



The Reading League Maryland &  
Decoding Dyslexia Maryland  
Comments on K-3 Literacy Policy, Draft 3



October 6, 2024

*“Is what I’m doing, or what I’m about to do, going to improve student achievement?”*

**Dr. Wright’s Call to Action**

In Maryland, the Ready to Read Act sets forth preventative screening criteria for students K-3 to assess for risks of reading difficulty, including dyslexia, and requires schools to provide intervention for students who need it. MSDE’s draft policy expands Ready to Read by requiring that **all** students in grades 1-3 be screened using MSDE approved screening assessments. The draft policy also includes a multi-tiered reading support system,<sup>1</sup> student reading plans, professional learning for educators serving students PK-3, and more. We support the literacy policy and applaud MSDE’s foresight and willingness to accept feedback.

On behalf of [Decoding Dyslexia Maryland](#) members, **we respectfully request that MSDE create policies, practices, and oversight that will improve our students’ literacy outcomes.** Most struggling readers and kids with dyslexia learn to read in a general education classroom; therefore, it is critical that they receive effective, evidence based reading instruction, screening, and interventions. Implementation of the literacy policy, combined with implementation of the Blueprint and Ready to Read, will be daunting for LEAs. **We ask that MSDE focus first on effective implementation of literacy laws and policies to improve student outcomes. We ask that retention be removed until reform is fully and effectively implemented.**

Educators and members of [The Reading League Maryland](#) agree with Decoding Dyslexia Maryland and ask that the Comprehensive Literacy Policy focus on prevention practices and effective implementation in the 24 LEAs. We are opposed to retaining students except as state law currently allows. As an example, if this policy is implemented as written, students in first grade now, who are struggling to read because of poor literacy practices, would likely be candidates for retention in third grade through no fault of their own. An effective, multi-tiered, support system would help prevent the need for a state retention policy. **We ask that MSDE focus on prevention, ensure that the literacy policy is based on evidence and is aligned to state statutes and regulations. Once structured literacy and Multi-tiered Systems of Support are in place and demonstrated effective, the retention policy should be revisited.**

---

<sup>1</sup> MTSS/RTI is named in federal law as a pathway to special education. The notion that it cannot be used as a “pathway to special education” is concerning. How would a struggling student be addressed outside of a district’s MTSS? Whatever we call the system that addresses reading difficulties, the outcomes will be used as part of a student’s eligibility for special education.

## Preventing Reading Difficulties

The Ready to Read Act and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future lay the groundwork to build a sustainable literacy system for Maryland students and educators. Included below please find our Recommendations Summary along with detailed feedback in the table below.

### Recommendations Summary

1. **Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs):** This policy needs an accountability mechanism to make sure that EPPs teach students as required in this policy. This is one of the most crucial pieces of this policy. Until EPPs change the way they provide student teachers with effective, quality, reading coursework and practicum experiences, the literacy policy itself is at risk for failure.
2. **MTSS:** Implement a sound, well-defined, evidence-based reading support system that provides students the help they need, when they need it. MTSS includes:
  - a. Screening;
  - b. Structured problem-solving model / Data based decision making;
  - c. Well defined and aligned core instruction & intervention tiers;
  - d. Progress monitoring; and
  - e. Guidance for LEAs on MTSS for reading: how to implement, recommendations on best practices, links and resources on MTSS to support implementation.
3. **Retention.** Remove Section D: Demonstrated Readiness for Promotion. The retention policy can be reconsidered when structured literacy and Multi-tiered Systems of Support function well across the state. To implement retention prior to changing the way reading is taught in Maryland is unfair to struggling readers. See Appendix A for a short list of studies/links on the topic.
4. **Screening:** Remove the dyslexia screening requirement. Reading screening and dyslexia screening use the same measures to assess the acquisition of literacy skills to determine if a student may be at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.
5. **Dyslexia:** [Reconvene the Ready to Read stakeholder workgroup](#) to consider amendments to Ready to Read and to develop a dyslexia reference guide for parents and local districts.
6. **Professional Learning:** Annually fund and prioritize teacher knowledge and practice that incorporates mentoring and coaching. Differentiate professional learning for educators so the training is relevant.
7. **Practice:** Create interdisciplinary practices between special education, multilingual language teachers, general education, speech and language pathologists, and other professionals engaged in reading and literacy.
8. **Families and Caregivers:** Literacy outreach should be incorporated into the community schools' model including after school, family support, and asset mapping programs. All schools should incorporate families in the literacy process & work together to create a community network that supports literacy.
9. **Consistency and Alignment:** Ensure that this policy is aligned with existing federal and state laws and regulations. The policy language should not replace existing definitions and requirements in statute and

