



LONG ISLAND
LITERACY COALITION

Literacy Leadership

A BOARD OF EDUCATION GUIDE TO
EVIDENCE-BASED INSTRUCTION



Executive Summary

This brief is designed to support Board of Education members in understanding literacy outcomes, research-aligned reading instruction, and governance considerations related to district decision-making. For Boards of Education, literacy is not solely an instructional concern—it is a governance responsibility tied to oversight, coherence, and informed decision-making.

Current Literacy Landscape

Across Long Island and New York State, a significant number of students are not reading at grade level. Publicly available data show persistent gaps in reading proficiency across grade levels and student groups. These patterns reflect system-level conditions—such as instructional alignment, curriculum coherence, and professional learning—rather than student ability or effort.

What Research Tells Us

Decades of interdisciplinary research, often referred to as the Science of Reading, explain how students learn to read and comprehend text. This body of evidence identifies the importance of explicit instruction in word-level reading skills, language comprehension, and knowledge-building. While the research base is well established, implementation varies widely across districts.

Why Alignment Matters

When literacy practices, materials, assessments, and professional learning are not aligned with research, instructional coherence breaks down. These misalignments are typically systemic, resulting from fragmented approaches rather than individual classroom decisions. Over time, such gaps limit the effectiveness of instruction and intervention.

The Board's Role

Boards of Education do not direct classroom instruction, but they do shape the conditions that support effective literacy systems. Through curriculum approval, policy oversight, budget decisions, and accountability structures, boards influence whether literacy instruction is coherent, research-aligned, and sustainable.

Looking Ahead

This brief provides a shared foundation to support informed governance discussions about literacy. It is intended to clarify context, establish common language, and highlight considerations that can guide evidence-aligned decision-making in service of improved outcomes for all students.



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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.

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.

Why This Is Critical

Looking at the numbers helps us 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

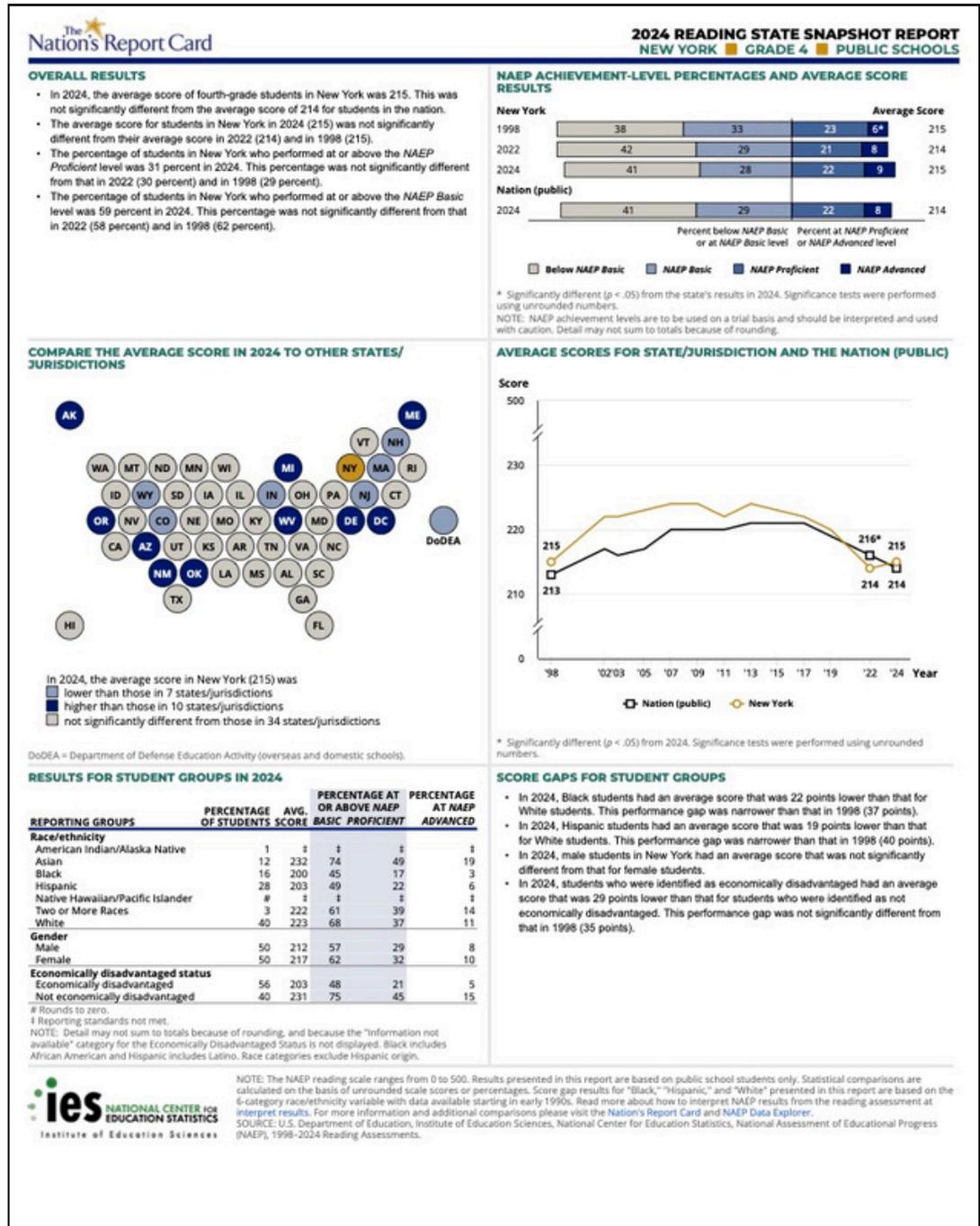
In 2024, the average reading score for New York's fourth graders was **215**, nearly identical to the national average (214).

