

Kindergarten Through Grade 4 Literacy Report for School Year 2022-2023



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Executive Summary

Ohio's commitment to student success is stronger than ever. In 2023, Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted, with the support of the Ohio General Assembly, signed into law historic investments in literacy for Ohio's students. These investments expand on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's priorities to strengthen reading achievement, accelerate learning opportunities in mathematics and literacy, create programs to support and expand workforce readiness, and ensure students have the necessary supports to be ready each day to learn.

Building strong literacy skills early in life strengthens the potential for Ohioans to prosper and achieve well after high school graduation. As a result, Governor DeWine has called for a renewed focus on literacy and the science of reading in Ohio's schools through the ReadOhio initiative. ReadOhio is an exciting, statewide effort to encourage improved literacy skills for all ages, including the implementation of high-quality instructional materials aligned with the science of reading in Ohio's schools.

The data in this Kindergarten through Grade 4 Literacy Report provides insight into some of the improvements made over the past year and challenges that remain in working to ensure students are proficient readers. Key findings include:

- Only 62.3% of third grade students and 58.9% of fourth grade students scored proficient or higher on the respective state English language arts tests in 2022-2023.
- 32% of students in kindergarten through grade 3 with Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans who were not on track in the 2021-2022 school year advanced to on track status by the fall of the 2022-2023 school year.
- The most frequently reported interventions across grades kindergarten through 4 were Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness, Explicit Intervention in Decoding, Explicit Intervention in Comprehension, Explicit Intervention in Sight Word Recognition, and Explicit Intervention in Fluency.
- Evidence indicates third grade students on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans made significant progress in reading throughout the academic year. While there is significant progress, relatively few of these students are achieving proficiency.

Introduction

[Ohio law](#) requires the director of the Department of Education and Workforce to report annually to the governor and General Assembly the numbers and percentages of kindergarten through grade 4 students who are reading below grade level based on diagnostic assessments. The annual report must include the types of intervention services districts are offering these students and, when possible, their effectiveness.

[Ohio law](#) also requires the Department to report progress for all public school students placed on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans in kindergarten through grade 4 and the

progress made by school districts and community schools operating under state-required Reading Achievement Improvement Plans.

The data and findings in this report are organized in four sections:

- **Section 1** discusses the number and percentage of kindergarten through grade 4 students reading below grade level as determined by assessment and performance level.
- **Section 2** discusses reading achievement progress for kindergarten through grade 4 students on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans.
- **Section 3** discusses reading achievement progress for districts and community schools operating under Reading Achievement Improvement Plans.
- **Section 4** discusses types of intervention services offered to kindergarten through grade 4 students reading below grade level.

The report concludes with a description of some of the Department’s ongoing literacy support efforts.

Data and Findings

Section 1: Number and Percentage of Kindergarten through Grade 4 Students Reading Below Grade Level by Assessment and Performance Level

The results of the reading diagnostic assessment administered at the beginning of each school year determine whether a student is “on track” or “not on track” to read at the student’s current grade level. A student who is on track is reading at the level set by [Ohio's Learning Standards](#) for the end of the student’s previous grade. The reading diagnostic assessment is only required to be administered to students in kindergarten through grade 3. Table 1, below, includes the numbers and percentages of students in kindergarten through grade 3 who have scored on track and not on track on a state-approved reading diagnostic assessment in the 2022-2023 school year. Additional student performance data is available in the spreadsheet accompanying this report.

Table 1 also shows the numbers and percentages of students in grades 3 and 4 who scored proficient or not proficient on Ohio’s State Tests for English language arts in the 2022-2023 school year. This test measures student proficiency on Ohio’s Learning Standards for English language arts. Third-grade students first take the test in the fall, at which point the test serves as an early marker of student performance on the standards. Students who score below the “proficient” level in the fall are required to take the test again in the spring. Students who score at the “proficient” level or higher in the fall also may take the test in the spring. The numbers and percentages in the column titled “Ohio’s State Tests for English Language Arts Assessment: Proficiency Status” contain the highest score a student received on either the

fall, spring, or summer grade 3 English language arts assessment in the 2022-2023 school year. Ohio’s State Test in grade 4 English language arts is administered once per year in the spring. Notably, 62.3% of third-graders and 58.9% of fourth-graders scored proficient or higher. These percentages are similar to but slightly higher compared to the 2021-2022 data for third-graders (59.8%) and slightly lower compared to the 2021-2022 data for fourth-graders (62.5%).

