

READING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

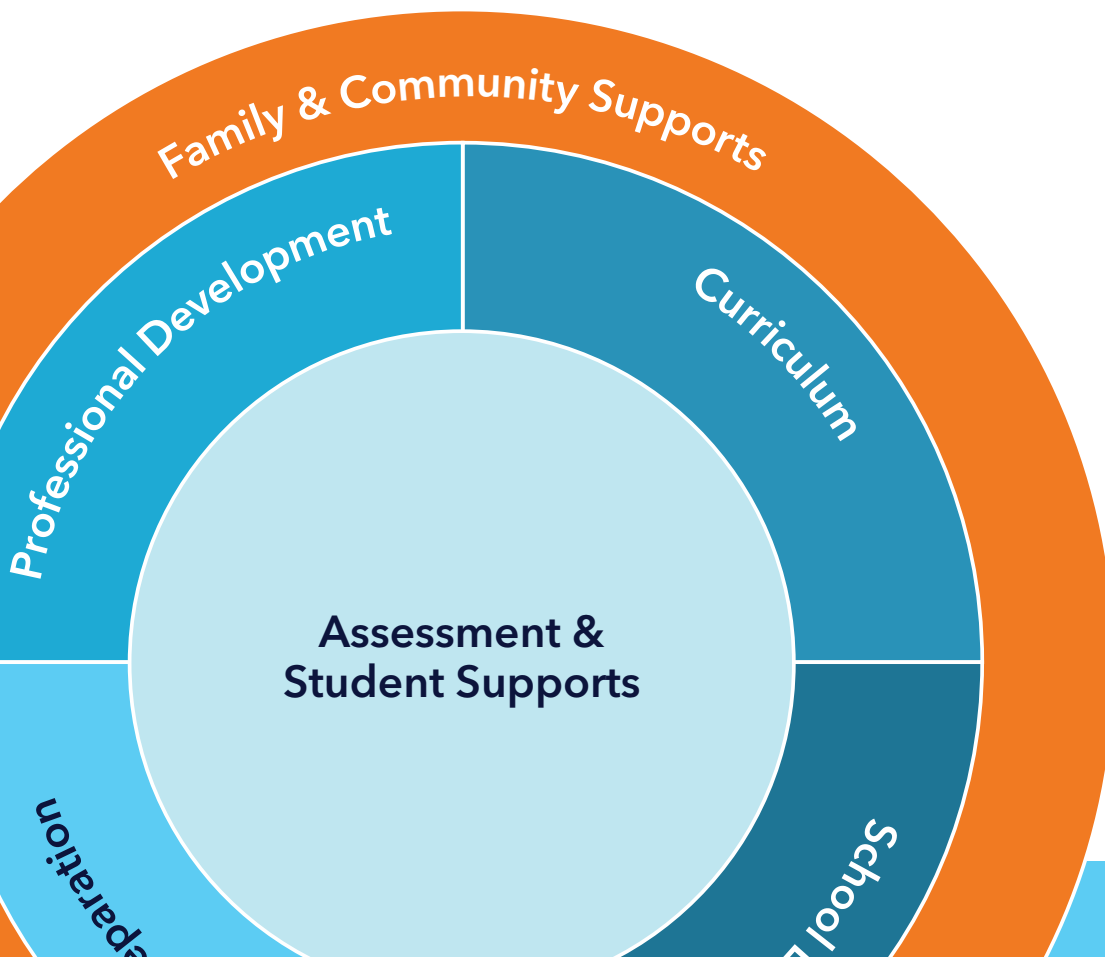
	WHAT <u>MOST</u> STATES ARE GETTING RIGHT AND SHOULD CONTINUE DOING	WHAT <u>ELSE</u> STATES MAY CONSIDER
DEFINING READING Developing effective literacy policy requires reaching agreement on the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are necessary for learning to read and becoming a confident reader.	✓ Grounding reading policy on the five pillars identified by the National Reading Panel: • phonemic awareness • phonics • vocabulary • fluency • comprehension	These five pillars, however, should be a starting point. ■ Oral language and writing take a back seat in the legislation but are as essential as the other five. Lawmakers should ensure that they receive the same degree of attention. MODEL STATE: KENTUCKY ■ Background knowledge receives very limited attention in the law. It is crucial that legislators recognize its importance and ensure that it has a prominent role in reading instruction. RESOURCE: KNOWLEDGE MATTERS CAMPAIGN ■ More states could craft legislation that espouses a holistic view of reading, including its socio-affective aspects like motivation, engagement, preferences etc. MODEL STATE: ARIZONA

