



LONG ISLAND
LITERACY COALITION

Advocacy Packet

TALKING POINTS, FACT SHEETS, AND PRACTICAL TOOLS TO
SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY ADVOCACY.





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About the Coalition

Every child deserves to read with confidence—and every community has a role to play.

The Long Island Literacy Coalition was founded to unite parents, educators, and advocates around one shared goal: ensuring all students receive literacy instruction grounded in the Science of Reading.

We are a volunteer-led, nonpartisan coalition dedicated to bridging the gap between research and practice. Our work centers on **awareness, alignment, and advocacy**—helping school districts, families, and legislators make informed decisions that reflect the evidence on how children learn to read.

Through collaboration and transparency, we aim to strengthen literacy systems across Long Island and beyond. From sharing research summaries and outreach tools to tracking state and local initiatives, our focus is simple: **empower communities with knowledge and equip them to take action.**

OUR MISSION

To promote evidence-based literacy instruction and ensure that every student on Long Island has access to the tools, teaching, and support needed to become a proficient reader.

OUR VISION

A region where all schools are aligned with the Science of Reading, educators are supported with effective training, and every child can thrive as a confident, capable reader.

How to Use This Packet

Moving from Conversation to Change

This packet was created to make advocacy easier, not overwhelming. Whether you're meeting with a school leader, writing to a legislator, or simply starting a conversation in your community, these materials are designed to help you speak with clarity, accuracy, and confidence.

1

Before You Begin

- Familiarize yourself with the basics. Read The Science of Reading section to understand the research behind effective literacy instruction.
- Know your audience. Decide who you're speaking with—school leaders, board members, or legislators—and focus on the most relevant talking points.
- Stay focused on solutions. Highlight what's possible when schools align with evidence-based practices.

2

During Conversations

- Lead with shared values. Start with what everyone agrees on: all children deserve to read and write proficiently.
- Use data and stories. Combine facts from The Literacy Landscape with real examples from classrooms or families.
- Keep it short and clear. One to two key points are more memorable than a list of ten.
- Stay positive and professional. Advocacy is most effective when it's rooted in collaboration, not confrontation.

3

Afterward

- Follow up. Send a thank-you email or share a resource that reinforces your message.
- Share updates. Tell others in the coalition what worked—your experience strengthens our collective advocacy.
- Stay connected. Visit our website and social media pages for the latest legislative updates, upcoming events, and new tools.

The Literacy Landscape

The numbers tell a story—and the story calls for action.

Across New York State, far too many students are not reading at grade level. According to the most recent NAEP data, only about one-third of eighth graders demonstrate proficiency in reading comprehension. On Long Island, local assessments mirror these trends, showing persistent gaps in foundational skills, comprehension, and vocabulary growth.

These results aren't a reflection of student potential. They reflect the **systems and instructional approaches** that have long relied on methods unsupported by research. The Science of Reading offers a roadmap out of this pattern—one grounded in decades of cognitive, linguistic, and classroom-based studies.

Districts across the state are now at a turning point. As new legislation, state guidance, and professional development opportunities emerge, Long Island has a unique chance to lead with clarity and coherence. The goal isn't to assign blame; it's to align practice with evidence so every student can access the instruction they deserve.

What This Means for Long Island

1.

Equity begins with access

Evidence-based literacy instruction ensures that all students receive effective teaching.

2.

Change is systemic

Success depends on aligned policies, curriculum, teacher preparation, and ongoing professional learning.

3.

Momentum is growing

Districts, families, and advocates across Long Island are joining together to move toward instructional alignment.

Understanding the Data

Looking at the numbers to understand where support and change are needed.

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) is often called *The Nation's Report Card*. Every few years, a representative sample of students across the country takes this assessment to measure how well they can read and understand grade-level text.

It is the **only assessment administered uniformly across every state**, allowing us to compare performance nationwide. These results help us see patterns across decades, grade levels, and student groups. They are not tied to one test, curriculum, or district—they show the bigger picture of how well our state's literacy systems are serving students. Scores are grouped into four categories:

Below Basic: Students struggle with grade-level reading tasks and need targeted support.

Basic: Students can understand simple texts but may miss deeper meaning or complex vocabulary.

Proficient: Students read and comprehend grade-level material with understanding and accuracy.

Advanced: Students demonstrate superior comprehension and analytical reading skills.

Use the following pages to explore how New York's fourth- and eighth-grade results compare across time and groups of students. Then, use this data to start conversations in your community about what's next.

Why This Matters

1.

Only about one in three students in New York performs at or above *Proficient* level in both 4th and 8th grade.

2.

Scores have remained flat for decades, showing little improvement since the 1990s.

3.

Gaps persist between student groups, including those defined by race, language background, and economic status.

Grade 4

Early Reading Foundations

2024 Results

In 2024, **the average reading score for New York's fourth graders was 215**, nearly identical to the national average (214).

Only **31% of students performed at or above the Proficient level**, showing little change since 1998.

This means the **majority of students are still struggling with grade-level reading tasks** that require vocabulary, comprehension, and inference skills.

Why Grade 4 Matters

Fourth grade marks a key shift—from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. When students haven't yet mastered decoding, vocabulary, and fluency by this point, comprehension in every subject becomes harder. These results show why **early, evidence-based instruction is essential**.

The Nation's Report Card

OVERALL RESULTS

- In 2024, the average score of fourth-grade students in New York was 215. This was not significantly different from the average score of 214 for students in the nation.
- The average score for students in New York in 2024 (215) was not significantly different from their average score in 2022 (214) and in 1998 (215).
- The percentage of students in New York who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level was 31 percent in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2022 (30 percent) and in 1998 (29 percent).
- The percentage of students in New York who performed at or above the NAEP Basic level was 59 percent in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2022 (58 percent) and in 1998 (62 percent).