TABLE 1: READING PERFORMANCE OF KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 4 STUDENTS IN 2022-2023

Grade Level	Ohio’s State Tests for English Language Arts Assessment: Proficiency Status			
	On Track	Not On Track	Proficient	Not Proficient
Kindergarten	59.8% (72,611)	40.2% (48,756)	N/A	N/A
Grade 1	64.1% (80,760)	35.9% (45,294)	N/A	N/A
Grade 2	58.2% (68,537)	41.8% (49,273)	N/A	N/A
Grade 3	58.7% (71,092)	41.3% (50,034)	62.3% (77,777)	37.7% (47,082)
Grade 4	N/A*	N/A*	58.9% (71,578)	41.1% (50,007)

*Grade 4 students do not take the reading diagnostic assessment required under [Ohio Revised Code 3313.608\(B\)\(1\)](#).

Section 2: Reading Achievement Progress for Kindergarten through Grade 3 Students on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans

All Ohio districts and community schools must screen kindergarten through grade 3 students for reading difficulties using the fall reading diagnostic at the beginning of each school year. For each student who is not on track (is reading below grade level), the school also must:

- Administer any necessary informal or formal diagnostic assessments to determine the instructional needs of the student;
- Immediately provide reading instruction and/or intervention using research-based reading strategies that have been shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers and are targeted at the student’s identified reading deficiencies; and
- Develop a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan within 60 days of receiving the student’s diagnostic result.

Each student will remain on a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan until the student scores on track for grade-level reading on the next school year’s fall reading diagnostic *or* until the student scores proficient (700) or higher on Ohio’s State Test for English language arts in third grade or a subsequent grade.

Students’ reading diagnostic scores from the fall of the 2021-2022 school year were compared to their reading diagnostic scores from the fall of the 2022-2023 school year to determine how

many students had progressed to on track status, and thus no longer were required to have a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan. Data showed that 32% ($n = 49,996$) of students who were not on track in the 2021-2022 school year advanced to on track status by the fall of the 2022-2023 school year. This rate of change is slightly greater than that of the previous year in which 30% ($n = 44,996$) of students who were not on track advanced to on track status the following year but remains below the rate for the 2018-2019 year in which 38% of students ($n = 46,334$) who were not on track in the fall of 2017 advanced to on track status by the fall of 2018.

Section 3: Reading Achievement and Progress for Districts and Community Schools Operating Under Reading Achievement Improvement Plans

The Reading Achievement Improvement Plan is a district-level blueprint for raising student achievement in reading. [Ohio law](#) requires school districts and community schools that demonstrate the following criteria on their past two consecutive Ohio School Report Cards to submit Reading Achievement Improvement Plans to the Department by Dec. 31:

1. A performance rating of less than three stars on the Early Literacy Component; and
2. 51% or less of students scored proficient or higher on Ohio’s State Test for grade 3 English language arts.

Based on these criteria, 55 districts and 118 community schools were required to submit Reading Achievement Improvement Plans to the Department in 2023. This is a sizable increase from 2019, the last year Reading Achievement Improvement Plans were required, when 40 districts and 50 community schools submitted plans. However, 14 districts (35%) and 21 community schools (42%) improved their reading achievement enough that they were no longer required to submit plans in 2023.

Section 4: Types of Intervention Services Offered to Kindergarten through Grade 3 Students Reading Below Grade Level

Research suggests that when students at risk for reading difficulties receive early and intensive intervention, they have a much stronger chance of achieving grade-level reading ability. Without early intervention, their difficulties are likely to persist and worsen over time as the demands of school increase. The chance of “catching up” decreases over time. Based on foundational research for [Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#), students who enter kindergarten on track in language and literacy are seven times more likely to go on to score proficient on the third grade Ohio’s State Test for English language arts. Students who are not proficient in reading by third grade are three times more likely than their proficient peers to not graduate on time.

Under [Ohio law](#), districts and community schools must create Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans for students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are not on track within 60 days of receiving the reading diagnostic results. The district or school must involve the student’s parent or guardian and the classroom teacher in developing the plan, which must include the following:

- Identification of the student’s specific reading difficulty;
- A description of proposed supplemental instructional services that will target the student’s identified reading difficulty;
- Opportunities for the student’s parents or guardians to be involved in the instructional services;
- A process to monitor the implementation of the student’s instructional services (progress monitoring);
- A reading curriculum during regular school hours that does the following:
 - Helps students read at grade level;
 - Provides scientifically based and reliable assessment; and
 - Provides initial and ongoing analysis of each student’s reading progress.
- A statement that unless the student attains the appropriate level of reading competency by the end of grade 3, the student may be retained unless otherwise exempt.
- High-dosage tutoring opportunities aligned with the student's classroom instruction through a state-approved vendor on the list of high-quality tutoring vendors or a locally approved opportunity that aligns with high-dosage tutoring best practices.