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**.



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.



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).

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

NAEP ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL PERCENTAGES AND AVERAGE SCORE RESULTS

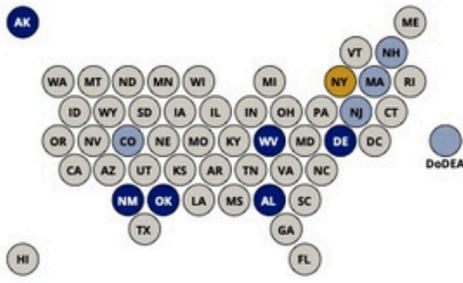
Year	Below NAEP Basic	NAEP Basic	NAEP Proficient	NAEP Advanced	Average Score
New York 1998	24*	44*	30	2*	265*
New York 2022	30*	38	28	5	262
New York 2024	35	34	26	5	257
Nation (public) 2024	34	37*	25	4	257

Percent below NAEP Basic Percent at NAEP Proficient or at NAEP Basic level or NAEP Advanced level

Legend: Below NAEP Basic (lightest), NAEP Basic, NAEP Proficient, NAEP Advanced (darkest)

* 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

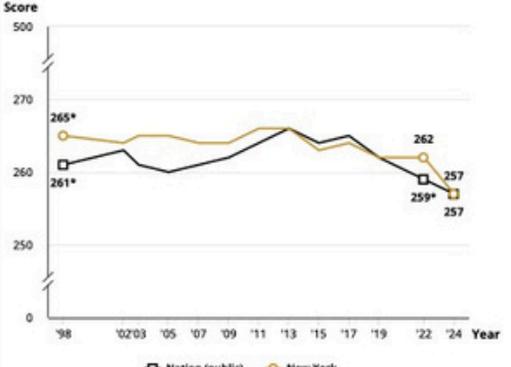


In 2024, the average score in New York (257) was

- 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)



Legend: Nation (public) (black line), New York (orange line)

* 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.
‡ 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 in 1998 (28 points). 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).

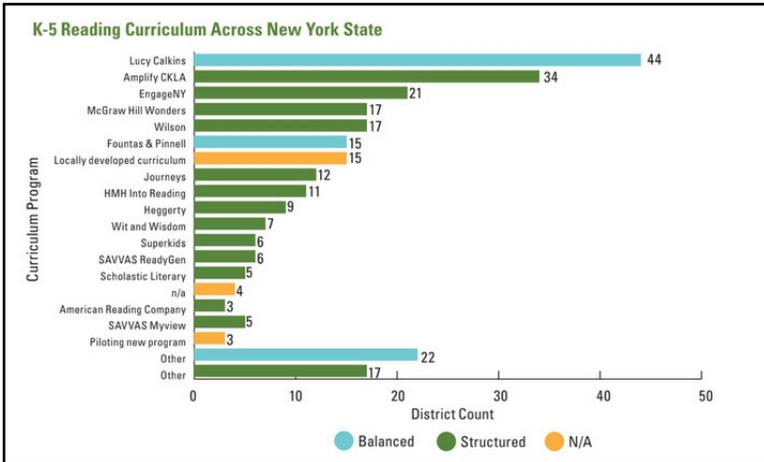


NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Results presented in this report are based on public school students only. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Score gap results for "Black," "Hispanic," and "White" presented in this report are 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.



