around K-3 literacy.” -Caitlin Fagan, Reading Assessment Support Specialist, Phoenix Elementary School District

In 2025, the Foundational Literacy Coaching Initiative included an administrator/principal component which included professional development and meetings in order to promote system wide evidence-based literacy strategies and practices aligned with the Science of Reading. Early literacy gains require leadership from well-informed and skillful administrators. According to a recent synthesis of two decades of research, the Wallace Foundation found the effectiveness of the principal contributes significantly to student achievement (Grissom et al., 2021). Within the context of the Foundational Literacy Coaching Initiative, principals must overtly and covertly support the efforts of the coach. In doing so, the principal intentionally structures a professional learning community, shares the responsibility in leading and learning, and supports instructional coaching practices.

A state funded grant allows schools with the highest need to apply for the allocation of money towards a foundational literacy coach. During this fiscal year, the demand superseded the supply based on the large number of schools who applied for this grant. A total of \$6 million was requested by schools across Arizona. Unfortunately, only \$ 2.6 million is available for allocation to schools for this grant. Additional funding will be required to support the future expansion of this program and meet the demand from the field.

Literacy Collaborations

While offering guidance documents, professional development, and technical assistance, the MOWR team also serves as partners to several professional literacy groups through outreach, collaboration, and ongoing communication. In addition to the partner groups listed below, the MOWR team works in collaboration with other units within the agency, including Assessment, Exceptional Student Services, School Support and Improvement, Unique Populations and Early Childhood. Externally, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (AZBCS) provides outstanding support when working with our charter schools. As a result of the collaboration with ASBCS, every charter school in the state, except two, submitted literacy plans for the 2024-2025 school year. The two schools that did not submit literacy plans were Incito Schools and Phoenix International Academy.

Literacy Partnerships

- Arizona Chapter of the International Dyslexia Association
 - The Dyslexia and Intervention Specialist of the MOWR team as well as one of the K-5 Literacy & Dyslexia Specialists participates as a non-voting board member for the AZ IDA. The Foundational Literacy Coach Coordinator, another K-5 Literacy & Dyslexia Specialist and the Director of K-12 ELA & MOWR are also IDA members. They represent MOWR and ADE, while providing information and gaining insights from the field and this group.
- ADE Dyslexia Advisory Committee
 - This committee, led by the Dyslexia and Intervention Specialist of the MOWR team, brings together representatives from all sections in the ADE that lead literacy initiatives: MOWR, Academic Standards, Unique Populations, Special Education, and Early Childhood. Members of this interagency committee built the dyslexia resources and the [Dyslexia Handbook](#) that can be found on the MOWR webpage. This committee also provided guidance on the implementation of recent legislative mandates.
- Arizona English Teachers Association (AETA)
 - The Secondary ELA Specialist serves as a non-voting board member for the AETA. She represents the interests of MOWR at these meetings, presents on the

program, presents on literacy, and gains valuable feedback from the field. Members of the MOWR team also present at the annual AETA conference.

- Conference on English Leadership
 - This organization, a committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, consists of English content leaders from states across the country. It builds and shares resources and serves in an advisory capacity on national issues involving the teaching of language arts.
- ExcelinEd National Literacy Group
 - A national group of literacy professionals that meets quarterly to discuss current research in literacy practices, kindergarten through 3rd grade literacy legislation around the nation, and to combine resources for guidance to the field. The Dyslexia & Intervention Specialist, the Foundational Literacy Coach Coordinator, and the Director of K-12 ELA & MOWR are also members of this network. They attended the 2025 National Summit on Education as well as the ExcelinEd Literacy Network Convening to learn about literacy initiatives across the country.
- Read On Arizona
 - Read On Arizona, is a statewide, public and private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders committed to creating an effective continuum of services to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth through age eight and works in collaboration with the MOWR team on a variety of projects. One example of this collaboration is the awarding of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant to ADE, which is in its fourth year of implementation. Additionally, Read On has facilitate learning collaborations with literacy leaders in both Mississippi and Florida which has provided a unique opportunity to learn and improve practices. Most recently, the MOWR team with support from Read On Arizona, the ADE ECE team and the US Dept. of Education took part in the 2024 CLSD Convening hosted in Washington, D.C.
- Regional Education Laboratory West (REL West)
 - The MOWR team is supported by the REL West at WestEd team to learn and understand the requirements of ESSA and how to evaluate related research. This learning allows the MOWR team to vet core reading and reading intervention programs to determine ESSA evidence-level requirements are met. Additionally, the collaboration has led to targeted trainings for schools and districts across the state and nation.
- Statewide Literacy and Family Engagement Professional Development Committee
 - The MOWR team serves on this statewide committee, which brings together stakeholders from around the state who are involved with early literacy initiatives. These partners include Read On Arizona, First Things First, Arizona PBS, Southwest Human Development, DES, Make Way for Books, and City of

Phoenix. This group works to create a unified, statewide approach to improving early literacy in Arizona.

