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7 | 15 | 2020

Brief

STATE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR 3RD GRADE LITERACY

Prepared for the Indiana Department of Education



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The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the Office of Program and Grantee Support Services (PGSS) within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), by the Region 8 Comprehensive Center at ICF under Award #S283B190013. This contains resources that are provided for the reader’s convenience. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, enterprise, curriculum, or program of instruction mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.



INTRODUCTION

This brief arises from two distinct yet related activities currently underway within the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). First, IDOE is preparing to review the state early learning standards. The idea for this brief arose initially in that context as a means of considering how to intentionally design and use early learning standards to lead ultimately to student reading proficiency in 3rd grade. Second, IDOE has begun to develop a needs assessment process to inform development of a comprehensive approach to literacy. Against this backdrop, IDOE requested support from the Region 8 Comprehensive Center in identifying best practices from states that are successful in meeting expectations or mandates that students are proficient readers by 3rd grade.

In responding to this question, we start by looking at the current state of literacy and reading in Indiana. Next, we draw upon several recent nationwide efforts to identify state-level policies that support literacy, including some that are already in place in Indiana and others that IDOE may consider adopting or adapting. Finally, we highlight some promising localized programs that support early reading (i.e., prior to 3rd grade).

A QUICK VIEW OF STUDENT LITERACY IN INDIANA

Overall, available data suggest that Indiana is successful in supporting children to be proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade. The most recent publicly available data from INview (<https://inview.doe.in.gov/>) indicate that 87.3% of children meet or exceed the benchmark for proficiency during 2018-19. While this overall number is encouraging, looking within the data suggests some important populations of students who are more or less likely to score proficient (see Figures 1 and 2).

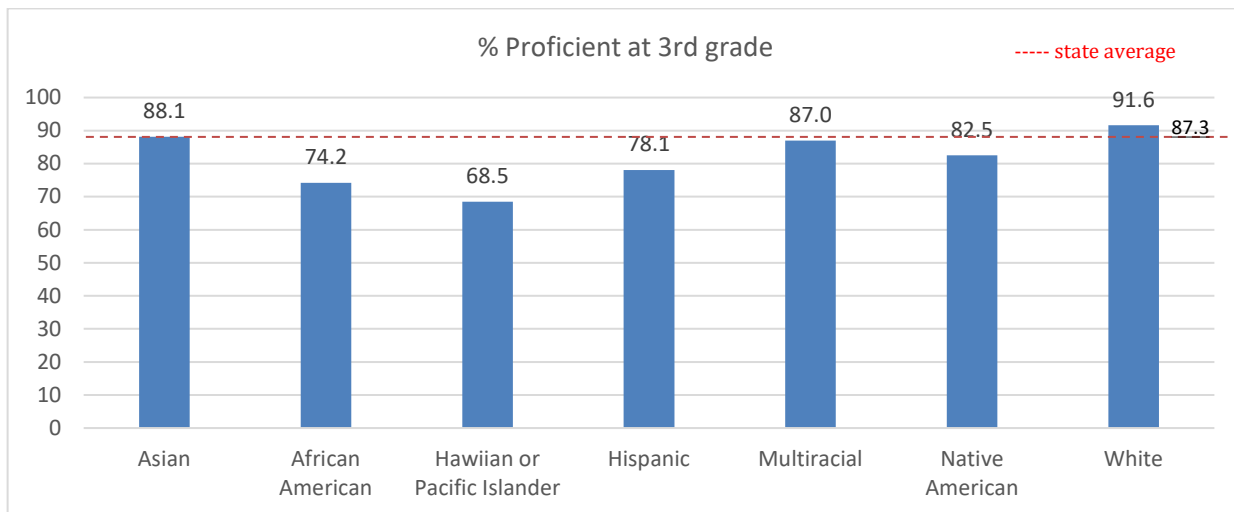


Figure 1. Percent of Indiana students scoring proficient in 3rd grade (I-READ) by race/ethnicity (2018-19).