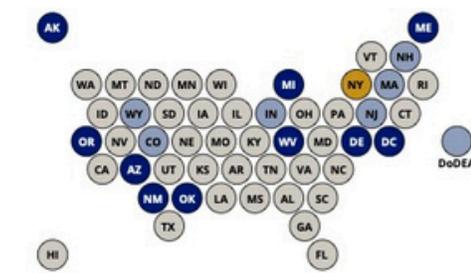
2024 READING STATE SNAPSHOT REPORT
NEW YORK ■ GRADE 4 ■ PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NAEP ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL PERCENTAGES AND AVERAGE SCORE RESULTS

Year	Below NAEP Basic	NAEP Basic	NAEP Proficient	NAEP Advanced	Average Score
New York	38	33	23	6*	215
1998	42	29	21	8	214
2024	41	28	22	9	215
Nation (public)	41	29	22	8	214

* Significantly different (p < .05) from the state's results in 2024. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: NAEP achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted and used with caution. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

COMPARE THE AVERAGE SCORE IN 2024 TO OTHER STATES/JURISDICTIONS

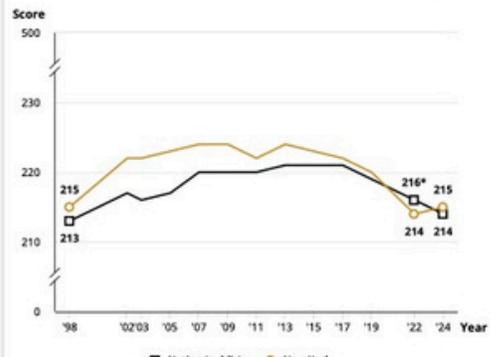


In 2024, the average score in New York (215) was

- lower than those in 7 states/jurisdictions
- higher than those in 10 states/jurisdictions
- not significantly different from those in 34 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

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



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

RESULTS FOR STUDENT GROUPS IN 2024

REPORTING GROUPS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS	AVG. SCORE	PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP BASIC	PERCENTAGE AT NAEP PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE AT NAEP ADVANCED
Race/ethnicity					
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1	1	1	1
Asian	12	232	74	49	19
Black	16	200	45	17	3
Hispanic	28	203	49	22	6
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	1	1	1	1
Two or More Races	3	222	61	39	14
White	40	223	68	37	11
Gender					
Male	50	212	57	29	8
Female	50	217	62	32	10
Economically disadvantaged status					
Economically disadvantaged	56	203	48	21	5
Not economically disadvantaged	40	231	75	45	15

Rounds to zero.
* Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "information not available" category for the Economically Disadvantaged Status is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SCORE GAPS FOR STUDENT GROUPS

- In 2024, Black students had an average score that was 22 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was narrower than that in 1998 (37 points).
- In 2024, Hispanic students had an average score that was 19 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was narrower than that in 1998 (40 points).
- In 2024, male students in New York had an average score that was not significantly different from that for female students.
- In 2024, students who were identified as economically disadvantaged had an average score that was 29 points lower than that for students who were identified as not economically disadvantaged. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (35 points).



ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Results presented in this report are based on public school students only. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Score gap results for "Black," "Hispanic," and "White" presented in this report are based on the 6-category race/ethnicity variable with data available starting in early 1990s. Read more about how to interpret NAEP results from the reading assessment at [interpret results](#). For more information and additional comparisons please visit the [Nation's Report Card](#) and [NAEP Data Explorer](#).
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998–2024 Reading Assessments.

Grade 8

Adolescent Reading Comprehension 2024 Results

In 2024, the average reading score for New York's eighth graders was **257**, the same as the national average.

Only **31%** of students performed at or above the **Proficient level**, showing virtually no improvement over the past two decades.

This means that **by middle school, many students are still struggling to interpret complex texts, make inferences, and connect ideas** across multiple sources.

Why Grade 8 Matters

Eighth grade marks a critical point in reading development. Students must analyze, compare, and evaluate increasingly complex texts across subjects. When foundational gaps persist, comprehension becomes a barrier to learning. These results underscore the **importance of sustained, research-aligned instruction** that helps students truly *understand and think with* the text.



2024 READING STATE SNAPSHOT REPORT
NEW YORK ■ GRADE 8 ■ PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OVERALL RESULTS

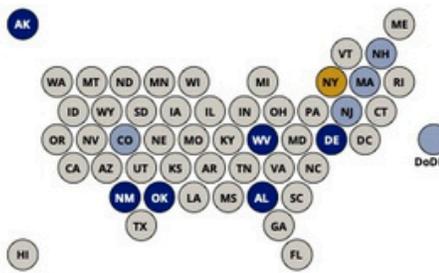
- In 2024, the average score of eighth-grade students in New York was 257. This was not significantly different from the average score of 257 for students in the nation.
- The average score for students in New York in 2024 (257) was not significantly different from their average score in 2022 (262) and was lower than their average score in 1998 (265).
- The percentage of students in New York who performed at or above the *NAEP Proficient* level was 31 percent in 2024. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2022 (32 percent) and in 1998 (32 percent).
- The percentage of students in New York who performed at or above the *NAEP Basic* level was 65 percent in 2024. This percentage was smaller than that in 2022 (70 percent) and in 1998 (76 percent).