Related Literacy Projects

In addition to working as partners with literacy organizations around the state and country, the MOWR team works on large projects each year to improve literacy outcomes and practices. All projects require collaboration with groups inside and outside of ADE. All projects are designed to support and celebrate literacy outcomes in the state.

New MOWR Application in ADEConnect

Approximately \$ 1 million was allocated to build a new application for schools to submit their Move on When Reading Literacy Plans and Data Submissions. The MOWR team has been working with the ADE IT team over the past two years to complete this project. The goal was to better align literacy plans with continuous improvement processes already in place in Arizona schools. The new application was launched in August 2025. It has a better look and feel with updates to handle current and future needs, including capturing student performance data. The MOWR team has worked diligently to take feedback from the field to eliminate redundancy for schools, allow for some duplication, prepopulate key areas and adding a comment feature that allows for instant communication between schools and ADE.

Decoding What Works: Success Analytics Project

Through a partnership with Read On Arizona is designed to highlight schools that have demonstrated significant improvement in the percentage of students who pass the 3rd grade statewide English Language Arts exam. It also spotlights schools that have had the most success in reducing the number of students who score in the Minimally Proficient range on the same exam. The case studies built during the project highlight strategies that Arizona schools are using that are resulting in significant growth in 3rd grade reading proficiency.

The first four schools were identified and interviewed during the 2018-2019 school year. The case studies for these four schools were published and made publicly available on the [MOWR](#) and [Read On Arizona](#) websites in March 2020. Additionally, the leaders and educator representatives from the campuses were recognized at a State Board of Education Meeting in February 2020 and the recognition event is available on the [AZSBE YouTube Channel](#).

- Legacy Traditional School, Queen Creek
- Lincoln Elementary School, Nogales Unified School District
- Roosevelt School, Yuma Elementary School District
- Wildflower School, Avondale School District

This ongoing project was on hold in 2021 and 2022 due to the impacts of COVID. Read On and the MOWR team have relaunched this project. This most recent case study spotlights the amazing work and efforts taking place at these schools:

- Agua Caliente Elementary School, Tanque Verde Unified School District
- Tanque Verde Elementary School, Tanque Verde Unified School District
- DeMiguel Elementary School, Flagstaff Unified Unified School District
- Arizona Charter Academy
- Roberts-Naylor K-8 School, Tucson Unified School District
- O.C. Johnson Elementary, Yuma School District One
- O.C. Johnson Preschool, Yuma School District One

These schools showed significant increases regarding student achievement in early literacy. All case studies can be found here: [Case Studies | "Decoding What Works"](#) The goal is to continue to share the great progress in literacy occurring around the state.

Legislative Updates

Legislation calls for two primary actions related to dyslexia and one other action related to teacher certification. The first is that all kindergarten and first grade students will be screened for characteristics consistent with dyslexia. The second element requires that all schools that serve kindergarten through third grade teachers have at least one teacher, one K-3 Literacy Coach, or one K-3 Literacy Specialist who has completed an ADE approved training in three areas: reading instruction, intensifying instruction, and understanding and recognizing dyslexia. The final action is the change in certification requirements which requires all educator prep candidates and in-service teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade who teach literacy to secure a K-5 Literacy Endorsement. The ADE MOWR team is leading the implementation of these legislative requirements.

Screening for Characteristics of Dyslexia. As part of a formal Request for Information (RFI) process, assessment vendors submitted product information. The ADE team reviewed all submissions in relation to expected criteria to determine which products met the required components. Those products that met the expectations were included on the ADE Approved Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener list with videos from the vendors directly highlighting key information about their product. Nine vendors have been approved through this process, as of November 18, 2025, with opportunities for others to be added during an annual review process. The MOWR team, in collaboration with the Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS) and Exceptional Student Services (ESS) teams, created the [Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide](#), which houses the approved vendor list, as a guidance document to support LEAs in understanding the purpose of a Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener in conjunction with other important literacy assessments which are all used within a

multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). Additionally, this extensive guide provides MOWR support and targeted parental strategies.

The [Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide.pdf](#) is available to LEAs to help them in determining a Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener that is most appropriate for their students. Although there is no state funding available to support schools with this legislative requirement, all Arizona schools are using a product on the approved list.