regulation without more discussion that includes educators, advocates and parents and other stakeholders..

10. **Funding:** Districts will need additional funding to implement effective MTSS practices for reading. A model budget and funding source should be identified.<sup>2</sup>

## Recommendations

| Definitions           |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Definitions to change | <p>J. “Reading Intervention” means evidence-based, sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative instruction or intervention to mastery of foundational literacy skills, including phonological or phonemic awareness and processing, phonics, and vocabulary to support development of decoding, spelling, fluency, writing, and reading comprehension skills to meet grade level curriculum.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>K. The “Science of Reading” definition, the last line of the definition should be deleted. The key components listed are the “reading pillars” that were taught after the National Reading Panel Report was issued. The key components are not part of the Science of Reading definition.</p> |
| Definitions to add    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Student at risk for reading difficulty” based on the results of a reading screener</li> <li>● “Reading deficiency”</li> <li>● “Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices”</li> <li>● System of Assessments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Informal diagnostics</li> <li>○ Progress monitoring</li> <li>○ Summative assessments</li> <li>○ Formal evaluation</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Pre-referral process for an IEP to support reading, writing, spelling and/or language</li> <li>● Diagnostic assessment</li> </ul>   |

| A. System of Support for Educators                       |   |
|--|---|
| Inservice Education                                      |   |
| Comprehensive Training on the Science of Reading by MSDE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are all listed professionals <b>required</b> to learn the science of reading and its application in the classroom? If not, how will educators who choose not to take the free PL be educated?</li> <li>● If a student is in a classroom with untrained personnel, who</li> </ul> |

<sup>2</sup> [Transitional Supplemental Instruction](#) funds in the Blueprint can be used to pay for screening in each school district. These funds will revert to \$0 at the end of 2026.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the Ready to Read Act.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | will be accountable if the student does not learn to read by the end of third grade?  |
| Licensure Exam in Science of Reading  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Replace 5205 TRE with an assessment like the Massachusetts Foundations of Reading – 19+ states use it to ensure educators know the basics about teaching reading.</li> </ul>   |
| LEA provides professional learning (PL) on the System of Assessments selected by LEAs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include an audit of current assessments in each district along with de-implementation of unnecessary assessments.</li> <li>● Include graphs and documentation of the results of screening and progress monitoring in the SRIP.</li> <li>● Define the screening benchmarks that indicate the risk of reading difficulties so there is consistency across the state.</li> </ul>  |
| Job-embedded coaching support   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The policy draft is unclear as to whether MSDE or the LEAs will fund and oversee the literacy coaches and for how long they will be funded.</li> <li>● Ensure coaches are well trained as they are critical to educator and student success. Teachers report that a colleague might be “appointed as the coach” without any commensurate professional learning or distinction.</li> <li>● Florida’s coaching policy is well defined and appears to be a solid model for coaching:<br/><a href="https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/literacy-coach.stml">https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/literacy-coach.stml</a></li> </ul> |
| Foundational Reading and Writing, Professional Learning Standards                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● III.A.(6) includes reporting the number of educators in grades PK-3 who received foundational training in the “science of reading” during the school year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We recommend using the Reading Universe from the Barksdale Reading Institute as a starting point to develop clear, comprehensive reading and writing standards.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