NAEP ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL PERCENTAGES AND AVERAGE SCORE RESULTS

Year	Below NAEP Basic	NAEP Basic	NAEP Proficient	NAEP Advanced	Average Score
1998	24*	44*	30	2*	265*
2022	30*	38	28	5	262
2024	35	34	26	5	257
Nation (public)					
2024	34	37*	25	4	257

* Significantly different (p < .05) from the state's results in 2024. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: NAEP achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted and used with caution. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

COMPARE THE AVERAGE SCORE IN 2024 TO OTHER STATES/JURISDICTIONS

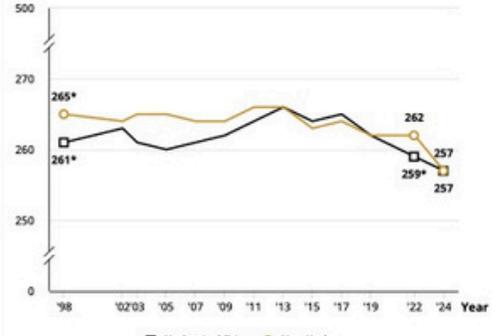


In 2024, the average score in New York (257) was

- lower than those in 5 states/jurisdictions
- higher than those in 6 states/jurisdictions
- not significantly different from those in 40 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

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



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

RESULTS FOR STUDENT GROUPS IN 2024

REPORTING GROUPS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS	AVG. SCORE	PERCENTAGE AT OR ABOVE NAEP BASIC	PERCENTAGE AT NAEP PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE AT NAEP ADVANCED
Race/ethnicity					
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1	1	1	1
Asian	10	279	83	51	13
Black	16	248	58	21	2
Hispanic	30	243	53	21	2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	1	1	1	1
Two or More Races	3	1	1	1	1
White	40	265	72	37	7
Gender					
Male	51	253	62	28	4
Female	49	261	68	34	6
Economically disadvantaged status					
Economically disadvantaged	54	247	56	22	3
Not economically disadvantaged	40	270	76	42	8

Rounds to zero.
1 Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "Information not available" category for the Economically Disadvantaged Status is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

SCORE GAPS FOR STUDENT GROUPS

- In 2024, Black students had an average score that was 16 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (28 points).
- In 2024, Hispanic students had an average score that was 22 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (28 points).
- In 2024, male students in New York had an average score that was lower than that for female students by 8 points.
- In 2024, students who were identified as economically disadvantaged had an average score that was 23 points lower than that for students who were identified as not economically disadvantaged. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (25 points).



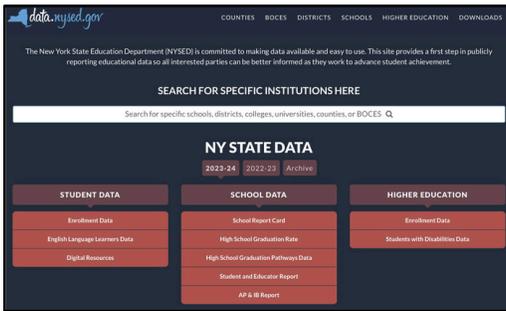
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NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Results presented in this report are based on public school students only. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Score gap results for "Black," "Hispanic," and "White" presented in this report are based on the 6-category race/ethnicity variable with data available starting in early 1990s. Read more about how to interpret NAEP results from the reading assessment at [interpret.results](#). For more information and additional comparisons please visit the [Nation's Report Card](#) and [NAEP Data Explorer](#).
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998-2024 Reading Assessments.