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SCIENCE-BASED POLICY Adhering to scientific findings is essential, but it's important to acknowledge that science is dynamic and that it encompasses varying degrees of certainty. Legislators should approach reading science with educated skepticism, able to discern between established and emerging evidence.	✓ Prioritizing the role of science and research evidence in reading legislation. Allow the best evidence to guide decision-making about curricula and programs.	■ Legislators should become knowledgeable about reading science and understand common misconceptions. RESOURCE: AMERICAN EDUCATOR ■ As lawmakers attend to reading science, they should also consider education science more broadly to guide reading policy — prioritizing evidence-based interventions, such as tutoring, and phasing out policies with mixed evidence, such as grade retention. MODEL STATE: MICHIGAN
TEACHER SUPPORTS Effectively supporting teachers involves more than directly investing in their development. Teachers need instructional materials that support their practice as well as school leaders capable of creating the conditions for change. When all these components work together, they lay a robust foundation for improvement.	✓ Allowing flexibility in implementation, but pairing it with support — e.g., professional development or curriculum lists — so that districts can more efficiently select high-quality programs and instructional materials. ✓ Supporting existing teachers by offering professional development opportunities that are grounded in reading science. ✓ Developing an effective teacher workforce by prioritizing teacher education programs rooted in evidence-based reading instruction.	■ A high-quality curriculum not only provides a clear framework for teachers, but also ensures coherence across grades and schools. It is essential that legislators promote the selection and periodic review of evidence-based instructional materials and resources in districts. This will help determine if they meet students' needs or if additional materials and supports are necessary. Don't remove resources, even flawed ones, without providing educators with effective alternatives first. MODEL STATE: DELAWARE ■ Without the support and commitment of school leaders, teachers might struggle to implement reforms. Therefore, legislators should consider policies that educate and empower school administrators with knowledge of the science of reading. Such enlightened leadership is crucial for ensuring that teachers' varied professional needs are met and that professional learning demands are sustainable, appropriately compensated, and come with ample opportunities for practical application. MODEL STATE: UTAH

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STUDENT SUPPORTS Identifying the needs of a range of student populations is just the start; states must also provide support for all students.	✓ Maintaining a broad scope that encompasses all students - from pre-schoolers to those beyond the 3rd grade and across all school types, including charter and non-Title I schools. ✓ Keeping a strong focus on progress monitoring through valid and reliable assessments. ✓ Maintaining legislation that provides support and resources for students with dyslexia.	■ Legislators should support inclusive, explicit and systematic reading instruction that values students' diverse backgrounds, languages, and knowledge. RESOURCE: READING ROCKETS ■ Legislators should strive to address students' literacy needs comprehensively by developing a suite of interventions, instead of relying on isolated initiatives. MODEL STATE: MICHIGAN ■ Lawmakers should strive for equitable support for all students, including students experiencing poverty, English learners or students with dyslexia. Given the persistent and predictable disparities in reading proficiency across racial and ethnic lines, we urge legislators to craft language that deliberately targets the needs of black, brown, and indigenous students. MODEL STATE: CALIFORNIA
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM Achieving desired reading outcomes hinges not only on the individual efforts of schools and families, but most importantly on the two working together while also incorporating community-based assets and supports.	✓ Keep prioritizing legislation that supports authentic school-home-community collaboration to improve children's reading.	■ States that currently inform parents about their children's reading performance should consider modeling after states that are trying to foster genuine school-family partnerships around literacy. MODEL STATE: ALASKA ■ Legislation in many more states could leverage libraries and other community assets to promote students' reading development. MODEL STATE: COLORADO

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Building a strong foundation for reading improvement requires a comprehensive array of **supports for both teachers and students**. We urge states to guarantee that their laws address all these aspects, building a **solid foundation** for literacy improvement.
- Moreover, we advise lawmakers to prioritize establishing **system alignment and coherence**, which is arguably the most vital objective moving forward.
- Finally, legislators should ensure that **parents and teachers have a voice in policy decisions**. This could involve their participation in literacy committees or input through surveys or interviews. Laws should embody a spirit of collaboration; excessive prescriptiveness and rigidity, such as outright bans on practices, hinder this and can prove impractical. The emphasis should be on adaptability, respect, and positive interactions with educators and families, who are critical for the success of reading reform. Ultimately, it's parents and teachers, with their direct connection to students, who support everyday learning and bring these reforms to life.



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