Cost of Poor Implementation

When Instruction Is Misaligned, Spending Alone Doesn't Move Results



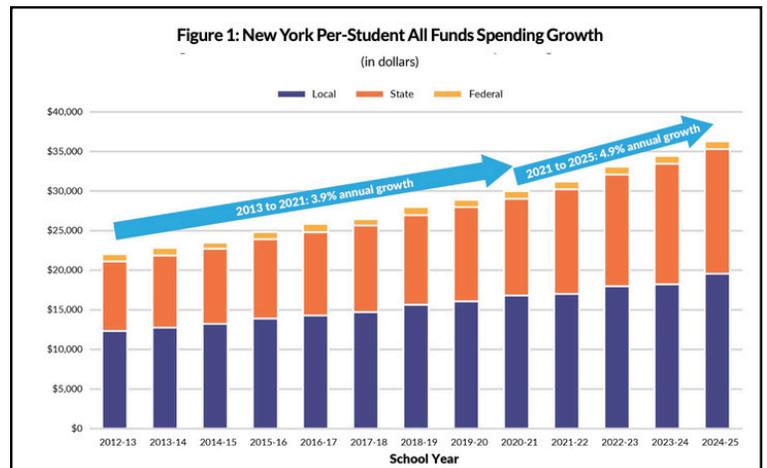
Source: Assemblymember Robert Carroll, Letter to the New York State Board of Regents, 2025. robertcarroll.nyc/regentsletter

New York's literacy challenges are not the result of limited effort or insufficient funding. They reflect long-standing misalignment between instructional practices and what reading research shows works.

Across the state, **many districts continue to rely on curricula and approaches that research has repeatedly raised concerns about**, even as evidence-based options remain less widely adopted. At the same time, per-student spending has increased steadily over the past decade—without corresponding gains in reading outcomes.

Taken together, these data point to a governance issue, not a resource issue. **When systems are misaligned, increased spending and expanded intervention do not reliably translate into improved outcomes.**

For Boards of Education, this underscores why **literacy decisions matter at the system level:** alignment between curriculum, professional learning, assessment, and intervention is what determines whether investments lead to lasting improvement.



Source: Citizens Budget Commission, *Highest Costs, Middling Marks: New York School Spending and Results*, 2025. cbcn.org



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.
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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.

Misaligned Practices

Understanding where literacy systems lose coherence

Across many districts, literacy outcomes are shaped not by a single decision, but by the cumulative effects of misalignment across instructional systems. Even when well intentioned, fragmented approaches can weaken the overall effectiveness of reading instruction.

Misalignment typically emerges at the system level—between curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and instructional expectations—rather than from individual classrooms or educators.

Common Areas of Misalignment

1 Curriculum and Instruction

When instructional materials are not fully aligned with reading research, teachers may be asked to balance competing approaches to word reading, language development, and comprehension.

This may include:

- **Balanced literacy / Units of Study** with an implicit form of instruction and workshop model
- **Cueing practices** that rely on context or pictures over phonemic decoding

2 Assessment and Instruction

If assessments do not measure the skills instruction is designed to build or if data are used inconsistently—instructional decisions become less targeted and less effective.

This may include:

- **Running records/miscue analyses** that accept inaccurate word reading
- **Leveled text measures** without decoding-specific data

3 Professional Learning and Classroom Practice

When professional development is fragmented or disconnected from instructional expectations, teachers may lack a shared understanding of how reading skills develop and how instruction should progress across grades.

This may include:

- PD grounded in **balanced literacy frameworks**
- Limited training in **explicit, systematic instruction**

Misaligned Practices

4

Core Instruction, Intervention, and MTSS Alignment

Effective intervention systems are designed to build on strong core instruction, not compensate for its absence. When Tier 1 literacy instruction is not fully aligned with reading research, intervention systems are often asked to address gaps they were not designed to fix.

Misalignment between core instruction and intervention reduces the effectiveness of both and can contribute to increased referrals without sustained improvement in outcomes.

This may include:

- **Leveled text type interventions** emphasizing predictable texts
- Interventions misaligned with **Tier 1 instruction**
- Reliance on intervention systems to compensate for **inconsistent or misaligned core instruction**
- High rates of intervention referral without corresponding review of **Tier 1 instructional alignment**

Why Misalignment Matters

When literacy systems lack coherence:

- **instructional expectations vary** across classrooms and grades
- **students experience uneven skill development** over time
- **intervention efforts become more reactive** than preventive
- **gains are harder to sustain**, even when short-term improvements occur

Over time, these patterns contribute to persistent achievement gaps and increased reliance on remediation rather than early, effective instruction.