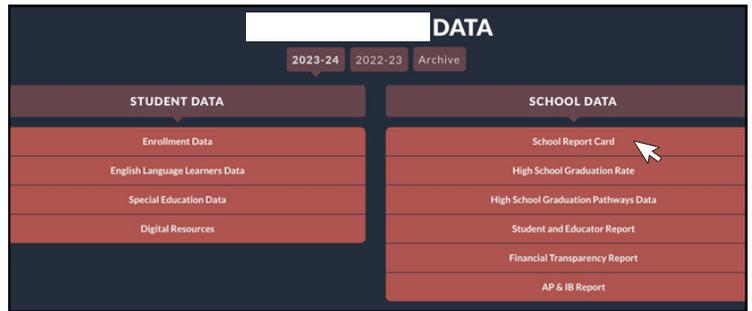
www.longislandliteracycoalition.com



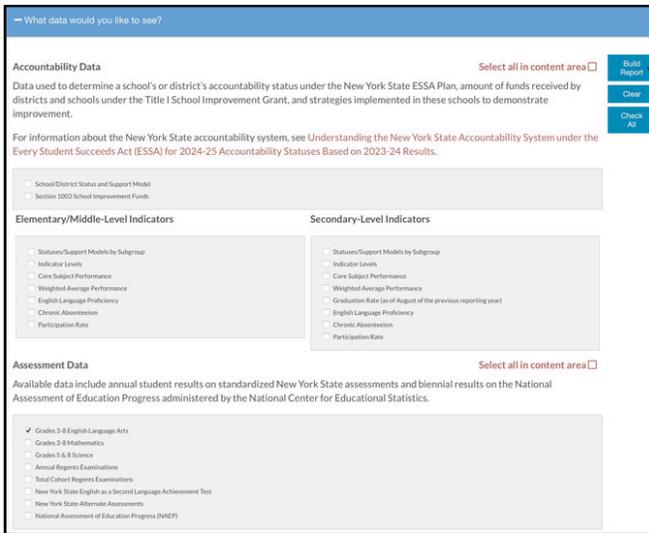
HOW TO ACCESS YOUR DISTRICT'S ELA DATA



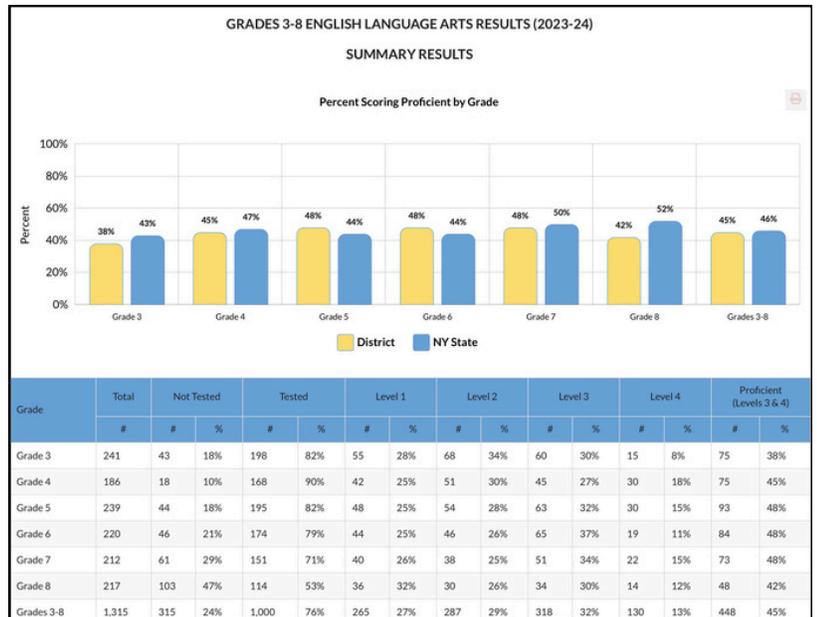
Step 1: Visit data.nysed.gov website and type your school district in the search bar.



Step 2: Select School Report Card.



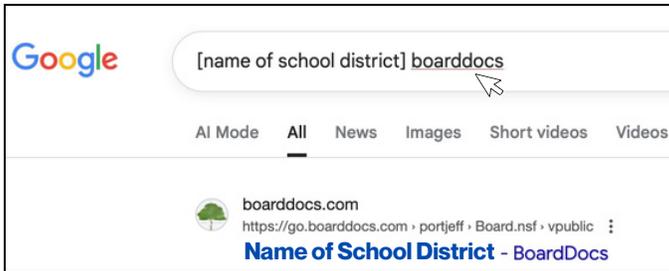
Step 3: Check the box for your school's Grades 3-8 ELA results. Then hit "Build Report." You can explore other subjects and their data by selecting them as well.



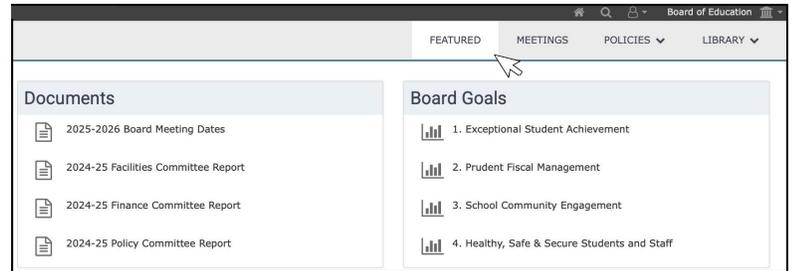
Step 4: Scroll through the results and compare the scores across grade levels and over the years. Bring this information to Board of Ed meetings or discussions.



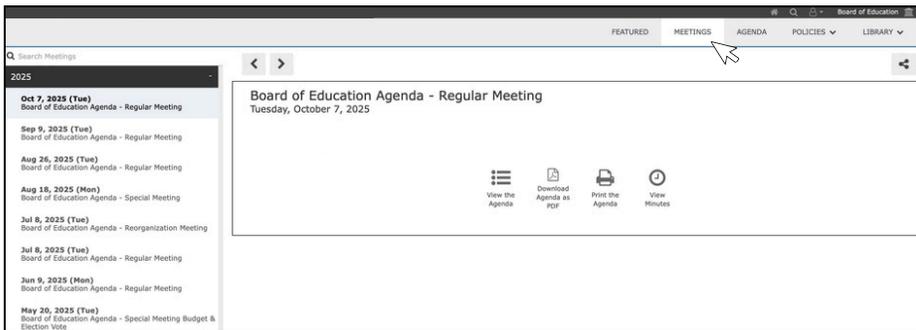
HOW TO ACCESS YOUR DISTRICT'S BOARDDOCS



Step 1: Type in name of school district followed by “boarddocs” in your preferred search engine.



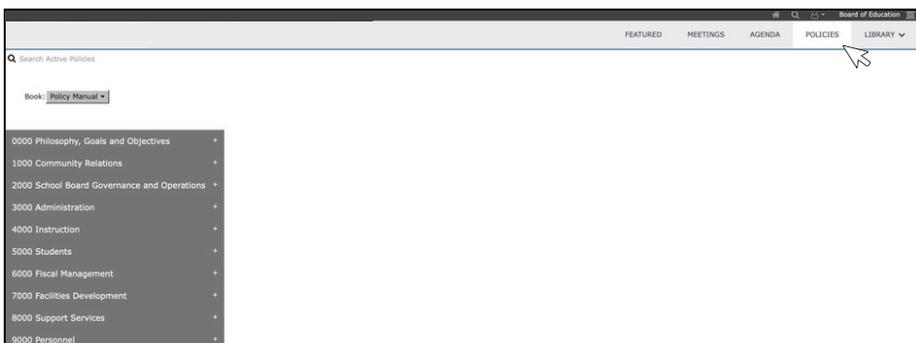
Step 2: Each school district customizes their welcome page. Featured gets you back to it.



Meetings: This tab will take you to your districts BOE meetings, with the dates listed in chronological order. Selecting a specific date will open up the meeting’s description, agenda, and minutes.



Agenda: Find any attachments presented during the meeting here listed in PDF format. Click to open.



Policies: Click to view Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.



The Science of Reading

Decades of research show how the brain learns to read, and how instruction can make or break that process.

The Science of Reading isn't a program or a trend. It's a body of interdisciplinary research from fields such as cognitive psychology, linguistics, and neuroscience that explains *how skilled reading develops and why some students struggle*.

