

Move On When Reading Overview 2025-2026

Introduction

Arizona's Move On When Reading (MOWR) legislation is designed to provide students with evidence-based reading instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade to position them for success as they progress through school, college, and the workforce. The heart of the legislation emphasizes early identification and immediate intervention for struggling readers, especially in kindergarten and first grade. This document provides a brief overview of the key elements of this legislation.

The School's Role

A student's school plays a vital role in ensuring the pupil is reading at grade level at or before third grade. [A.R.S. § 15-704](#) and [15-211](#) require every school who serves kindergarten through third grade students in Arizona to:

1. Adopt and implement an evidence-based reading curriculum that includes the essential components of early literacy: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and is aligned to standards.
2. Devote reasonable amounts of time to explicit evidence-based literacy instruction and independent reading.
3. Provide a comprehensive literacy assessment system that assesses and monitors student progress. This system must include the use of universal literacy screeners (fall, winter, and spring), diagnostics, and progress monitoring tools.
4. Provide high-quality ongoing professional development in evidence-based reading instruction.
5. Use funding provided by the MOWR legislation to build the literacy skills of students in kindergarten through third grade.

School Literacy Plans

Per [A.R.S §15-211](#) (D.) Each school district and charter school shall submit to the department of education a plan for improving the reading proficiency of the school district's or the charter school's pupils in kindergarten programs and grades one through three. The 2022 legislative session amended this legislation to remove the alternate-year submission exclusion. **Therefore, beginning in 2022-2023, all K-3 schools must submit to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) each year.**

Annual Due Dates:

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| a. Literacy Plan Submission: | October 1 |
| b. Fall Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screening Data Submission: | October 1 |
| c. Winter Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screening Data Submission: | February 1 |
| d. Spring Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screening Data Submission: | June 1 |

Statewide Exam

All third-grade students must participate in the spring statewide assessment. Students must meet the MOWR cut score for the reading and oral reading fluency portion to be promoted to the fourth grade. This year, the AASA scores will be available in [PearsonAccess^{next} \(PAN\)](#). There will be a section of PAN for Published Reports, which includes Student Data Files (.txt format), Roster Reports (PDF), and Student Reports (PDF). Visit the [AASA Homepage](#) for more information.

Student Retention

The strategic planning and quality instruction provided by Arizona schools work to ensure that students are reading at the appropriate level; however, some students require added time and attention to hone their literacy skills. [A.R.S. § 15-701](#) requires that a student not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the statewide exam that falls below the MOWR cut score established by the State Board of Education.

Exemptions to 3rd Grade Student Retention

The MOWR legislation was designed with the understanding that some students face unique challenges to learning. There are exemptions to retention for a student who does not obtain a sufficient score on the reading portion of the statewide exam.

- i. Is an English learner or is limited English proficient and has received less than three years of English language instruction. (this was changed from two years, as amended by [HB2026](#))
- ii. Is in the (1) process of a special education referral or evaluation for placement in special education, or (2) has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment, including dyslexia, or (3) is a child with a disability as defined in section [15-761](#) and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate.
- iii. A student has demonstrated or subsequently demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress towards sufficient reading skills of the 3rd grade reading standards as evidenced through a collection of reading assessments which meet criteria approved by the State Board of Education. See [Promotion and Retention](#) for guidance on assessment criteria.
- iv. Receives intervention and remedial services during the summer or subsequent year and demonstrates sufficient reading progress.

Summer School Promotion

The fourth good-cause exemption can be particularly helpful for a student who scores an insufficient score on the reading portion of the statewide exam and may only need some additional targeted intervention. See [Summer School](#) for targeted summer school intervention guidance. Upon completing a summer school program and demonstrating that the pupil is reading at a proficient level on an appropriate reading assessment administered by the school prior to the start of the next school year, a third-grader may be promoted. Criteria used to determine a collection of reading assessments for exemption number three can also apply to this exemption. The department of education does not have a list of approved assessments.

Midyear Promotion

A student who is retained in third grade due to an insufficient score on the reading portion of the statewide exam and does not meet one of the previous exemptions, can be promoted to the fourth grade midway through the next year, the year the pupil is retained, if he demonstrates that he is reading at a proficient level on an appropriate reading assessment administered by the school, as described in the school district or charter school's policy on midyear promotion to a higher grade.

Interventions for Retained Students

The goal of the Move On When Reading legislation is to provide each student the level of support needed to become a strong reader. Students who are retained must receive *more than one* of the following interventions:

1. 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. Intensive reading instruction before, during, and/or after the regular school day.
4. Small-group and teacher-led evidence-based reading instruction, which may include computer-based or online reading instruction.

Parent/Guardian Communication

Annual Notification

Students learn best when parents are a part of the educational process. Per [A.R.S. § 15-704](#) schools are required to provide annual written notification to parents of students in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade at the beginning of each school year or upon entry for new students. This initial notification is to inform parents about the MOWR and Dyslexia legislation and the possibility of retention for students who do not earn a sufficient score on the reading portion of the statewide exam.

Early Notification of Reading Deficiencies

The earlier parents and teachers are made aware of a student's struggles with reading, the sooner they can act. Following each Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener, if a school determines that a kindergarten through third grade student is substantially deficient in reading, the school will provide the parent/guardian of that student with separate written notification of the reading deficiency, including characteristics consistent with dyslexia.

Per [A.R.S. § 15-701](#) this notification must include the following six requirements:

1. A description of the student's specific area(s) of struggle with reading, including indicators of dyslexia.
2. A description of the current interventions/reading services being provided to the student at school.
3. A description of any available supplemental instructional reading services and/or supporting programs that are available at the school.
4. Strategies for the parents/guardians to use at home to assist their student in attaining reading proficiency.
5. A statement that the student will not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil does not obtain a sufficient score on the reading portion of the statewide exam taken at the end of the third grade.
6. A description of the school/district policies on midyear promotion to a higher grade.