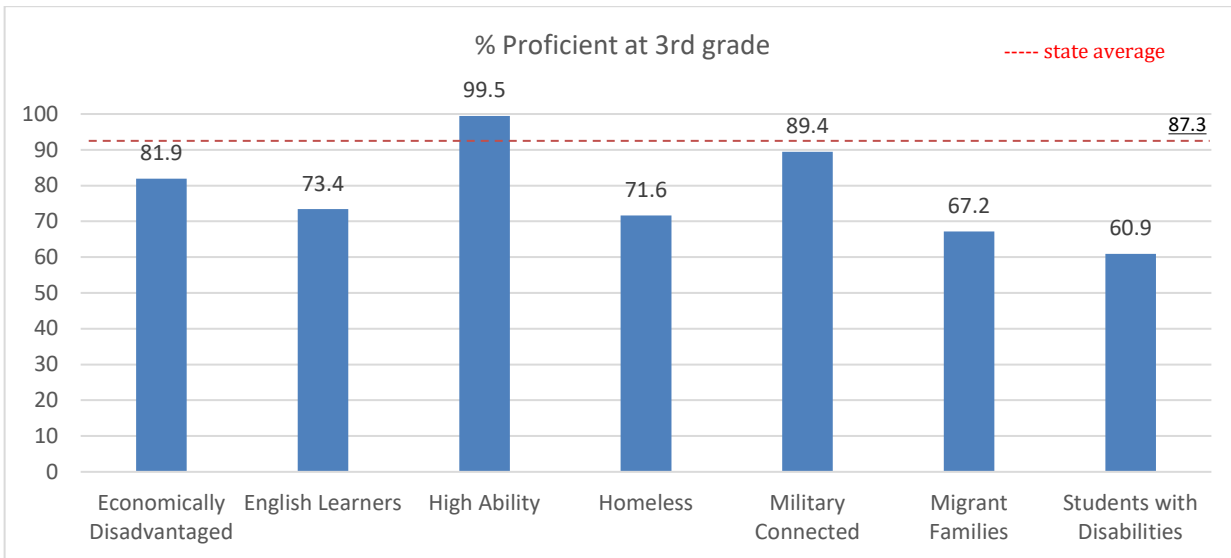


Figure 2. Percent of Indiana students scoring proficient in 3rd grade (I-READ) by identified subgroups (2018-19).

In addition to examining variation in proficiency at 3rd grade, it is important to put the 3rd grade proficiency in context – how well are students learning to read prior to 3rd grade, and to what extent does proficiency in 3rd grade set them up for success in later grades?¹ As shown in Figure 3, 3rd grade reading scores provide a single point in time snapshot of student academic performance.

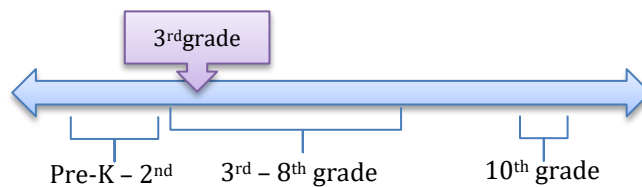


Figure 3. Reading scores in 3rd grade within the Pre-K to Grade 12 continuum.

Like many states, Indiana does not report student learning data in the years prior to 3rd grade, nor does Indiana have a kindergarten entry assessment. Although these years appear as “untested grades” in state reporting, there are oftentimes assessments occurring within classrooms (including pre-kindergarten classrooms), that ultimately can be used to identify areas of needed support.² There are some limited data available from modest studies of Indiana’s On My Way Pre-K program. The 2019 and 2018 Annual

¹ Analysis of data on standardized test scores 2009-2015 by economist Sean Reardon found that the best performing districts produced just over 1 year of student growth per year, with many producing less (Badger & Quealy, 2017). Mathematically this means that the best schools can demonstrate 10 years of growth across nine years of schooling (remember that many schools produce less than 1 year of growth). So, if children are behind by the time they are assessed in 3rd grade, for whatever reason, most schools did not produce enough growth for them to ever catch up with peers.

² The years prior to 3rd grade, particularly K-2, are dramatically under studied. Elliott Regenstein (2019, p. 2), writes, “The K-2 years are often a strangely orphaned period within K-12 world, in part because they are the only years not subject to state accountability systems.”



Reports for the On My Way Pre-K program both reported immediate impact of participation on children’s language comprehension and early literacy skills.³

Students in Indiana are tested in grades 3 through 8 to assess their English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency. According to INview data, overall just under half of students in grades 3–8 (48.7%) scored proficient or above proficiency on the ILEARN assessment during 2018-19 (see <https://inview.doe.in.gov/>). As with the I-READ assessment, there is notable variation across student groups in scores. Together these assessments suggest some success among Indiana schools in helping students reach proficiency by 3rd grade, but some challenges in later years.

Data on 3rd grade reading proficiency, as well as data before and after 3rd grade, are helpful in identifying targets for additional supports. When these data provide flexibility to examine student performance by student characteristics, or by school or district, they can be used to focus resources and interventions where they are most needed. At the same time, they can be used to provide feedback for more universal and statewide programs intended to raise reading achievement for all students.

These data provide an important backdrop to examining what can be described as state success stories in supporting literacy. The remainder of this brief includes findings from a review of emerging trends in state policies and approaches to improve literacy. Many of these are already present in Indiana. This brief also includes findings from a review of selected, localized, programs that Indiana may consider in launching more targeted programs to address the gaps identified above.