This research has identified the critical components of reading—**phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension**—and how explicit, systematic instruction in each area supports all learners, including those with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

What The Research Tells Us

- Reading is **not natural**, the brain must be taught to connect sounds (phonemes) with letters (graphemes).
- **Oral language and background knowledge** are key drivers of comprehension.
- **Explicit and systematic instruction** is more effective than discovery-based or implicit methods.
- **Early intervention** prevents reading failure more effectively than remediation later on.

Why It Matters

When instruction aligns with the Science of Reading, more students become fluent, confident readers who can access knowledge across every subject. Misaligned practices, like over reliance on guessing or context cues, leave many students behind—widening gaps that persist into adolescence.

From Research to Action

The challenge now is not discovering what works—but ensuring every classroom reflects it. This means updating curriculum, professional development, and intervention practices so teachers are equipped with the knowledge and tools that align with how the brain learns to read.

The Science of Reading in Focus

These frameworks collectively point to a simple truth: reading proficiency grows when instruction is explicit, systematic, and grounded in how the brain processes print and language. Each strand (decoding, language, and strategic thinking) must be taught intentionally for students to become independent, lifelong readers.

Foundational Frameworks

- **The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986):** Reading comprehension = decoding × language comprehension.
 - **Scarborough’s Reading Rope (2001):** Illustrates how word recognition and language comprehension strands intertwine to create skilled reading.
 - **The Active View of Reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021):** Expands the model to include self-regulation, motivation, and strategic thinking in reading.
-

Key Researchers & Contributions

1.

Linnea Ehri

Described how children form connections between letters and sounds (orthographic mapping).

2.

Marilyn Adams & Isabel Beck

Highlighted the importance of phonemic awareness and vocabulary for comprehension.

3.

Louisa Moats

Advocated for teacher knowledge of language structure and explicit instruction.

4.

Mark Seidenberg & David Kilpatrick

Emphasized the role of phonological processing in reading development.

5.

Nancy Hennessy

Developed *The Reading Comprehension Blueprint*, translating research into practical instructional design.

6.

Keith Stanovich

Introduced the “Matthew Effect” in reading, how early success leads to more success, and early struggle compounds over time.

Talking Points for Engagement

Clear, consistent messages help move conversations from awareness to action.

These talking points are designed to support productive discussions with school leaders, legislators, and community partners about why evidence-based literacy instruction matters—and what steps can strengthen outcomes for all students.

Core Messages

- Literacy **is a right, not a privilege**. Every child deserves access to instruction grounded in the science of how reading develops.
- **The Science of Reading is not a program**—it’s a body of research that spans decades and disciplines, showing what works for all learners.
- Students who receive **explicit, systematic instruction** in phonics, language, and comprehension make stronger, more lasting gains.
- **Teacher knowledge** is the foundation of literacy success; professional learning should prioritize the science behind reading development.
- **Alignment matters**. Curriculum, intervention, and teacher training must all reflect the same evidence base to achieve lasting improvement.
- **Early support prevents later struggle**. Prevention is more effective—and more equitable—than remediation.

How to Use These Messages

- **Start with shared goals**: every child reading confidently.
- **Choose two or three points that fit your audience**—don’t try to cover them all at once.
- **Pair each message with a data point** from The Literacy Landscape section, or district specific data from the NYSED site (data.nysed.gov).
- **Keep the tone collaborative**: these points are conversation starters, not confrontations.
- **Follow up by sharing** NYSED tools, links, or upcoming coalition events.

Come Prepared

When you meet with school leaders, legislators, or speak at a Board of Education meeting, preparation helps your message land with clarity and purpose. Bring materials that make your advocacy focused, factual, and actionable.

-
- **A copy of this Advocacy Packet** — Use pages like *The Literacy Landscape* and *Talking Points for Engagement* to anchor your comments in shared goals and credible data.
 - **Local literacy data from data.nysed.gov** — Share your district’s most recent reading proficiency rates to connect the message directly to student outcomes.
 - **Specific examples from classrooms or families** — Brief, real-world stories make the issue relatable and human.
 - **NYSED tools and links** — Reference resources such as the *K–3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide* and *Science of Reading Literacy Briefs* so decision-makers know where to find vetted solutions.
 - **A clear, concise statement for public comment** — When addressing a Board of Education, limit your remarks to one or two key points, cite local data, and end with a specific request or next step.
 - **A follow-up plan** — After your meeting or comment, send a short thank-you email with one actionable resource or reminder to keep the conversation going.

1

When Speaking at a Board of Ed Meeting

- **Begin by affirming a shared goal**—every child in your district deserves evidence-based reading instruction that supports lifelong success.
- **Reference your district’s literacy data** from data.nysed.gov to connect your message directly to local outcomes and needs.
- **Highlight state resources** such as NYSED’s *K–3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide*, *Science of Reading Literacy Briefs*, or the *Back to Basics Reading Plan* as actionable solutions.
- Keep your remarks concise—**focus on one or two clear points**, stay within the time limit, and **emphasize collaboration over criticism**.
- **Share a brief story or example that humanizes the data** and demonstrates why structured literacy matters for real students and families.
- **Invite the board to take a next step**, such as reviewing district literacy practices, aligning curriculum with NYSED guidance, or including parent representatives on literacy committees and task forces.

Come Prepared

2 When Speaking with School Leaders

District and building leaders operate under constant pressure—balancing state mandates, test performance, staffing shortages, and community expectations, often all at once. Their time is limited, and every initiative competes for funding and attention.

When you speak with them, focus on what supports their goals: improved student outcomes, teacher confidence, and instructional coherence. Position literacy alignment not as another task but as a solution that simplifies systems, reduces intervention costs, and builds long-term achievement. The more your message connects to their daily realities, the more likely it will lead to meaningful change.