| <b>Pre-Service Educator Preparation Programs</b>                     |  |
|--|--|
| Pre-service course content, materials and assessments                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teach instructional practices that are aligned to the Science of Reading.</li> <li>● Prioritize instructional practices over teaching particular curricula</li> <li>● Include content on how to use and establish a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to serve all students with reading difficulties including dyslexia and developmental language disorder. (DLD).</li> <li>● Require a practicum with at-risk readers under the supervision of teachers experienced in evidence-based reading practices.</li> </ul> |
| Oversight of EPP and alternate education programs for PK-3 personnel | To ensure EPPs provide teacher candidates effective, quality, coursework, high quality student teaching experiences in reading,  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>and employ professors and adjuncts who know how to teach evidence-based reading:<sup>4</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On p. 6, 4(a-f), requirements are listed to address the content of educator preparation courses for reading and the quality of reading teacher instruction.</li> <li>● We request that this policy include oversight and accountability measures to be effective.</li> <li>● <b>Audit and approve EPP reading course content by establishing compliance mechanisms.</b></li> <li>● We request that policy measures that would make compliance more transparent to the community be included to ensure the requirements on p. 6 are met.</li> <li>● There are currently no PK-3 standards EPPs must follow to provide elementary reading courses to teacher candidates. The literacy policy should include requirements for teacher preparation reading and writing courses, materials and assessments.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**B. Reading Instruction, Assessment and Intervention**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ready to Read Act                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The policy should include the 30-day requirement for administering screening assessments.</li> <li>● Ensure that it's clear that PK-3 are to be screened three times a year using the criteria in the statute and regulations.</li> <li>● Ensure that there is a delineation between a reading screener and a diagnostic assessment.</li> <li>● Consider screening 4th and 5th grade students if they are new to the district or if there is a reported concern about the student's reading ability.</li> <li>● Students who are struggling by the end of third grade, or at any time during their elementary journey, should have the option to be referred for a special education evaluation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the student does not "get in" to special education, this student is clearly at risk and should be provided an SRIP to ensure they are college and career ready by the end of 10th grade.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| What the screener measures <sup>6</sup> | <p>Policy language should state:</p> <p><b>"Approved screeners shall measure phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, rapid automatic naming, and reading comprehension as predictive at various stages in students' reading development."</b></p>  |

<sup>4</sup> In 2015, MSDE convened a workgroup of educators and community members to create a set of [Early Literacy Competencies](#) for educator preparation programs in Maryland's public universities. These standards were finished in 2019 and then disappeared. The four reading courses are no longer required but are available should a university or program choose to use them.