Connection to Governance

For Boards of Education, understanding misalignment is essential to effective oversight.

Board-level decisions influence whether literacy systems are:

- coherent **across grade levels**
- aligned with **research** and **state guidance**
- supported through **sustained professional learning**
- monitored using **clear** and **consistent indicators**

Recognizing misalignment allows boards to ask better questions and support conditions that strengthen literacy outcomes over time.

Beware of the Rebrand

As districts revisit literacy materials, it is important to look beyond labels and marketing language. Meaningful review requires an informed, unbiased examination of whether current curricula are truly aligned with reading research—or whether familiar approaches have simply been repackaged under new terminology.

Literacy approaches are often described using familiar terms, but those labels can reflect very different theories about how reading develops. As curricula are revised or rebranded, it is important to distinguish between approaches grounded in current reading research and those rooted in earlier instructional models. This distinction helps boards evaluate instructional design based on evidence, not terminology.

Structured Literacy

- Grounded in evidenced-based best practices
- Phonemic awareness developed systematically
- Explicitly teaches decoding strategies
- Incorporates decodable books for early readers
- Teaches letter-sound relationships in irregular words
- Groups students by skills to mastery
- Class time spent on all strands of Reading Rope
- Data pulled from norm-referenced assessments
- Explicitly teaches foundational skills

Balanced Literacy

- Grounded in debunked whole language theory
- Phonemic awareness patched in
- Teaches debunked 3 cueing reading strategy
- Relies on predictable Leveled Readers
- Whole Language approach to high frequency words
- Groups students by F&P guided reading levels
- Class time largely spent on independent reading
- Data pulled from unreliable F&P Assessments
- Devotes mini lessons to foundational skills

Signals of Potential Misalignment:

- assessing students based on **inaccurate levels**
- using **leveled intervention** over targeted skill work
- devoting more **classroom time to student-led workshops** over explicit instruction
- using the same **balanced literacy staff developers** for training

These indicators do not point to individual classrooms or educators. Instead, they highlight system-level patterns that may signal misalignment between instructional practices and current reading research, and that warrant closer review at the governance level.

The Board's Role

Literacy Through a Governance Lens

As a Board of Education member, the decisions you make shape the conditions under which literacy instruction succeeds or stalls. You are not responsible for directing classroom practice, but the policies you approve, the questions you ask, and the priorities you set influence whether your district's literacy system is coherent, research-aligned, and sustainable over time.

Literacy improvement is rarely driven by a single initiative. It depends on alignment across curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and intervention. When board-level decisions reinforce that alignment, districts are better positioned to see lasting gains—and avoid relying on short-term fixes.

- **Direction and alignment:** ensuring literacy approaches reflect current research/state guidance
- **System coherence:** reinforcing consistency across instruction, assessment, and intervention
- **Oversight of outcomes:** reviewing trends to understand what is working and where gaps persist
- **Sustainability:** supporting initiatives long enough to evaluate impact before shifting course

When literacy decisions are approached as system-level governance work, progress is more likely to be sustained across leadership changes and competing priorities. Clear oversight helps ensure that literacy improvement efforts are intentional, aligned, and responsive to student outcomes—rather than reactive.

What to Guard Against

1.

Intervention as Substitute
especially when intervention expands without examining Tier 1 alignment.

2.

Patch in Individual Programs
instead of considering research-aligned systems and checking for system-wide coherence first.

3.

Not Reviewing New Initiatives
and how they fit existing structures, or their cumulative impact.

Next Steps

Change happens when information turns into action.

These considerations are intended to support your oversight by reinforcing alignment, coherence, and sustainability within your district's literacy systems.

- **Review literacy systems for alignment** — Examine how curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and intervention work together to reflect current reading research.
- **Request clarity on Tier 1 instruction** — Ask how effective core literacy instruction is defined, supported, and evaluated across grade levels.
- **Examine literacy data over time** — Review trends across years and student groups to understand patterns beyond single data points.
- **Clarify the role of intervention systems** — Ensure MTSS structures are supporting strong Tier 1 instruction rather than compensating for misalignment.
- **Assess professional learning coherence** — Consider whether educator training reflects a shared, research-aligned understanding of reading development.
- **Support sustainable decision-making** — When changes are proposed, ask how they build on existing structures and how impact will be measured over time.
- **Use state and public resources** — Reference NYSED guidance and publicly available data to contextualize district outcomes and inform oversight discussions.

Using Research-Aligned Review Tools

The resources that follow can help you understand how literacy materials align with reading research and state guidance. Use them to inform governance conversations and frame questions—rather than to replace district-led evaluation or instructional decision-making.