- **Ask your district to use NYSED’s K–3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide when evaluating core and intervention programs** to ensure materials are explicit, systematic, and aligned with the Science of Reading.
- **Encourage leaders to strengthen Tier 1, 2, and 3 instruction** using NYSED’s *Science of Reading Literacy Briefs* to guide evidence-based practices across all grade levels.
- **Recommend professional learning through credentialed providers in scientifically based reading research**—including our professional recommendations (see Appendix) and the MTSS-I Center, to deepen teacher expertise in structured literacy.
- **Ask how the district is prepared to meet the required annual attestation to certify literacy curricula** under the Back to Basics Reading Plan and align materials with NYSED guidance.
- **Request that schools implement universal screening aligned with NYSED’s Part 117 updates** to identify reading difficulties early and ensure consistent data use across grades.
- **Invite administrators to collaborate with the MTSS-I Center** to strengthen evidence-based reading instruction and build sustainable districtwide literacy systems.
- **Encourage districts to share literacy goals, outcomes, and professional development plans publicly each year** to promote transparency and strengthen community engagement.
- **Share a brief story or example that humanizes the data** and demonstrates why structured literacy matters for real students and families.

Come Prepared

3 When Speaking with Legislators

Legislators are driven by outcomes that resonate with their communities—policies that improve lives, use funds wisely, and show measurable progress. They juggle competing priorities and depend on clear, credible information to guide decisions.

When you meet with them, connect literacy to what matters most in their role: educational equity, workforce readiness, and fiscal responsibility. Ground your message in data and statewide context, and make the case that investing in evidence-based reading instruction isn't just good policy—it's good economics. A clear link between literacy outcomes and long-term community health helps turn your advocacy into action.

- **Share the importance of NYSED's *Back to Basics Reading Plan*** as a step toward ensuring every district adopts evidence-based, structured literacy instruction.
- **Ask legislators to prioritize funding for teacher training and coaching** so educators can implement the Science of Reading effectively.
- **Encourage continued support for universal screening policies under Part 117** to identify reading challenges early and prevent long-term gaps in achievement.
- **Advocate for sustained investment in literacy implementation and monitoring** to help districts maintain alignment beyond initial curriculum adoption.
- **Emphasize that literacy success is both an educational and economic issue**—students who read proficiently are better prepared for high school, career, and civic life.
- **Urge legislators to support and advance active bills in the State Senate and Assembly related to dyslexia identification, intervention, and literacy reform**, reinforcing statewide alignment with evidence-based practice.
- **Share a brief story or example that humanizes the data** and demonstrates why structured literacy matters for real students and families.

Moving From Awareness to Action

Change in literacy starts locally—through classrooms, board meetings, and community conversations. Every voice helps shape how reading is taught across New York. Whether you're attending a meeting, contacting legislators, or sharing research with your district, your advocacy keeps evidence-based instruction at the center.

The Long Island Literacy Coalition is documenting this growing movement—collecting moments of action from across Long Island to show what collective effort can achieve. Share your advocacy moment at www.longislandliteracycoalition.com/advocacy-on-li/ to be a part of the movement.

Take Action

Change happens when information turns into action.

Here are simple ways you can stay involved and strengthen literacy advocacy across Long Island and New York State:

- **Join the Long Island Literacy Coalition** — Become part of a growing network of parents, educators, and advocates working to align literacy instruction with research.
- **Share your advocacy moment** — Submit board comments, meetings, and community events at www.longislandliteracycoalition.com/advocacy-on-li/ so we can document and amplify this collective movement.
- **Write to decision-makers** — Use the letter templates in the appendix to contact legislators, board members, and district leaders about evidence-based literacy priorities.
- **Stay informed** — Visit our website for updated resources, active state and assembly bills, and tools to support evidence-based instruction.
- **Engage locally** — Attend Board of Education meetings, connect with district leaders, and encourage your community to review local reading data at data.nysed.gov.
- **Support statewide progress** — Reach out to your legislators, reference NYSED's *Back to Basics Reading Plan*, and advocate for continued investment in literacy training and early screening.
- **Keep the conversation going** — Share this packet with others, follow our updates, and invite colleagues or families to join the movement toward stronger literacy outcomes.

Stay Connected

1.

Visit Our Website

for updates, event listings, recorded presentations, and advocacy tools.

2.

Follow Us on Social Media

for literacy news, action alerts, coalition updates, literacy news, and advocacy highlights.

3.

Email Us

Have a question, resource to share, or advocacy update? We'd love to hear from you.



LONG ISLAND
LITERACY COALITION

Appendix

TEMPLATES, TOOLS, AND RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TURN
KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION AND ADVOCATE FOR LITERACY
WITH CLARITY AND CONFIDENCE.





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Pre-written examples for contacting district leaders, board members, and legislators about literacy reform.

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A running list of active State Senate and Assembly bills with short summaries and links for tracking and sharing.

03 NYSED TOOLS & RESOURCES **PAGE 22**

Direct links to the K–3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide, Science of Reading Literacy Briefs, Back to Basics Reading Plan, and MTSS-I Center.

04 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES **PAGE 23**

Explore free and paid PD options that deepen knowledge in the Science of Reading—such as SUNY New Paltz SOR Webinars, Keys to Literacy trainings, and other courses

[Your Name]

[Address]

[Date]

[School Leader Name]

[School Address]

Dear [School Leader Name],

As a parent, I am deeply concerned about how our district identifies and supports struggling readers. According to data.nysed.gov, [insert percentage]% of third-grade students in [District Name] are not meeting ELA proficiency standards. These numbers mirror a statewide pattern that calls for immediate, research-based action to ensure every child learns to read.

To raise literacy outcomes, our district must align classroom instruction and intervention with the Science of Reading and begin phasing out approaches proven to be ineffective, including *Units of Study*, *Leveled Literacy Intervention* (LLI), and the *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System* (BAS). These programs rely on “cueing” and leveled-text methods that encourage guessing rather than decoding—strategies that extensive research has shown to hinder reading development.

