

# Guidance on Ohio’s Prohibition on Three-Cueing

## Executive Summary

- Public schools may not use any core curriculum, instructional materials, or intervention programs in grades prekindergarten to five that rely on any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, including a three-cueing approach.
- Public schools may apply for a waiver on an individual student basis. The Department’s approval decisions will be dependent on Ohio School Report Card performance.
- A waiver is not required if a student’s individualized education program (IEP) explicitly indicates the three-cueing approach is appropriate for the student’s learning needs,
- Students with Reading Intervention and Monitoring Plans (RIMPs) are not eligible for waivers.

## Introduction

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine recently announced the [ReadOhio initiative](#), an exciting statewide effort to encourage improved literacy skills for all ages that includes the implementation of curriculum aligned with the science of reading in Ohio’s schools.

This document serves as guidance for public schools to help transition to using instructional materials and programs aligned with the science of reading. Under [ORC 3313.6028\(A\)\(2\)](#), a “three-cueing approach” means *any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues*. Public schools may not use any core curriculum, instructional materials, or intervention programs in grades prekindergarten to five that rely on any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, including a three-cueing approach, unless a waiver has been granted.

## Applicable Grade Bands

The prohibition on using a three-cueing approach applies to any core curriculum, instructional materials, or intervention programs used in grades prekindergarten to five.

## Three-Cueing Restriction Waiver

Under [ORC 3313.6028\(D\)](#), public schools may apply for a waiver on an individual student basis to use curriculum, instructional materials, or an intervention program in grades prekindergarten to five that uses the three-cueing approach. The Department will ultimately determine if the waiver will be granted and must consider the performance of the student's district or community school on the Ohio School Report Cards, including the Early Literacy component.

## Three-Cueing Prohibition Waiver Application Process

The Department will provide an application process for public schools to request a student waiver of the prohibition on using a three-cueing approach. The waiver application and its instructions will be available on the Department's Three-Cueing Waiver Application webpage. The Department will begin accepting waiver applications in August of each school year. Waiver applications may only be submitted by a superintendent or a superintendent's designee and attestation will be required. Waiver applications will be made per student. No mass applications will be accepted. Approved applications will be good for one school year at a time.

## Three-Cueing Waiver and Students with IEPs and/or RIMPs

**Students with only an IEP:** Under [ORC 3313.6028\(D\)\(2\)](#), if a student has an individualized education program (IEP) that explicitly indicates the three-cueing approach is appropriate for the student's learning needs, a waiver is **not** required to be submitted. However, if a district or school is seeking to use a three-cueing approach for a student with an IEP that does not explicitly indicate the three-cueing approach is appropriate for the student's learning needs, a waiver is required.

**Students with only a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP):** Students with Reading Intervention and Monitoring Plans (RIMPs) are **not** eligible for waivers under [ORC 3313.6028\(D\)\(1\)](#).

**Students with both an IEP and a RIMP:** Students with an IEP explicitly indicating the three-cueing approach is appropriate for their learning needs are not subject to the waiver requirement. If it is indicated as appropriate in the IEP, even if the student is on a RIMP, a waiver is **not** necessary.

## Is it possible to teach students to read using both three-cueing strategies and practices aligned with the science of reading?

Recent technological advances help us better understand how skilled readers' brains process information while reading. Brain researchers have identified particular and distinct areas and networks of the brain that process print, speech sounds (phonology), language, and meaning. Proficient readers use this path to connect letters to sounds and then to meaning on the left side of the brain. Using this same technology, researchers know poor readers have not developed this pathway and instead rely on meaning and context first, activating the right side of the brain (Stanovich, 2000). Eye tracking research confirms that good readers do not guess or use a few letters to read words. They look at all the letters when reading (Rayner & Pollatsek, 1986). Proficient readers use the same brain circuit or neural pathway, which must be strengthened and taught through explicit, code-based instruction. When teachers use practices based on three-cueing strategies, they build another neural circuit to the wrong side of the brain in an area not associated with proficient reading. Whole-word memorization also

weakens the development of the proficient pathway to reading. It is essential to use only strategies that activate the print, speech, and then meanings of words in that order.

## **Shifting to the Science of Reading Discussion Guide**

The science of reading is informed by research from various fields such as education, cognitive science, psychology, communication science, and linguistics. It encompasses how the brain learns to read, the necessary skills for reading, and research on the best teaching methods. Explicit and systematic reading instruction is crucial for all students, especially those at risk or experiencing reading difficulties.

Districts and schools may find the [Shifting to the Science of Reading: A Discussion Guide for School and District Teams](#) helpful as they align teaching approaches with effective literacy instruction in kindergarten-grade 5 and grades 6-12.

Please send questions about the science of reading to [ReadOhio@education.ohio.gov](mailto:ReadOhio@education.ohio.gov).