1.

Understanding Curriculum Alignment

Tools to examine whether instruction material align with research-backed practices.

2.

Evaluating Evidence and Research Claims

Frameworks to better understand how evidence is defined + applied when materials are reviewed.

3.

Supporting Informed Oversight

Publicly available data that support oversight of literacy outcomes + system alignment.



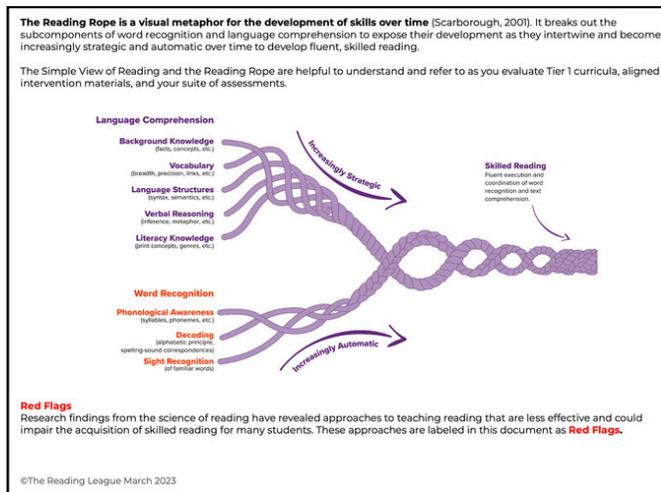
UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Using the Reading League’s Curriculum Review Guide

Use this guide to better understand what **research-aligned curriculum looks like**, and to ask more informed questions about instructional materials used in your district.

This resource supports **clearer decision-making by focusing on instructional alignment** rather than marketing claims. Download this free resource from [The Reading League](#), and [read why](#) such a tool was created.

Organized around **Scarborough’s Reading Rope**, this tool covers reading, writing, and assessment with red flags provided for each strand involved.



NON-NEGOTIABLES: WORD RECOGNITION	
Red Flags: Practices Not Aligned with the Science of Reading	Red Flag ✓
Three cueing-systems are taught as strategies for decoding in early grades (i.e., directing students to use picture cues, context cues, or attend to the first letter of a word as a cue).	
Guidance to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	
Supporting materials do not provide a systematic scope and sequence nor opportunities for practice and review of elements taught (e.g., phonics, decoding, encoding).	
Practices Aligned with the Science of Reading	
Explicit instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling	
Systematic scope and sequence of skills building from simple to complex.	
Curriculum and support materials that provide opportunities for practice and interleaving of elements taught (e.g., phonics, decoding, encoding).	

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness		
Red Flag statements: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness	To what extent is this red flag statement true?	Evidence from curricular materials
1.7	Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) without moving to the phoneme level (e.g., blends such as /t/ /k/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds).	<p>1) Note the specific location (if applicable) - (e.g., is this from the teacher’s manual? Student materials? Ancillary materials (e.g., student texts, workbooks, specific additional materials)? Please note the specific grade, section, lesson, and/or page number.</p> <p>2) Justify your response by describing the practices that signal the presence of the red flag.</p>

Workbook: Select the appropriate rating in the drop down menu based on curriculum materials being reviewed.

Use the [workbook](#) as a **structured companion to the guidelines** to assist in rating and recording any evidence of red flags within the curriculum. Familiarity with this framework **strengthens your ability to engage in governance conversations** about alignment, coherence, and system-level decision-making.