<sup>5</sup> During the [September 4, 2024 AIB meeting](#), Dr. Kirwan asked if EPP's were preparing teachers to teach [Structured Literacy](#) and was surprised when the answer was no. A discussion ensued about why MSDE and the State Board do not have oversight for elementary literacy courses' quality and content.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that [the original version of the Ready to Read Act](#) included the evidence-based developmental components for reading screeners; most components were removed during Senate consideration and amended to read: phonological and phonemic awareness and processing.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Universal screening<br/>Diagnostics (general)<br/>Progress Monitoring</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Universal screeners are not always interchangeable with diagnostic assessments and progress monitoring.</li> <li>● Clarify language in B(5) and describe each part of the assessment system including screening, diagnostics, progress monitoring and summative assessment and the function that each performs.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Universal Reading Screener components</p> <p>Computer Adaptive Tests</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brief</li> <li>● Standardized</li> <li>● Reliable and valid</li> <li>● Criterion-referenced</li> <li>● Measures indicators of essential early literacy skills</li> <li>● Instructionally relevant</li> <li>● Inclusive of alternate forms if used for progress monitoring</li> <li>● Predictive of future reading success</li> <li>● Has adequate psychometric properties such as sensitivity and specificity</li> <li>● Developmentally appropriate</li> <li>● Are administered by a trained educator as specified in the Ready to Read Act</li> <li>● Computer adaptive tests (CAT) should not be used for early literacy screening because they do not include the qualities listed above and CAT results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are not always accurate for screening in general or for screening young children in particular:</li> <li>○ Young children often have speech and language impairments that cannot be discerned by CAT that requires the student to verbalize an answer;</li> <li>○ Are not easy to interpret because algorithms are not transparent;</li> <li>○ Are not useful for planning instruction;</li> <li>○ Require students to guess the correct multiple-choice response instead of producing a response; and</li> <li>○ Require students to use a keyboard and/or mouse to answer questions and kindergarten students may not have the fine motor skills needed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p>Multilingual Learners and Universal Reading Screening</p>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WIDA-based ESOL programs face significant challenges in aligning with state literacy laws that emphasize structured literacy and the science of reading. WIDA-based ESOL programs show gaps in (1) standards-based instructional practices, (2) comprehensive assessment, and (3) setting language expectations.<sup>7</sup> Neither the <a href="#">AIB Guidelines for Implementation for ELs</a> nor the <a href="#">Ready to Read Implementation Guide</a> on pp. 8, 17-18 address WIDA’s shortcomings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When possible, screen MLL students in their primary language.</li> <li>○ Implement a structured literacy policy that incorporates evidence based, effective English language development practices to improve</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

<sup>7</sup> Pendergrass, Jennifer; Tierce, Tabatha; Chiesa, David L, [“Bridging WIDA and the Science of Reading in ESOL Programs,”](#) Language Magazine, October 1, 2024.

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>reading outcomes for English learners.<sup>8</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contact WIDA and recommend that they update their standards to include the science of reading and screening MLLs for risks of reading difficulty in PK-3 aligned with the MTSS model.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Dyslexia Screening</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reading screening should be comprehensive and universal and include the components that are predictive of future reading success. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dyslexia screeners and reading screeners use the same or very similar developmental components to identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulty and characteristics of dyslexia.</li> <li>○ It is not necessary to “screen for dyslexia” when, as required by Ready to Read, the reading screener and the dyslexia screener must assess the <b>SAME essential early literacy skills</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)</b> should be universally administered to kindergarten students and that LEAs/MSDE provide training on how and why RAN is administered to students. Additionally, screening protocols in Maryland should include RAN as it is required by the COMAR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ RAN is a screening subtest that can help identify students at risk for dyslexia. Many districts may not use RAN because it’s sometimes an “add on” that requires the teacher to activate it in the settings.</li> <li>○ Current research indicates that students should be screened once in Kindergarten with a RAN measure to help identify who may be at risk for reading difficulty, including dyslexia.<sup>9</sup> If a student shows potential risk of dyslexia, that student should receive general education diagnostic assessments to determine next steps for intervention. If a parent or guardian suspects dyslexia, they have a right to ask for a formal evaluation. See the <a href="#">Maryland Dyslexia Technical Assistance Bulletin</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p>Supplemental Instruction for students at risk for dyslexia</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On page B(8)(d), we recommend moving (d) to (b) and (b) to (d).</li> <li>● We recommend that students at risk for dyslexia, based on student data, receive tier 3, intensive intervention in their area/s of need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The taxonomy of intensity should be adjusted in response to student data.</li> <li>○ The instructional program should be accredited by the International Dyslexia Association – see the list <a href="#">HERE</a>.</li> <li>○ Dyslexia-specific professional learning should be provided to educators by MSDE and/or LEAs or both.</li> <li>○ MSDE should oversee implementation of all tier 3 reading programs, teacher education, and student outcomes. Parents report that students are in tier 3 intervention for multiple years and the with the reasoning that the student moved up a grade and is now behind.</li> <li>○ Collect data on students in tier 2 and 3 interventions across LEAs to compare from school to school and district to district to determine if</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