STATE POLICIES TO SUPPORT 3RD GRADE READING

Many states have turned to their policy-setting roles in response to ongoing concerns about their student’s proficiency in reading. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010) publication *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters* established the importance and rationale for focusing on 3rd grade reading proficiency. Following publication of this report, many states, including Indiana, passed specific laws and policies intended to ensure students are proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade (collectively referred to as “3rd grade reading laws”). At the same time, researchers and advocates were pressing the need for more comprehensive approaches than the 3rd grade reading laws were generally taking. They focused on a range of policy levers typically available at state education agencies (SEAs) as well as the breadth of policy levers available to other state agencies to support children’s learning to read even before they enter school. Many states, like Indiana, have programs that potentially support early childhood learning housed in multiple departments in addition to their SEA. The discussion of promising, research-based policy options across these layers is summarized below.

3rd Grade Reading Laws

One strong policy lever states have used is the development of “3rd grade reading laws.” Broadly defined, these laws “...specify supports, processes, success measures, or interventions focused on developing

³ These reports are available at <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2018/publications/agency/reports/fssa/#document-ad81cfa9> (2018), and <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2018/publications/agency/reports/fssa/#document-3ca75095> (2019).



reading skills by third grade... The goal of these policies is to improve reading outcomes by bringing attention and resources to early literacy, and by recommending or requiring some combination of prevention, intervention, and/or retention” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019, p.3).

In their 2019 review of state 3rd grade reading laws, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2019, p. 14) noted that Indiana’s 3rd Grade Reading law (House Act 1367 (passed in 2010) required that the “... the state superintendent, in conjunction with the state board, to develop a reading improvement plan focused on grades 1-3, which includes retention ‘as a last resort’.” The CCSSO review also notes “One of Indiana’s biggest lessons for other states is the importance of educator involvement in implementation. Educators played a critical role in developing the IREAD-3 [state designed summative assessment of reading in 3rd grade], professional development offerings, and the new literacy framework. Not only can this make the product stronger and more useful, engaged educators can act as ambassadors in their schools and communities for the importance of early literacy and communicate the state’s approach at a local level” (CCSSO, 2019, pp. 14-15).

State Education Agency Policy Levers for Literacy

Examination of state policies to support reading was dramatically accelerated with the release of results from the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP (2019) reported that Grade 4 reading scores dropped between 2017 and 2019 in 17 states and remained the same in 34 states, with the percent of students at or above proficient dropping from 37% to 35% (only in Mississippi did scores improve). Driven by these data, national reading expert Barbara Foorman (no date) identified a 4-step approach built upon policy levers available to state education agencies (SEAs) to support reading:

- ◀ Step 1: Accelerate language development for all three- and four-year-olds.
 - Exposure to and practice using spoken language is critical for both language and literacy development. States can create policy to highlight the importance of and provide opportunities for children to gain language experience.
- ◀ Step 2: Implement evidence-based practices in K–3 classroom reading instruction.
 - States can create policy to ensure educators are using evidence-based approaches to support reading. For example, the *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC) has produced a practice guide for instructional practices based on systematic reviews of literacy research (Foorman, et al., 2016). States can build systems that recognize quality preparation for teachers, especially with regards to how to support literacy development. Walsh and Drake (2020) noted that teacher preparation programs nationally have improved their inclusion of scientifically based instruction related to reading over the past decade, and programs in Indiana are just above the national average. In addition, states need to focus on instruction as it occurs in classrooms to support effective practices and modify ineffective ones.⁴
- ◀ Step 3: Provide opportunities to practice reading in the classroom and in intervention, summer reading camps, and home literacy programs.
 - Reading as a skill benefits from practice. States can develop and support programs that encourage reading outside of the classroom – at home, through community-based resources and programs,

⁴ Education Week development produced the *Getting Reading Right* project to examine teaching practices and sources of instructional knowledge related to reading that found many practices used in classrooms are not based on current knowledge of how children learn to read (see <https://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/getting-reading-right/index.html>).



and through summer bridge programs.

- ◀ Step 4: Assess for risk, growth, and outcomes, and translate data to instruction.
 - States can establish systems for assessment that allow for identifying children at-risk for reading difficulties, monitor students’ learning to assure they are on track for proficiency, and to provide valuable feedback to teachers on students’ instructional needs.

Foorman notes that there are many additional policies and programs driven more by local education agencies or other state or local agencies that need to be addressed in order to support children’s reading. For example, she notes the multiple routes through which pre-kindergarten programs may be developed or expanded (and by extension early care and education programs from birth to age five), as well as programs to support program quality and teacher quality improvement, that are not specifically within the SEA policy space (or focus of her analysis).