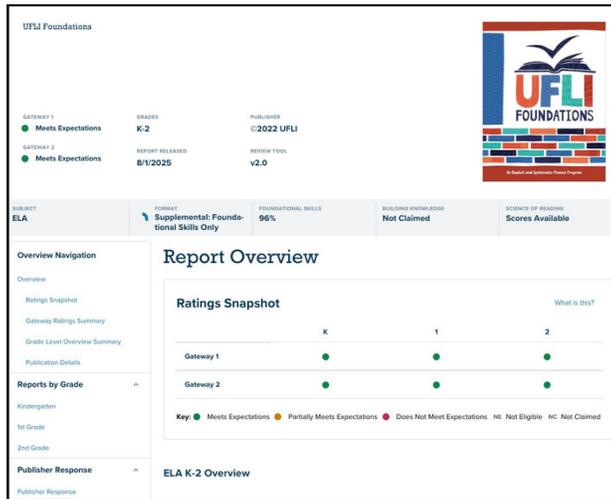
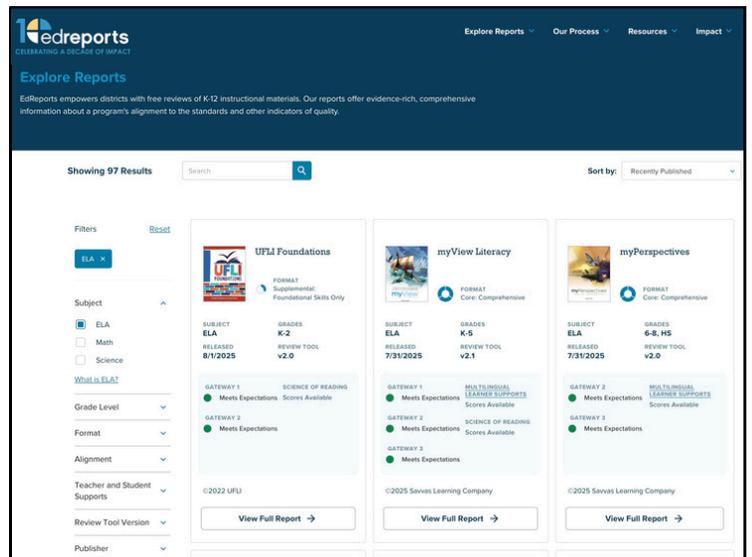
EVALUATING EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH CLAIMS

Using EdReports as a Tool for Reviewing Curriculum Alignment & Evidence

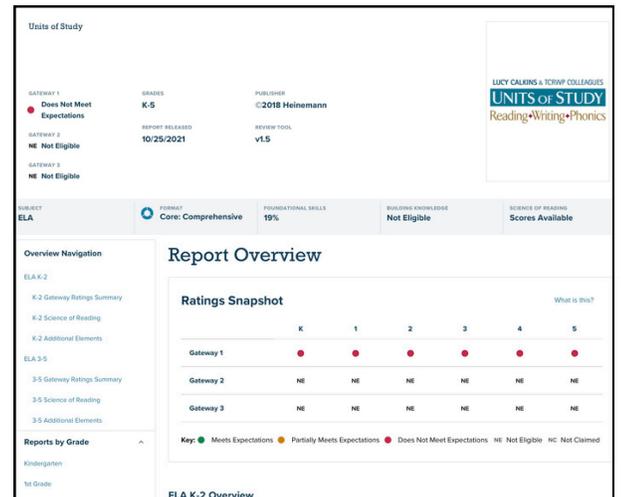
Use **EdReports** to better understand how instructional materials are evaluated against research-based criteria, and to **distinguish evidence-aligned design from marketing claims**.

This resource **supports clearer leadership decisions** by summarizing where curricula meet expectations for **college and career readiness**, based on transparent review standards.

This resource **serves as one data point within a broader review process**, helping inform district and team-level decision-making without replacing local evaluation or professional judgment.



These side-by-side examples illustrate how different instructional designs align, or fail to align, with research-based criteria using the same standards.