<sup>8</sup> Excerpted from the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools](#), p. 6

<sup>9</sup> Papadopoulos TC, Spanoudis GC, Georgiou GK. How Is RAN Related to Reading Fluency? A Comprehensive Examination of the Prominent Theoretical Accounts. *Front Psychol.* 2016 Aug 24;7:1217.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>students are accelerating their learning outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The instructional program should only include programs and materials that are approved by the <a href="#">International Dyslexia Association</a>.</li> <li>○ MSDE should continue to fund Maryland LEADS and encourage LEAs to adopt professional learning that is evidence based for students with dyslexia. The IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers is the gold standard for structured literacy and programs approved by IDA meet those standards.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MSDE should oversee reading and writing program implementation for all tier 3 students in the LEAs and conduct a random sample of student outcomes and reading plans.</li> <li>● We recommend that the screening and intervention recommendations posted on MSDE’s website be removed and replaced by an updated list of vetted screeners and intervention programs.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**Parent Notification and Student Reading Improvement Plan (SRIP)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Notification</p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students should be identified using a reading screener or diagnostic with benchmark goals. A screener or diagnostic is part of an assessment system.</li> <li>● Notification should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An explanation of the student’s specific areas of difficulty; the notification should also include the name of the screener and outcome data from the screener and any diagnostic assessments.</li> <li>○ Description of current reading instruction the student is receiving. Services is a term used in Individualized Education program for students with disabilities</li> <li>○ Description of proposed evidence-based reading interventions (instructional services and supports is a special education term).</li> <li>○ Notification of the possibility of retention -- students/parents should not be threatened with retention if the student doesn’t catch up by the end of the school year. Depending on when the SRIP is written, the skill of the teachers and the extent of the difficulties, it is unreasonable to expect the student to catch up within the school year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p>Student Reading improvement Plan (SRIP)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ideally the MTSS in a school should be flexible and responsive in order to provide a student the instructional supports the student needs, when he/she needs them. The SRIP needs to reflect the same flexibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Should describe the evidence based supplemental instruction including the frequency and the intensity of the instruction along with the progress monitoring tool and frequency to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |



|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
|                                      | <p>determine the effectiveness of the supplemental instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The plan should be reviewed at least quarterly or as progress is monitored.</li> <li>○ The supplemental instruction can be at the tier 2 or tier 3 levels. Not every student will require “intensive” instruction.</li> </ul>   |
| Demonstrated Readiness for Promotion | <p>We recommend that this section requiring retention if a student does not reach a certain score on the third-grade standardized assessment MCAP be put on hold and not implemented. At the very least, retention should be put on hold until PreK-3 educators have the knowledge of the science of reading and how students learn to read, and every elementary school has a well-functioning MTSS system in place.</p>  |
| Evidence Base                        | <p>To our knowledge, there is no definitive evidence that retaining students works in the long term for ensuring that students become proficient readers. (See Appendix for links to studies on the effectiveness of retention.)</p>   |
| Retention Good Cause Exemption       | <p>It is unfair to hold children back in an environment where all due diligence in terms of teacher training, learner supports, tutoring, and class sizes have not been fully executed and in an environment where early education and family engagement haven’t been fully developed and implemented. Only after these other areas are effectively addressed should the school system consider a policy to retain students. Retention discussions should include all stakeholders as part of the policy development process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students with a disability have an Individualized Education <b>Program</b>, not an Individualized Education Plan</li> <li>● We are concerned that the Good Cause Exemption for students who participate in the Maryland Alternate Education Framework will provide a perverse incentive for IEP teams to designate students for the Alt Assessment which makes it unlikely that the student will have the opportunity to try to graduate with a Maryland diploma.</li> <li>● For students with disabilities, what is “intensive interventions” -- is that tier 2 or tier 3 intervention? Does a student need to have an IEP or a 504 Plan for at least two years?</li> <li>● For a student who is promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption or a waiver, it is unclear what an intensive intervention is within a MTSS system, or what would prove that a “student no longer demonstrates reading difficulty.”</li> </ul> |
| Retention and Terminology            | <p>Remove Section D Demonstrated Readiness for Promotion Section of this literacy policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Many research studies show that retention is harmful to students. See the Appendix for a short list of studies/links on the topic.</li> <li>● Retention policies are time consuming for districts.</li> <li>● D.5.a - g the language should be tightened up and can be improved by using MTSS language to describe interventions. Use the term evidence-based reading instruction and remove “reading strategies” and “scientifically evidence-based”</li> </ul>  |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
|                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● D.5.g mentions a “parental contract” that includes participation in parent training workshops and/or regular parent-guided home reading activities. This literacy policy contains significant professional development for educators whose job it is to teach reading. Yet as a last resort this policy requires the parents of the most struggling readers to step into the role of reading teacher. Maryland has many private schools dedicated to teaching students with dyslexia and most of those schools discourage parents from working with their students on reading. They encourage parents to focus on parenting and let the teachers teach reading.</li> <li>● Be more efficient with children’s time. Dr. Holly Lane stated in a Facebook post said: “Using multiple programs makes things harder on your most vulnerable students. It means they have to deal with different scopes and sequences, different methods of instruction, and different kinds of practice. This is more likely to confuse struggling students than support their needs.”<sup>10</sup></li> </ul> |
| <p>Timeline for Implementation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is unrealistic to start implementing the retention portion of the Literacy Policy in the school year 2026-2027. Third grade students in the 2026-2027 school year, most likely did not receive four years of effective instruction aligned to this Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We recommend removing the retention policy or postponing its adoption until all resources and elements of MTSS are in place.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p>Responsibilities</p>            | <p>Data Collection --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A.1.b -- “The number and percentage of all students in grades K-3 performing below grade level on reading screening measures and other local assessments...” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We believe that what is meant here is the screening assessment conducted 3 times during the school year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

<sup>10</sup> Science of Reading - What I Should Have Learned in College Facebook Group. Aimee Stewart asked about research about the importance of using the same curriculum for all tiers of MTSS and Dr. Holly Lane responded. Accessed October 7, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/704498996666615>

## Consistency & Alignment

- Grade levels across the policy vary – sometimes it includes PK and sometimes it does not. [St. Mary's County screens PK](#) and worked with the National Center on Improving Literacy to establish its screening and intervention system. **We recommend adding PK to the screening and intervention protocol.**<sup>11</sup>
- Tiers of instruction should be included in all references to supplemental and intensive intervention to be consistent and avoid confusion.

## Appendix: Retention Studies

1. [National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#): NASP has issued several position statements and policy briefs opposing retention due to the negative long-term effects on students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and graduation rates. Their work emphasizes the importance of early intervention rather than retention.
2. [American Educational Research Association \(AERA\)](#): AERA's research synthesis and policy recommendations also strongly oppose retention policies. The association highlights the lack of evidence supporting retention as an effective strategy and points to numerous studies that show its harmful effects.
3. [Journal of Educational Psychology](#): A variety of studies published in this journal have examined the long-term impacts of retention on academic outcomes and dropout rates. For example, studies in the journal have demonstrated that retention increases the likelihood of school disengagement and dropping out.
4. [Meta-Analysis by John Hattie](#): In his influential book *Visible Learning (2009)*, Hattie synthesizes over 800 meta-analyses relating to student achievement. Retention is one of the lowest-ranked strategies in terms of positive effects on learning, showing that it often does more harm than good.

---

<sup>11</sup> **Pre-Kindergarten.** Source: [MILE Blueprint Implementation and Literacy](#), August 2024.

- Align pre-K curriculum and instruction with kindergarten literacy benchmarks, focusing primarily on oral language development.
- Provide supplemental instruction and interventions for students who are not ready for kindergarten, determined using a pre-k reading screener, via targeted instructional time, and family engagement.