Table 2, below, lists the types of intervention services districts and community schools provided to students with Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans in the 2022-2023 school year. No single reason exists why a student struggles to read. Schools choose various strategies on a case-by-case basis according to the unique needs of each student as determined by data. Districts and community schools are required to report the types of reading intervention services provided during the school year in the Department’s Education Management Information System (EMIS). Districts and schools may report one or more intervention services for each student. These intervention types were recently revised to align with the science of reading. The 2022-2023 school year was the second year these interventions were reported in EMIS.

TABLE 2: INTERVENTION SERVICE OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS ON READING IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PLANS 2022-2023

Intervention Services	
Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness	Multi-Modal Approach to Structured Literacy
Explicit Intervention in Decoding	Explicit Intervention in Vocabulary
Explicit Intervention in Comprehension	Explicit Intervention in Writing – Focus on Foundation Skills Transcription

Interventions Designed Around Levelled Texts	Explicit Intervention in Writing – Focus on Composition Skills
Explicit Intervention in Sight Word Recognition	Explicit Intervention in Communication/Language
Explicit Intervention in Fluency	Interventions Designed Around the Three Cuing System
Small-Group Scaffolding of Complex Text	Summer Structured Literacy Programs

Although districts and community schools reported using all the possible intervention service options across grades, there was notable variability in how frequently each was used. In general, the least frequently reported intervention types were explicit intervention in writing, explicit intervention in communication/language, summer structured literacy programs, and interventions designed around the three-cuing system. Table 3, below, shows the five most frequently reported intervention services per grade level during the 2022-2023 school year.

TABLE 3. MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED INTERVENTION SERVICES BY GRADE LEVEL 2022-2023

Grade Level	Number of Students Receiving Top 5 Intervention Types Per Grade				
Kindergarten	Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness (n = 43,167)	Explicit Intervention in Decoding (n = 20,327)	Explicit Intervention in Sight Word Recognition (n = 10,982)	Multi-Modal Approach to Structured Literacy (n = 7,353)	Explicit Intervention in Comprehension (n = 5,045)
Grade 1	Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness (n = 32,501)	Explicit Intervention in Decoding (n = 26,867)	Explicit Intervention in Sight Word Recognition (n = 13,498)	Explicit Intervention in Fluency (n = 7,634)	Explicit Intervention in Comprehension (n = 6,991)
Grade 2	Explicit Intervention in Decoding (n = 29,841)	Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness (n = 24,202)	Explicit Intervention in Fluency (n = 13,865)	Explicit Intervention in Comprehension (n = 13,531)	Explicit Intervention in Sight Word Recognition (n = 12,359)
Grade 3	Explicit Intervention in Comprehension (n = 27,974)	Explicit Intervention in Decoding (n = 27,543)	Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness (n = 18,312)	Explicit Intervention in Fluency (n = 17,915)	Explicit Intervention in Vocabulary (n = 9,611)

It is important to note the most frequently reported interventions change across grade levels (Table 3). For example, consider that in kindergarten, there are more than 47,000 students categorized as not on track based on the K-3 reading diagnostic. Most of those students (88%) received explicit intervention in phonemic awareness as part of their Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans, underscoring the importance of this key skill as students are in the early stages of word recognition instruction. Conversely, by grade 3, although there were more than 50,000 students who qualified for Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans, the type of interventions provided was less specific to one skill, with just over half receiving explicit intervention in comprehension and/or decoding.

Also as seen in Table 3, there is a general shift from intervening on skills that underlie word recognition (phonemic awareness, decoding, sight word recognition) in the earlier grades to intervening on skills to support fluency and comprehension as students get older. Finally, it is worth noting that explicit interventions in decoding and phonemic awareness remain frequently used intervention services across these grade bands, suggesting that supports specific to word recognition continue to be necessary for students who experience reading difficulties.

As more educators continue to engage in professional development requirements aligned to the science of reading, it is likely that trends in the most frequent interventions will continue to map more closely to students' specific intervention needs. For example, data from the 2021-2022 year showed that Intervention Designed around Leveled Text was one of the top 5 most frequently reported interventions. The use of that intervention decreased in the 2022-2023 year, as more students are receiving explicit instruction in the key skills that are required for reading proficiency.