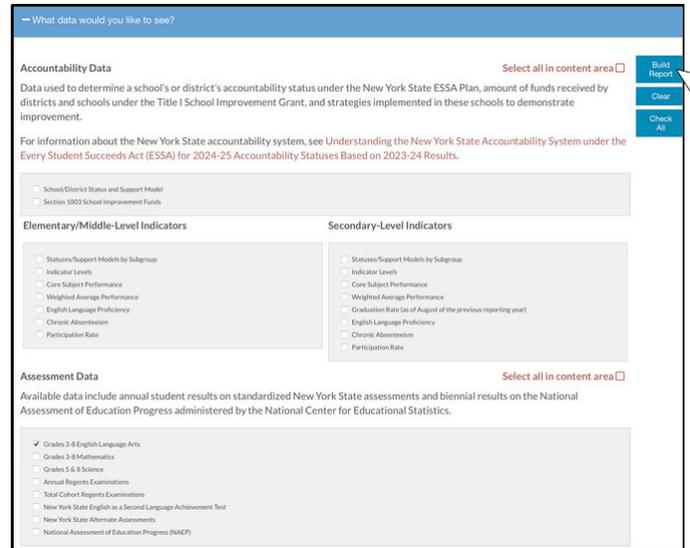
SUPPORTING INFORMED OVERSIGHT

Using NYSED’s Literacy Data as a Tool for Monitoring Outcomes & Trends

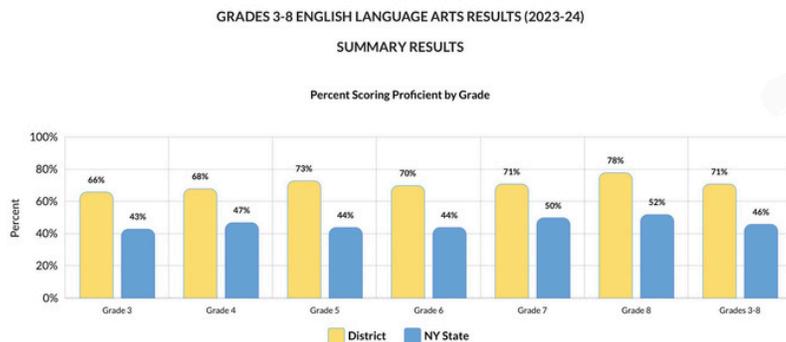
Use **NYSED’s** public data to **understand how literacy outcomes are trending over time in your district and across the state**. These data provide context for governance conversations about system performance, equity, and the effectiveness of instructional decisions.

By building **custom reports**, you can view proficiency rates, compare grade-level trends, and identify areas for improvement.

This resource **supports informed oversight** by emphasizing context, trends, and multiple perspectives. Regular attention to outcome data **strengthens your ability to ask informed governance questions** about alignment, resource allocation, and long-term instructional planning.



Once at your district’s page on data.nysed.edu, check the box for Grades 3-8 ELA results. Then hit “Build Report.” You can explore other subjects and their data by selecting them as well.



Grade	Total	Not Tested		Proficient (Levels 3 & 4)	
	#	#	%	#	%
Grade 3	321	17	5%	200	66%
Grade 4	342	16	5%	221	68%
Grade 5	326	21	6%	223	73%
Grade 6	389	38	10%	245	70%
Grade 7	319	46	14%	193	71%
Grade 8	321	59	18%	204	78%
Grades 3-8	2,018	197	10%	1,286	71%

When reviewing literacy outcomes, **consider how participation rates, subgroup representation, and year-to-year testing conditions shape what proficiency data can, and cannot, show.**

Examining results from multiple angles helps distinguish true performance trends from changes driven by who was assessed, under what conditions, and over what period of time.



LONG ISLAND
LITERACY COALITION

Appendix

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





CONTENTS

01 GLOSSARY OF KEY LITERACY TERMS **PAGE 19**

Clear, plain-language definitions of research and system-level literacy terms used throughout this packet to support shared understanding during Board discussions.

02 RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS AT A GLANCE **PAGE 20**

Brief overviews of foundational research frameworks that explain how reading develops and why instructional alignment matters at the system level.

03 DISTRICT LITERACY REVIEW CHECKLIST **PAGE 21**

A governance-focused checklist to support Board-level review of literacy alignment, Tier 1 instruction, MTSS coherence, and decision-making practices.

04 REFERENCES & FURTHER READING **PAGES 22-23**

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.



Glossary of Key Literacy Terms

alignment the degree to which curriculum, assessments, professional learning, and instructional practices reflect the same research-based understanding of how reading develops

assessment tools or measures used to gather information about student learning. In literacy, assessments may target foundational skills, language comprehension, or overall reading performance

balanced literacy an instructional approach that blends multiple reading strategies and activities. Research has raised concerns about its reliance on implicit skill development and cueing strategies rather than explicit, systematic instruction for many students

core instruction (Tier 1) the primary classroom instruction provided to all students. The strength and alignment of Tier 1 instruction directly affect student outcomes and the effectiveness of intervention systems

cueing (or Three-Cueing) an approach that encourages students to use context, pictures, or sentence meaning to identify words. Research indicates this strategy does not support the development of accurate and automatic word reading

curriculum alignment the extent to which instructional materials reflect research-based practices for reading development and provide a coherent progression of skills and knowledge

evidence-based practices or approaches supported by a strong body of research demonstrating effectiveness