The following chart shows the current list of approved tools and the percent of Arizona schools currently using that tool.

| Universal Screening Tool – update percentages | Used By (%) | Used By (#) |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Acadience Reading K-6 | 14.16 % | 179 |
| aimswebPlus | 6.25 % | 79 |
| Amira | 2.85 % | 36 |
| DIBELS 8th Edition. | 16.93 % | 214 |
| FastBridge CBMreading & aReading (2/3) | 20.25 % | 256 |
| FastBridge Early Reading English- Composite (K/1) | 20.17 % | 255 |
| i-Ready Assessment | 8.15 % | 103 |
| iStation | 0.08% | 1 |
| iSTEEP | 1.90 % | 24 |
| mCLASS with DIBELS 8th and mCLASS RAN (K/1) | 19.07 % | 241 |
| mCLASS with DIBELS 8th Edition (2/3) | 19.38 % | 245 |
| Renaissance – Star AZ Literacy Assessment | 12.97 % | 164 |

Dyslexia Training Designee. Another legislative requirement is for every campus with kindergarten through 3rd grade students to designate at least one educator, literacy coach, or literacy specialist as the Dyslexia Training Designee (DTD). The training required for the DTD must meet the criteria in the areas of Literacy Instruction (I), Intensifying Instruction (II), and Understanding and Recognizing Dyslexia (URD). DTD information for each campus is reported annually to the MOWR team within the existing MOWR Literacy Plan portal.

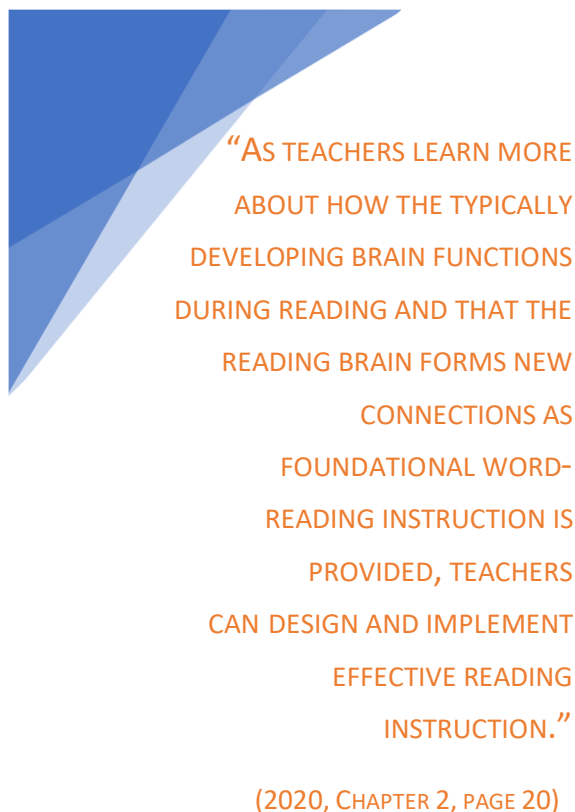
To make certain training opportunities are robust and meet the criteria of the law, the MOWR team worked under the guidance of the Dyslexia and Literacy Intervention Specialist to create a Request for Information (RFI) which outlines the required elements expected in approved

future professional development, coursework, and training. In early 2021, vendors initially submitted their products for evaluation. This RFI process helped the team create an approved menu of options designed to train educators on the science of reading, reading instruction, targeted reading intervention and the characteristics of dyslexia. The MOWR team is continuing to review training opportunities and updates the list regularly. There are eighteen vendors on this approved list as of November 18, 2025.

The Dyslexia Training Designee Grant provides financial assistance to the field for required dyslexia training. The Dyslexia Designee Training Grant provides training money for up to 2 individuals per campus to obtain funds to then use to earn the appropriate hours needed to become DTD certified. Each educator may be awarded \$2,500 for a total of \$100,000 per LEA. Additionally, schools are encouraged to leverage their MOWR funds, Early Literacy Grant funding, and other resources to support continued training for the DTDs.

K-5 Literacy Endorsement. The final legislative change requires Kindergarten- 5th grade teachers who teach literacy to have a K-5 Literacy Endorsement. To earn this endorsement, teachers need to participate in 6 semester credits or 90 clock hours of training in the science of reading. Additionally, teachers would need to pass a State Board approved literacy assessment. Institutes of Higher Education are changing their programs to make certain newly trained teachers meet these requirements upon exiting their educator prep programs. Pre-service teachers have until 2025 to earn the K-5 Literacy Endorsement. For those teachers already serving students, they will have until 2028 to complete the requirements for the endorsement. This equates to about 30 hours of professional development per year until the 2028 deadline. Between October 2024 and September 2025, 19% of teacher certificates were renewed with the K-5 Literacy or Reading Endorsement. Significant work remains to ensure that every K–5 teacher responsible for reading instruction obtains the required endorsement by 2028.

The MOWR team has developed a free OnDemand course that meets the criteria for teachers to secure the training hours for this endorsement. This course is Pathways to Proficient Reading and Pathways to Structured Literacy designed to follow a Learn, Practice, and Apply



Dr. Stanislas Dehaene

cycle. Successful completion of Pathways coursework fulfills the training hours required for the K-5 Literacy Endorsement.