In contrast, structured literacy emphasizes the skills decades of research have identified as essential for proficient reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This explicit, systematic approach benefits all students (especially those with dyslexia or other reading challenges) and ensures instruction is delivered consistently and effectively across classrooms.

To move toward this goal, I urge the district to:

- **Adopt a structured literacy curriculum** grounded in the Science of Reading to replace leveled-text and cueing-based programs.
- **Provide high-quality professional development for all educators**, such as LETRS, 95 Percent Group, or The Reading League training, to strengthen teacher knowledge of language and reading science.
- **Review intervention practices**, including LLI, to ensure they are evidence-based and aligned with structured literacy principles.
- **Communicate transparently with families and staff** about the district’s plan to transition to evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementing these steps would ensure our district’s literacy practices reflect the strongest evidence available—supporting teachers, empowering families, and improving outcomes for every learner.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to improving outcomes for all students in our district.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your Email]

[Your Phone Number]

[Your Name]
[Your Address]

Dear Members of the [District Name] Board of Education,

I am writing as a [parent / educator / community member] who cares deeply about ensuring every student in our district learns to read with confidence and understanding. Reading proficiency is the foundation of all learning, and research continues to show that how we teach reading matters as much as what we teach. According to data from data.nysed.gov, [insert district name] currently has [insert percentage]% of students not meeting ELA proficiency standards. When students do not master foundational reading skills early, it impacts every subject area—limiting comprehension, writing ability, and overall academic success.

Decades of research, often referred to as the Science of Reading, have clearly identified the most effective ways to teach children how to read. This body of evidence, grounded in cognitive science and linguistics, demonstrates that explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension benefits all students. The same methods that help students with dyslexia or other reading challenges are equally powerful for developing proficient readers across the classroom.

To raise literacy outcomes, our district must align classroom instruction and intervention with the Science of Reading and begin phasing out misaligned approaches proven to be ineffective, including Units of Study, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), and the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS). These programs rely on “cueing” and leveled-text methods that encourage guessing rather than decoding—strategies that extensive research has shown to hinder reading development. New York State has made major strides toward aligning instruction with this research through the NYSED Literacy Initiative, which includes the below tools for districts to evaluate and strengthen their literacy programs.

I respectfully urge the Board to review how our district’s literacy instruction and professional development align with these state-supported initiatives. Specifically:

1. Conduct a curriculum review using NYSED’s *K–3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide* to ensure classroom materials reflect structured literacy practices rather than balanced literacy or three-cueing approaches that research has shown to be ineffective.
2. Invest in professional development that builds teacher knowledge of language and reading science—such as LETRS training, Keys to Literacy, 95% Group, or The Reading League’s professional learning programs. These trainings empower educators with the understanding of how reading develops in the brain, how to identify skill gaps, and how to deliver instruction that accelerates growth for every student.
3. Ensure alignment across all tiers of instruction (core, intervention, and special education) so that struggling readers receive consistent, research-based support throughout their schooling.
4. Engage families and the community by sharing literacy data transparently and offering opportunities to participate in literacy committees and learn about evidence-based reading practices.

Structured literacy instruction doesn’t just improve test scores—it changes lives. Students who receive this kind of instruction early are less likely to need intensive intervention later, reducing special education referrals and closing equity gaps for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and those from under-resourced communities.

Thank you for your time, commitment, and continued service to our students and families. I believe [District Name] has the opportunity to be a leader in this statewide movement toward stronger, research-aligned reading instruction. I would welcome the chance to participate in a committee, community discussion, or upcoming review process that helps move this work forward.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Address]

Name
 Address
 Email
 Phone number

Dear Assembly Member [Last Name] / Senator [Last Name],

I am writing to urge you to co-sponsor the following bills: [Bill Number] [Bill Name], [Bill Number] [Bill Name], and [Bill Number] [Bill Name]. These bills would improve literacy proficiency rates and academic outcome potentials for all students throughout our state.

For over a decade two-thirds of NYS students in 4th and 8th grade have shown they are below expected proficiency rates in reading (NAEP, 2019). NYSED data also shows that over 50% of NYS students continue to score below proficiency standards in ELA (reading and writing). These numbers have remained consistent for more than 10 years and indicate instruction is not meeting the needs of the majority of NYS students throughout the state. Struggling readers and those diagnosed with dyslexia are the most negatively affected students, as well as students with other disabilities and marginalized groups, especially those with less socioeconomic means.

Decades of reading research has demonstrated how reading skills are effectively acquired. The same instructional methods that have proven to work best for students struggling to read or dyslexic students also work best for all students learning how to read. Instructional methods and programs based on the science of reading are considered evidence-based best practices for teaching reading. This is based on the consensus of decades of reading research that have proven these are the instructional practice methods that produce highest gains for the majority of all students.

NYS ranks near the bottom nationally for teacher training on literacy curricula based on the science of reading. This negatively impacts reading instruction delivered to students in all classrooms. The [Bill Name and Number, *example: A.2897 Right to Read Act*], would [give detailed description of what the bill proposes and how it means to advance improvements in literacy outcomes]. The [Bill Name and Number, *example: A.2897 Right to Read Act*], would [give detailed description of what the bill proposes and how it means to advance improvements in literacy outcomes]. The [Bill Name and Number, *example: A.2897 Right to Read Act*], would [give detailed description of what the bill proposes and how it means to advance improvements in literacy outcomes]. ***Reference our website for a list of current bills and their proposals to include in your letter.**

All students deserve access to evidence-based reading instruction grounded in the science of reading—the approach proven to yield the highest gains in literacy achievement. This would mitigate many socioeconomic disparities related to educational outcome potentials while decreasing the need for intensive intervention and special education referrals. We must ensure an equal opportunity for all students to receive an education that prepares every student to reach proficiency standards in reading. Only then are all students afforded the opportunity to reach their academic potentials since literacy is the ultimate cornerstone for all academic success.