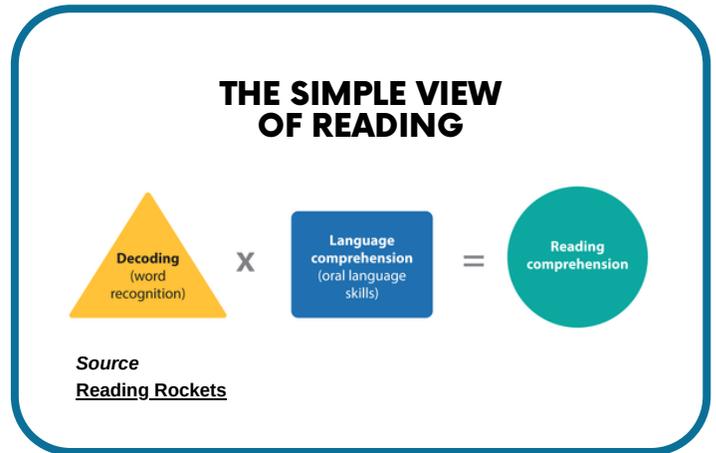
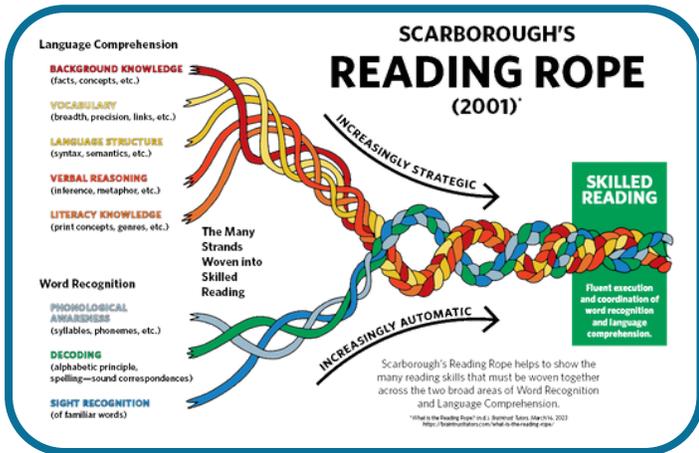
language comprehension the ability to understand spoken and written language, including vocabulary, syntax, and background knowledge

misaligned practices instructional approaches, assessments, or systems that do not reflect current research on how reading develops or that conflict with one another across the system

multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) a framework designed to provide layered academic support based on student need. MTSS is most effective when built on strong, research-aligned Tier 1 instruction

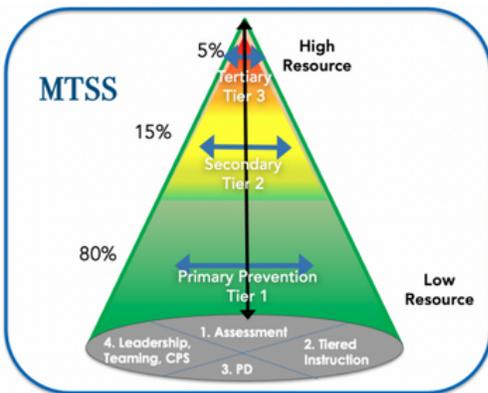
running records/miscue analysis Assessment approaches that analyze reading behaviors and substitutions. Research has raised concerns about their ability to accurately measure decoding and word recognition skills

Research Frameworks At A Glance



Skilled reading develops through the **coordination of multiple interwoven skills**, highlighting the importance of instructional coherence rather than isolated strategies.

Reading comprehension depends on **both accurate word recognition and language comprehension**; weakness in either limits overall reading outcomes.



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support are **designed to organize prevention and intervention**, but their effectiveness depends on the strength of Tier 1 instruction.

When core literacy instruction is not aligned with reading research, **intervention systems are often asked to compensate for gaps they were not designed to fix**—resulting in increased referrals without sustained improvement.

District Literacy Review Checklist



Review Literacy Systems for Alignment

- Confirm curriculum, assessment, and intervention reflect research base
- Verify professional learning aligns with instructional materials
- Check coherence of practices across grade levels



Request a high-level alignment review using tools such as [EdReports](#) and [Reading League's Guide](#).



Define Tier 1 Expectations

- Establish a shared definition of effective core instruction
- Monitor Tier 1 effectiveness beyond intervention referrals
- Examine core instruction before expanding supports



Work with Curriculum & Instruction Committee to establish expectations that inform BOE decisions.



Analyze Literacy Data Over Time

- Review multi-year trends rather than single data points
- Consider participation rates and subgroup patterns
- Compare local outcomes with state trends



Schedule regular review of multi-year literacy outcome trends using [NYSED's](#) public data.



Clarify the Purpose of MTSS

- Use intervention to supplement strong Tier 1 instruction
- Interpret rising intervention demand as a system signal
- Confirm that intervention practices reflect same evidence base as Tier 1



Request a review of how intervention systems align with core instruction.



Guide Sustainable Decision-Making

- Set expectations for monitoring impact over time
- Evaluate whether proposed changes address root causes
- Use state guidance and evidence-based review tools



Direct Curriculum & Instruction Committee to regularly review alignment and report findings.



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-uJVLxgQoeVD0pFt3iY_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>



LONG ISLAND
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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 appreciate the Board members and district leaders who engage thoughtfully with this work and who approach literacy governance with care, curiosity, and responsibility.

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