In addition to the free OnDemand Course that meets the K-5 Literacy Endorsement requirements, the MOWR team in collaboration with LEAs across the state, successfully distributed additional licenses for Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) 3rd edition training to Arizona educators. This comprehensive learning opportunity designed to provide teachers with deep understanding of the processes of teaching reading and the science behind it. Completion of this training meets the course work required for the K-5 Literacy Endorsement. In total over the last few years, the MOWR team has distributed over 6,000 licenses to Arizona educators.

Furthermore, the MOWR team, in collaboration with LEAs across Arizona, has also allocated 240 LETRS for Administrators licenses. This training is created specifically for school leaders to create adaptable and suitable literacy initiatives using systems thinking and implementation science. It defines the systems and infrastructures required to successfully implement a sustainable literacy program aligned to scientifically based research. The MOWR team provides monthly meetings for these administrators to share their learning and support for implementation of evidence-based literacy practices at their sites.

Lastly, the MOWR team has provided 14,000 free slots for educators to take the Foundations of Reading Exam, which is required to earn the K-5 Early Literacy Endorsement. Initial results show that 82% of Arizona educators are passing the Foundations of Reading Exam on their first attempt, an increase from 77% the previous year. The national pass first-attempt rate is 69%.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant

Through a collaborative process with Read On Arizona, First Things First and the Arizona Department of Education's Academic Standards team, which includes the ELA, MOWR, and Early Childhood teams, Arizona was awarded the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant in November of 2020. As shared from the ADE's [CLSD Webpage](#), this is a 5-year \$20,000,000 federal

“competitive grant that proposes to improve child literacy skills and instructional capacity on the science of reading. This grant project aims to strengthen collaboration, improve efficiency and drive innovation to accelerate language and literacy outcomes. The focus will be children birth to grade 12 in high needs' schools and qualified opportunity zones serving Arizona's most disadvantaged students. CLSD is a substantial investment that will award up to 25 qualified schools and/or early childhood programs who have demonstrated readiness and the ability to implement.”

Through the course of this grant, educators in the neediest schools will have targeted and specific training in systems thinking, science of reading and other evidence-based trainings to directly impact the literacy success of approximately 14,000 students and 750 educators in 40 schools and early childhood care, across the birth to grade 12 continua in 12 Arizona counties. The MOWR team continues to support schools receiving this grant through guidance and coaching in the selection of high-quality reading materials, evidence-based reading and instructional strategies, targeted training based on teacher needs and student data, and programmatic information.

Path Forward Project

In 2020, Arizona was one of six states selected to be a part of the Path Forward for Teacher Licensure and Preparation multi-state initiative led by the Hunt Institute and the Barksdale Reading Institute. The Path Forward focused on building connections with institutes of higher education, strengthening teacher preparation in reading, and infusing teacher preparation programs with the science of reading.

The Arizona Path Forward team built three state goals that will guide its work moving forward:

- Goal 1: Strengthen the birth to K-12 to higher education literacy pipeline to build teacher capacity and improve student achievement in literacy
- Goal 2: Increase understanding of the science of reading in higher education faculty, mentor teachers (student teacher placement), and across programs
- Goal 3: Augment Institutes of Higher Education and Education Preparation Program coursework and experiences to align with the science of reading

Literacy Coaching

With funds provided by the Arizona State Legislature, the MOWR team is working in tandem with the Early Childhood Education team, and community partners to introduce and implement a robust statewide coaching model based on the coaching model first implemented in Mississippi. Through this model, funds for 29 literacy coaches have been allocated to 12 districts with high needs. Currently 28 coaching positions have been filled, impacting 28 schools, 448 teachers and over 11,000 students. The demand for literacy coaching training continues to grow, with schools increasingly requesting opportunities for their coaches to participate in our sessions. For this reason, a total of 35 coaches attend training. In partnership with WestEd, monthly training is provided to coaches in best-practices for coaching and facilitation as well as how to support the implementation of evidence-based reading instruction aligned with the science of reading. Additionally, administrators attend monthly meetings to

build understanding of early literacy evidence-based practices and align processes and protocols to develop a systemic approach to coaching on their campus. New coaches attend monthly virtual training and all coaches and administrators are supported with on-site visits tailored to each site's need. Two virtual check-ins with each district or charter provide opportunities for goal tracking and system adjustments.

Data over the course of implementation show that 85% of coaches' time is dedicated to coaching cycles and professional learning facilitation. Coaches are reporting growth in student foundational skills as measured by progress monitoring as well as increased understanding of and fidelity to evidence-based curriculum and instructional practices.

Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)

LETRS 3rd Edition in a comprehensive literacy training that is reading program agnostic and grounded in the science of reading which is called for in several grants awarded in Arizona. The training has four components that include reading materials, asynchronous learning, virtual training sessions with a LETRS trainer, and practice application for every session. The entire training covers all elements of reading and specifically calls out cognitive models like Scarborough's Reading Rope, The Simple View of Reading, Tolman's Hourglass and more. The information provided in this rich learning experience meets all criteria for Dyslexia Training Designee training requirements and K-5 Literacy Endorsement requirements. With funds allocated from the Governor's office and other grant funds, ADE and the MOWR team have supported more than 6,000 educators in high needs districts/charters in implementing this 2-year training.

The MOWR team has secured 4 cohorts of LETRS for Facilitators training in order to sustain the ability of districts/charters to train new teachers. The facilitator is an individual with a deep understanding of the content and commitment to become an expert in the research-based theories of LETRS. Once trained, the facilitator will provide face-to-face workshops for their district/charter aligned with each unit of learning, facilitate Professional Learning Communities, answer questions from participants, and review participants' online data to determine if gaps in conceptual understanding exist that need to be addressed in a customized workshop.

The first cohort of LETRS Facilitators commenced during July 2024 and completed their training in May 2025. The next cohort of LETRS Facilitators began their initial training in the summer of 2025. The final two cohorts of LETRS Facilitators training will take place in the summer of 2026.

All LETRS Facilitators continue to receive support from the MOWR team during monthly Communities of Practice. At these meetings, resources are shared, and support is provided to

Facilitators working on growing the number of LETRS trained teachers in their districts/charters.

Section IV: Further MOWR Initiatives Given Increased Funding

The current administrative budget for the MOWR team is \$500,000 annually, which is 1/3 of the annual budget the program received from 2013-2015. This administrative budget covers salaries, I.T. costs, and all professional development costs for the state. The current administrative budget is significantly constrained, and the MOWR team has employed innovative strategies to maximize available resources in support of statewide initiatives. Nevertheless, state literacy data clearly demonstrates that substantial additional work is required—along with increased funding—to achieve meaningful progress. Provided sufficient funding, the MOWR team would institute all of the K-3 early literacy recommendations made by the State Board of Education as well as expand on the following practices:

- Increase Foundational Literacy Coaches throughout the state
 - Increasing the number of coaches in the state
 - Increasing the regional coaching support for K-3 schools in this initiative
 - Sustaining the administrator training and support for K-3 schools in this initiative
- Increase professional development offerings to build teacher capacity in the science of reading
 - These trainings would focus on high areas of need, such as
 - Increasing the family engagement elements embedded in Move On When Reading beyond the provision of letters to parents
 - Fundamentals of early writing instruction
 - Appropriate use of assessment data
- Increase professional development offerings to build administrator capacity in the science of reading and effective schoolwide literacy systems
 - 1:1 coaching cycles to provide insight into literacy implementation for schools
 - Literacy Advisory Committees for administrators
- Regional support
 - With additional funds, the MOWR team could offer specific technical assistance and training to regions of the state. Each region would have an assigned MOWR team member as a point of contact who would perform in-person outreach. This would increase the level and frequency of support, coaching and accountability for elementary schools in Arizona.

- This would allow for more oversight of LEAs to ensure that they are submitting the literacy plan as well as Middle-of-Year and End-of-Year data as required by A.R.S §15-704.
 - The team will provide science of reading professional learning opportunities with several day-long sessions at host LEA sites across the state. This will allow participants from outlying areas of the state to have in-person professional development provided at a nearby location.
- Continue to build and develop collaborative relationships across the literacy continuum.
 - Build relationships with Institutes of Higher Education to support the training in the science of reading, reading instruction and intervention and characteristics of dyslexia in pre-service programs
 - Collaborate with state agencies across the nation to support ongoing improvement in literacy practices in Arizona.
 - Plan a statewide event, in conjunction with literacy partners and groups, with researchers and experts in the science of reading.

Section V: Achievement Data

Each year, schools, and districts with kindergarten through 3rd grade students submit Move On When Reading literacy plans to the Arizona Department of Education. These plans contain literacy data collected using an approved Universal Literacy and Dyslexia screener given three times per year. Additionally, data is collected to measure student progress in reading outcomes through state-wide and national assessments. These data sources provide schools/districts information to make programmatic decisions to improve student outcomes.

During the 2024-2025 school year, all but three LEAs submitted their K-3 Literacy Plans. Two were charters mentioned previously: Phoenix International Academy and Incito Schools. The third was McNary Elementary District.