For third grade students, intervention services often are of particular importance for ensuring students' reading proficiency for future academic success. On average, third-grade students on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans demonstrated significant gains throughout the academic year on Ohio's State Test for English language arts. An important aspect of examining students' gains over time is understanding the extent to which district-level effects exert influence on student scores, particularly because there is considerable variation among district locations and types. Analyses that incorporated these district-level effects determined that students' average spring scores (684) were greater than their average fall scores (660), indicating these students made significant progress in reading throughout the academic year.

As described above and shown in Table 3, although there were many possible intervention strategies that students could have received, the most frequently reported interventions for students in grade 3 were explicit intervention in comprehension, decoding, phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary. A comparison of scores for students receiving these five most frequently reported interventions are below in Table 4 and indicate levels of gain throughout the year. It is important to note that students could receive more than one type of intervention, as detailed in their Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans. Just over one-half of third-graders (52%, $n = 30,252$) received more than one type of intervention, and just under one-half of third-graders received just one type of intervention (48%; $n = 27,590$).

TABLE 4. IMPROVEMENT ON OHIO'S STATE TEST FOR GRADE 3 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS BY INTERVENTION TYPE IN 2022-2023

Intervention strategy	Avg. Fall Score	Avg. Spring Score	Gain
Explicit Intervention in Comprehension	664	690	26
Explicit Intervention in Decoding	655	677	22
Explicit Intervention in Phonemic Awareness	655	676	21
Explicit Intervention in Fluency	660	686	26
Explicit Intervention in Vocabulary	663	688	25

Overall, results from the 2022-2023 school year suggest third grade students identified as not on track for reading at grade level who subsequently were on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans exhibited significant gains on the state test throughout the year. Although these data are limited in that the details of the intervention materials used are unavailable, this is a promising outcome as it indicates most students are receiving the support they need to make progress. However, these results also show that, on average, most students still are not scoring at or above grade-level proficiency even after receiving intervention services. In fact, only 37% of third-grade students on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans ($n = 21,327$) scored at or above grade-level proficiency in the spring. These data support the idea that early intervention is critical; students who receive intervention can make considerable progress over time, so providing these services as early as possible is key. In future years, the Department also will be collecting more detailed information regarding the core curriculum and reading intervention materials schools and districts use, which will provide greater insight into the relative effectiveness of different reading interventions.

Ongoing Literacy Support Efforts

Through the recently enacted budget bill, the Governor received the backing of the General Assembly to secure funding to help advance literacy practices in the state, including:

- Subsidizing the cost of **high-quality instructional materials** aligned with the science of reading for public schools that don't have them.
- Supporting teachers through **professional development in the science of reading** by covering the costs of stipends for teachers to participate.
- Providing **additional literacy coaches**, in districts and community schools most in need of support, to help teachers implement literacy best practices.

The Department is committed to helping educators support all students in increasing their literacy skills to become lifelong learners. Whether a district or school is just getting started in this work or if they have already implemented instruction aligned to the science of reading, the Department is ready to support these efforts. For example, the Department provides a continuous professional learning series for state support team and educational service center colleagues to bolster support to districts to address local literacy needs. The Department also trained state support team and educational service center colleagues to support districts with

literacy or English language arts curriculum reviews and material selection. These supports include analyzing district data to identify gaps in resources. The following examples illustrate additional statewide supports:

- **Literacy Academy:** The Department hosts an annual, in-person [Literacy Academy](#) that provides professional learning to support the use of evidence-based language and literacy practices. In addition, [Literacy Academy on Demand](#) provides access to short professional learning courses in literacy for grades kindergarten-12. The Department has embraced this model and is creating additional on-demand courses for any educator to access for free at any time.
- **Ohio's Introduction to Dyslexia Course:** The Department's Introduction to Dyslexia, Kindergarten-Grade 3 course was made available in the Department's Learning Management System in the 2022-2023 school year. This free course is an option that meets the [professional development requirements](#) of Ohio's Dyslexia Support Laws. As of Jan. 5, 2024, 27,338 educators have enrolled in the course and 19,464 educators have completed the course. Additionally, the Department will be developing a free course to meet the professional development requirements for intervention specialists and teachers providing instruction to students in grades 4-12. This course will be available in early 2024.
- **The Department's Science of Reading Professional Development Courses:** The Department has partnered with Keys to Literacy to develop Ohio's professional development in the science of reading to meet the requirements of HB 33 of the 135th General Assembly. Keys to Literacy is a nationally renowned provider of training and courses aligned to the science of reading. The Department will provide multiple professional development sequences or pathways to meet this requirement based on an educator's role and prior training completed to meet Ohio's Dyslexia Support Laws. The Department anticipates the professional development being available statewide in early 2024. Additional guidance and information about the course is available on the [Department's website](#).
- **Science of Reading Toolkit:** A [Science of Reading Toolkit](#) is available with resources for educators and families, including timelines for new requirements for professional development and aligned instructional materials.
- **Shifting to the Science of Reading - A Guide for District and Building Teams:** Building educator capacity to deliver instruction that is aligned to the science of reading and the foundational components of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement requires leaders to provide intensive, sustained, embedded, collaborative, and instructionally focused professional learning and coaching. [The Shifting to the Science of Reading Discussion Guide for District and Building Teams](#) can be used to guide conversations within district, building, and teacher-based teams as they shift to instruction aligned with the science of reading.
- **Literacy Coaching Initiatives:** The biennial budget included funding for literacy coaches to support districts, community schools, and STEM schools with the lowest rates of proficiency. Thirty-three literacy coaches are in place for the 2023-2024 school

year, serving 32 districts and 11 community schools. Each coach provides support to one or more targeted buildings in the identified district. In addition, the Department is developing tools and resources to support the implementation of literacy coaching statewide.

- **Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement Implementation Guides:** [Implementing Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement: Resources for School Leaders](#) was made available for school leaders in 2023. The guides were developed as part of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant. District and building administrators play key roles in improving literacy outcomes, and these guides are available for school leaders to support the implementation of *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* in their settings. Additional resources and tools related to each section of the guide, as well as overview videos, are available on the [Department's webpage](#).
- **Ohio's Dyslexia Guidebook:** As required by [Ohio law](#), [Ohio's Dyslexia Guidebook](#) contains best practices and methods for universal screening, intervention, and remediation for students with dyslexia or students displaying dyslexic characteristics and tendencies. Districts and schools use the guidebook to access critical information for successful implementation of Ohio's Dyslexia Support Laws.
- **Family Engagement Resources for Ohio's Dyslexia Support Laws:** The Department has partnered with Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center at The Ohio State University to develop [sample communication tools and guidance](#) for schools related to Ohio's Dyslexia Laws. These resources are aligned with Ohio's Dyslexia Guidebook for schools and can be adapted for local use. This collaboration has resulted in sample letters schools can send to families after dyslexia screenings, an informational guide about dyslexia for Ohio families, a handout about structured literacy, and more.
- **Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan Intervention Video Series:** The Department has created a [series of short support videos](#) for the Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan interventions. In each video, Ohio's literacy leads describe specific intervention types and demonstrate how to teach each Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan intervention type.
- **Regional Support Teams for Literacy:** The Department provides continuous support for regional partners at educational service centers and state support teams through monthly professional learning sessions, facilitator training opportunities in Department-disseminated professional development, and engagement in educational service center and state support team networks. The consultants who support the implementation of Ohio's Plan to Raise to Literacy Achievement are members of their regions' support teams for literacy. These team members provide support to districts and schools in their regions around data-based decision-making in literacy, developing improvement plans in literacy, and supporting the fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices in language and literacy.
- **High-Quality Instructional Materials in English Language Arts and Evidence-Based Reading Intervention Programs:** The Department is conducting a review process for core curriculum and instructional materials and reading intervention programs to be

used in Ohio schools. An initial approved list of core curriculum and instructional materials is expected to be available in late January 2024, with a final approved list in late March. An approved list of reading intervention programs is expected in April 2024. Additional [guidance, resources, and implementation tools](#) are available to aid in the selection of high-quality instructional materials aligned with the science of reading. In addition, the Department has provided training to regional literacy consultants in materials adoption processes and practices specific to literacy and English language arts.

While the data in this report provide a snapshot of progress and challenges at a point in time, they are not an end point. As the challenges in education evolve, so too must our work to produce solutions, enrich essential learning experiences, and strengthen the critical partnerships central to student success. Knowing we are making gains is important and seeing how specific strategies are making an impact allows us to take stock of the progress and further prioritize the state's essential efforts. Together, Ohio school leaders, educators, and families will continue making a difference for all students.