Sincerely,

Name
 Address
 Email
 Phone number



NY STATE SENATE & ASSEMBLY BILLS

S5569

Dyslexia & Dysgraphic Center

Establishes a center for dyslexia and dysgraphia within the department of education.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A2687

S6844

Dyslexia Education Act

Establishes the “New York individuals with dyslexia education act”; implements a plan to identify and support students with characteristics of dyslexia; requires annual screening in grades K-5; directs intervention and notification.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A37

S7477

Dyslexia & Dysgraphic Screenings

Requires all school districts to screen all students for dyslexia and dysgraphia. View bill for more info.

S5427

Dyslexia Screenings

Requires screening for dyslexia; provides for intervention services for dyslexic children.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A6208

S7454

Early Literacy Education

Requires school districts to provide instructional programming and services in reading and literacy which are evidence based and aligned with state standards; requires teachers in grades pre-K through five to attend professional development courses in reading education.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A78

S8044

Library Literacy Education Guidance

Directs the state librarian to provide guidance for literacy education to certain libraries.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A5835

S6780

Interventions & Special Curricula for Dyslexic Students

Requires each school district to provide interventions and special curricula for children with dyslexia.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A6209

S7472

Mandatory Early Dyslexia Screening

Requires school districts to conduct mandatory early screening for dyslexia for all children commencing in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten and continuing thereafter on an annual basis until each child successfully completes second grade. View bill for more info.

Assembly Version of This Bill: A6209

A4595

Statewide Literacy Education

Establishes certain statewide literacy education programs including standards for an early education program. View bill for more info.



NYSED TOOLS & RESOURCES

1 NYSED Dyslexia And Dysgraphia Task Force Report and Recommendations

Outlines statewide recommendations for improving early identification, teacher training, and evidence-based literacy instruction for all students. It serves as a roadmap for aligning New York's policies and practices with the Science of Reading to address the state's literacy gaps.

<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/main/nysed-dyslexia-dysgraphia-task-force-report.pdf>

2 NYSED P-3 Literacy Instructional Best Practices

Provides educators with research-based strategies to support early reading development through explicit, systematic instruction. It emphasizes building strong foundations in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension during the critical early years of literacy learning.

<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/early-learning/prekindergarten-3rd-grade-literacy-best-practices-1.pdf>

3 NYSED Literacy Initiative

It serves as a central hub for educators and districts working to align instruction and curriculum with New York's evidence-based literacy priorities. Explore key state resources, including the *Science of Reading Literacy Briefs* and the *K–3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide Webinar*.

<https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/literacy-initiative>

4 NYSED MTSS-I Center

Part of the OSE Educational Partnership, provides schools with tools, coaching, and professional learning to strengthen tiered systems of academic and behavioral support. It helps districts implement evidence-based practices—including structured literacy—within a cohesive framework that supports all learners.

<https://osepartnership.org/mtss-i>



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Free Online Training

- SUNY New Paltz: SOR Webinars, <https://www.newpaltz.edu/science-of-reading-center/>
- Keys to Literacy: Webinars + Videos, <https://keystoliteracy.com/free-resources/videos/>
- AIM Institute: Free Resources, <https://institute.aimpa.org/resources>
- The Reading League: Compass, <https://www.thereadingleague.org/compass/>
- 95% Group: On Demand Webinars, <https://www.95percentgroup.com/webinars/>
- Literacy How: Video Library, <https://literacyhow.org/video-library/>
- Cox Campus: PK-5 Structured Literacy Program, <https://lms.coxcampus.org/pk-5-structured-literacy-program>
- Reading Rockets: Modules, www.readingrockets.org/reading-101/reading-101-learning-modules/course-modules
- Nat'l Center For Improving Literacy, www.improvingliteracy.org/literacy-resources-for-educators-and-agencies
- Center for Community Inclusion Literacy Workshops, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BmCU35CB-uUVLxgQoeVD0pFt3iY_Pqj0HEqv22-Yp0g/mobilebasic

Paid Courses & Professional Development

- SUNY New Paltz SOR Microcredential, <https://learn.newpaltz.edu/pages/nys-science-of-reading-fundamentals>
- Keys to Literacy: Keys to Beginning Reading, <https://keystoliteracy.com/offering/keys-to-beginning-reading/>
- AIM Institute: Pathways, <https://institute.aimpa.org/aim-pathways>
- The Reading League: Professional Development, <https://www.thereadingleague.org/professional-development/>
- 95% Group: Top Ten Tools, <https://www.95percentgroup.com/products/top-10-tools/>
- Literacy How: Professional Development, <https://literacyhow.org/professional-development/>
- LETRS Training (Lexia/BOCES), <https://www.lexialearning.com/letrs>
- Brooklyn College Reading Science Certificate, <https://www.brooklyn.edu/academics/programs/reading-science-all-grades-advanced-certificate/>

Recommended Books

- The Reading League Shop, <https://shop.thereadingleague.org/collections/books?zCountry=US>
- IMSE: 10 Essential Books on SOR, <https://journal.imse.com/ten-essential-books-the-science-of-reading/>
- LiteracyHow Professional Learning Series, <https://literacyhow.org/literacy-how-books/>
- Emily Hanford's Reading List, <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2022/10/20/science-of-reading-list>



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Thank You

Every conversation, email, and meeting sparked by this packet moves our region closer to literacy equity for all students.

We're grateful to the parents, educators, and advocates whose voices continue to shape this work—and to every leader who chooses to both listen and act.

LI Literacy Coalition is a regional alliance committed to improving literacy outcomes across Long Island through research-based practice, advocacy, and community partnerships.

www.longislandliteracycoalition.com