Additionally, the following LEAs did not submit their End-of-Year Data for the 2024-2025 school year as required by A.R.S §15-704:

- Acclaim Charter School
- Aguila Elementary District
- Archway Classical Academy Chandler
- Archway Classical Academy Cicero
- Ash Fork Joint Unified District
- Blue Elementary District
- Cave Creek Unified District
- Cochise Elementary District

- Colorado City Unified District
- Concho Elementary District
- Desert Sky Community School, Inc.
- Freedonia-Moccasin Unified District
- Haven Montessori Children's House, Inc.
- Hyder Elementary District
- Imagine Charter School at Camelback, Inc.
- Incito Schools
- Kingman Unified School District
- Liberty Leadership Academy
- Little Lambe Community School
- Maine Consolidated School District
- Miami Unified District
- Morristown Elementary District
- Picacho Elementary District
- San Carlos Unified District
- Sanders Unified District
- Santa Cruz Valley Opportunities in Education, Inc.
- Sentinel Elementary District
- SLAM Arizona, Inc.
- Stanfield Elementary District
- Stepping Stones Academy
- Superior Unified School District
- Tuba City Unified District
- Tucson Country Day School, Inc.
- Valley of the Sun Waldorf Association, dba Desert Marigold School
- Victory Collegiate Academy Corporation
- Winslow Unified District

State and National Assessment Data

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a national assessment that allows educational achievement to be compared across states. It was established by Congress in 1969 to create a national yardstick for accurately evaluating the progress of American students.

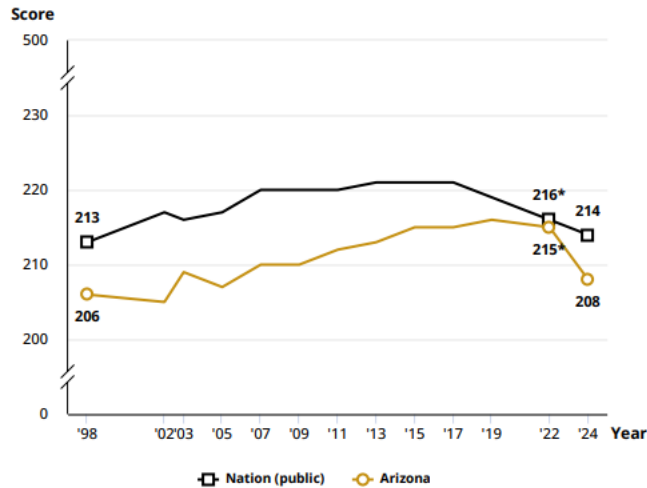
Reading scores for Arizona 4th grade students have stalled on NAEP. The average score in 2024 was 208 which was lower than the average score in 2022 which was 215.

NAEP Data: 4th Grade Reading

| 2015 | | 2017 | | 2019 | | 2022 | | 2024 | |
|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|
| Arizona | National Average | Arizona | National Average | Arizona | National Average | Arizona | National Average | Arizona | National Average |
| 215 | 221 | 215 | 221 | 216 | 219 | 216 | 215 | 208 | 214 |

NAEP- Average scale scores for grade 4 reading. Arizona students compared to students nationally.

AVERAGE SCORES FOR STATE/JURISDICTION AND THE NATION (PUBLIC)



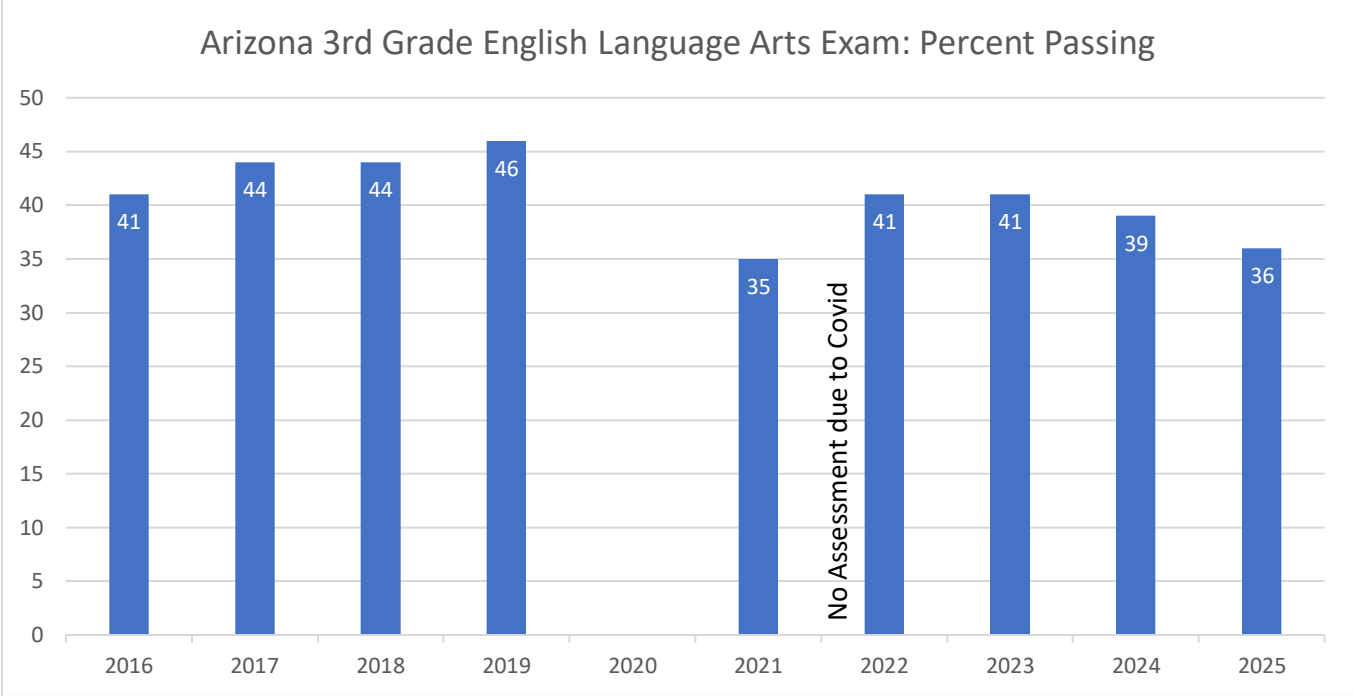
* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2024. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

The 2024 Arizona 4th Grade Reading Snapshot can be accessed here: [The Nation's Report Card: 2024 Reading Snapshot Report for Arizona Grade 4](#)

Statewide Summative Assessment Data

Each year, students in 3rd-8th, 9th, and 11th grades take the statewide English Language Arts exam, which assesses their skills in reading and writing. Data from this assessment is used to measure the effectiveness of student mastery of course goals, to determine the effectiveness of an educational program, and/or to meet local, state, and federal requirements. Due to the unique circumstances presented in 2020, the statewide ELA assessment was cancelled, therefore, no summative data was collected for the 2019-2020 school year. The impact of COVID is noted in the 2021 and 2022 statewide ELA data.

The following graph shows the annual growth in the percentage of students passing the 3rd grade statewide ELA exam over the five years before closures due to COVID and the impacts noted in the school years since.



Statewide ELA Exam Comparative Data

The following graph shows a comparison of all 3rd grade statewide ELA scores for 2015 to 2023. The assessment was not given in 2020 due to COVID implications. Prior to 2020, there have been documented increases in the percentage of students passing the 3rd grade English Language Arts exam across the state. Additionally, the percentage of students passing the statewide 3rd grade ELA exam improved in every county in Arizona in the five years prior to COVID. Clearly, COVID impacted the forward progress.

The graph indicates a slight change in third grade ELA proficiency from 2024 to 2025, with 36% of Arizona’s 80,000 third graders passing the most recent statewide assessment. This is not surprising data. This post-pandemic reading data falls in line with nationwide trends. Other factors, such as chronic absenteeism, are also a likely factor for the stalled progress in third grade.

County Data

Percent Passing the statewide 3rd Grade ELA Exam

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Apache County: 28% | Mohave County: 30% |
| Cochise County: 32% | Navajo County: 31% |
| Coconino County: 30% | Pima County: 33% |
| Gila County: 24% | Pinal County: 27% |
| Graham County: 38% | Santa Cruz County: 27% |
| Greenlee County: 38% | Yavapai County: 39% |
| La Paz County: 19% | Yuma County: 26% |
| Maricopa County: 39% | |

Statewide Benchmark Screening Assessment Data

Per A.R.S §15-704, LEAs submit school-level literacy data three times per year from their Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener for kindergarten through 3rd grade students. This data submission indicates the number of students at benchmark, approaching benchmark and significantly at-risk. Over the course of the three submissions, these data illustrate student progress from the beginning to the middle and to the end of the school year. In addition to submitting the student level data, school leaders must submit a descriptive narrative reflecting on these questions:

- How have you used diagnostic tools to further identify targeted needs and plan immediate interventions?
- What actions or revisions will occur at the school level based on current student needs?
- How have you targeted professional development for teachers to continue to support these areas?
- What resources/tools may you need to revisit to support the identified needs?

Move On When Reading Retention Data

Per A.R.S. § 15-701, a 3rd grade student who does not meet the cut score established by the Arizona State Board of Education on the reading portion of the statewide English Language Arts exam and does not qualify for one of four good-cause exemptions is to be retained. A school shall offer more than one of the interventions and remedial strategies provided to that pupil.

1. A requirement that the pupil be assigned for evidence-based reading instruction by a different teacher who was designated in that teacher's most recent performance evaluation in one of the top two performance classifications.
2. Summer school reading instruction.
3. In the next academic year, intensive reading instruction that occurs before, during or after the regular school day, or any combination of before, during and after the regular school day.

4. Small group and teacher-led evidence-based reading instruction, which may include computer-based or online reading instruction.

During typical assessment years, students are eligible to be retained according to the criteria. However, in 2020, no third-grade students were retained due to MOWR because of school closures and the cancellation of the statewide exam. Since 2021, all MOWR retention policies have returned to normal.

Four Exemptions to 3rd Grade Retention. If a student does not meet the cut score on the reading portion of the statewide English Language Arts exam, he or she is to be retained. Some students need this extra time and attention to acquire the necessary literacy skills to thrive and succeed in 4th grade. However, the MOWR legislation was designed with the understanding that some students face unique challenges to learning, so there are four exemptions to the retention requirement in the MOWR legislation.

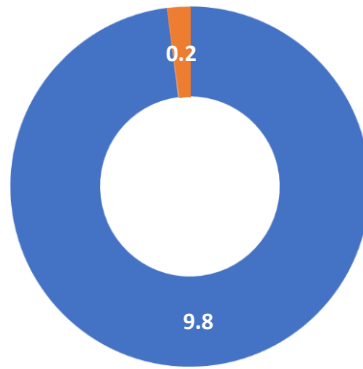
1. The student is an English learner or limited English proficient student and has had fewer than 3 years of English language instruction.
2. The student is in the process of a special education referral or evaluation, and/or the student has been diagnosed as having a significant reading impairment, including dyslexia.
3. The student has an identified disability and has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and the IEP team (including the parents) agrees that promotion is appropriate.
4. The student has demonstrated or subsequently demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress towards sufficient reading skills on the 3rd grade reading standards as evidenced through a collection of assessments.

Additionally, a student who fails to meet the MOWR cut score on the reading portion of the 3rd grade statewide ELA exam may be promoted to 4th grade if he/she attends summer school *and* demonstrates sufficient progress towards reading.

Historically, very few students are retained each year due to Move On When Reading. The chart below shows that 0.2% of 3rd grade students in the state were retained in the 2024-2025 school year for not meeting the MOWR 3rd grade cut score.

3RD GRADE STUDENTS RETAINED DUE TO MOVE ON WHEN READING 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

- 3rd Grade Students Who Met the MOWR Cut Score (or Qualified for a Good-Cause Exemption)
- 3rd Grade Students Retained Due to MOWR (.2%)



Section VI: Move On When Reading Expenditures

Per A.R.S. § [15-211](#), schools and districts shall use Move On When Reading funds only on instructional purposes intended to improve reading proficiency for pupils in kindergarten programs and grades one, two and three with particular emphasis on pupils in kindergarten programs and grades one and two. The MOWR team supports LEAs on using data to make informed decisions in the use of these funds for kindergarten through third grade staffing, instructional materials/programs, assessment materials, and professional development.

The majority of MOWR funding received by LEAs in 2024-2025 was spent on staffing, which may include salaries for kindergarten through third grade teachers, reading coaches, literacy interventionists, and paraprofessionals.

MOWR Expenditure Data 2023-2024 (FY24)

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Total MOWR Funding Released (All Schools) | | | |
| \$ 55,058,431 | | | |

| K-3 Staffing (Actual) | K-3 Instructional Materials (Actual) | K-3 Assessment Materials (Actual) | K-3 Professional Development (Actual) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 89% | 7% | 2% | 2% |

MOWR funding allocations may be redistributed and impact current programming due to implication of legislative changes requiring LEAs purchase of an approved Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener and additional training for teachers in the science of reading, intervention and characteristics of dyslexia as required for the Dyslexia Training Designee and the new K-5 Literacy Endorsement. Although MOWR funds may be used to support these new requirements, it may force districts to make unfortunate staffing cuts as they are mandates with little or no additional funding.

MOWR Estimated Expenditure Data 2024-2025 (FY25)

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Total MOWR Funding Estimated (All Schools) | | | |
| \$ 56,134,220 | | | |

| K-3 Staffing (Estimated) | K-3 Instructional Materials (Estimated) | K-3 Assessment Materials (Estimated) | K-3 Professional Development (Estimated) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| 90% | 6% | 2% | 2% |

Conclusion

[Arizona's Move On When Reading](#) policy is designed to provide students with evidence-based, effective reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade. Early intervention by well-trained educators using high quality materials is essential to make certain all students are in a position for success as they progress through school, college, career, and life. The MOWR team is proud to partner with schools and districts to create the most optimal learning situations which include training educators, choosing appropriate materials, assessing, and using assessment data to determine and fill needs and supporting understanding of legislative mandates, so that all students become proficient readers.

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