Systemic Approaches to Support Literacy

Each of the policy frameworks noted above tend to focus specifically on reading as it is managed through state-level policy at the SEA level. Yet, as CCSSO (2019, p. 4) noted, the presence of such policies at the state level “...are no panacea, states should anticipate working across various areas of policy, programs, and regulations to create systemic improvements in early learning outcomes – such as teacher preparation, curriculum, special education, and pre-K.” [italics added] Indeed, the need for systemic improvements is one motivation behind state comprehensive literacy plans being supported by the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, a comprehensive approach requires a focus on all the policy levers available to states based on research that supports reading, regardless of the responsible agency within the state.

In this final section the broadest possible view is taken of potential state (and local) policy levers available to support early reading. In 2015, New America’s Early & Elementary Education Policy team developed a “birth-through-third grade state policy framework” based upon a review of research with input from other early education experts (Bornfreund, Cook, Lieberman, & Loewenberg, 2015). It provides a robust view of potential policy levers accessible to states (through one or more state level agency) organized into seven areas that are essential for supporting children’s literacy development:

1. Educators: Teachers and Leaders;
2. Standards, Assessment, and Data;
3. Equitable Funding;
4. Pre-K: Access and Quality;
5. Full-Day Kindergarten: Access and Quality;
6. Dual Language Learner Supports; and
7. Third Grade Reading Laws.

Each of these areas was further specified using a set of generally accepted indicators of quality or effectiveness in supporting early literacy (these are listed in the Appendix A).



The New America team analyzed state policies (from 2012, 2013, or 2014) and scored states in each of the seven areas identified above and overall. They identified 5 states (NY, OK, CT, WV, WI) that had in place a majority of the policy recommendations (referred to as “walking”). Other states were identified as “toddling” – they had some of the policy recommendations in place, but had many areas left untapped. The final group, the “crawlers” had few of the policy recommendations in place.

Indiana’s Ratings. In 2015, the New America analysis placed Indiana in the “toddling” group overall. Within each of the seven areas covered by their review, Indiana fared better in some areas than others:

What do these “Walking” states have in common – not a lot except for state pre-kindergarten, a 3rd grade reading law, and equitable funding. From the New American report (Bornfreund et al, 2015, pp. 17-19): “Among the Walking states is one Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge winner, Wisconsin, and two Preschool Development Grant winners, Connecticut and New York. All five states have a state-funded pre-K program and each of them has a third grade reading law. None of these states have regressive funding distributions; they all provide highest-poverty districts with equal to or more funding than low-poverty districts. All except Oklahoma have strong education spending relative to the state’s economic productivity, signifying that they are prioritizing education.”

1. Educators: Teachers and Leaders – Indiana was identified as one of the strongest states in the “Educators” policy area. This area includes policies related to licensing of teachers, and educational and training requirements for teachers and principals.
2. Standards, Assessment, and Data – The report generally rated early learning standards well but noted limitations in assessment (especially during early years) and linkages between data sources.
3. Equitable Funding – Although Indiana met some of the policy points considered here, lack of funding for prekindergarten and low levels of funding for childcare were noted as weaknesses.
4. Pre-K: Access and Quality – In 2015, Indiana did not have a statewide public prekindergarten program, so this was scored as a serious weakness.
5. Full-Day Kindergarten: Access and Quality – Although there are kindergarten classes noted, the report noted greater than 18 students to one teacher within ratio, as a limiting factor.
6. Dual Language Learner Supports – Although there was some indication of support for language learners in school, lack of a prekindergarten program to support them limited the strength in this area.
7. Third Grade Reading Laws – While there is a 3rd Grade Reading Law in place in Indiana, at least in 2015, it included mandated retention in grade, which was negatively scored in the New America rubric.

It is important to consider that the New America review was intentionally comprehensive and includes some policy areas not typically housed in SEAs, as well as some areas that are not (yet) a focus of a specific state’s focus. For example, Indiana’s Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System (Paths to QUALITY™) is managed by the Families and Social Services Administration.⁵ Other areas in this analysis do not clearly appear to be a focus in Indiana, such as statewide public pre-kindergarten and the use of a kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). The set of scores from New America report’s ratings for the full set of indicators is given in Appendix B across the seven essential areas noted above. The specific results of the analyses are less critical than the framework they provide. The methodology used is clearly articulated and could be repeated within the current policy context. Indeed, it could be built into a capacity-building needs assessment.

⁵ See <https://www.in.gov/fssa/2554.htm>.



SELECTED PROMISING LOCAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT EARLY READING

Certainly, state and local school system policies and practices are large drivers of children’s opportunities to become readers. However, within *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) there is space for schools and districts to pursue innovative interventions that meet the ESSA standards of evidence. This opens the door for localized programs to be encouraged to address specific needs to ensure reading proficiency for all students. Below are several specific areas that communities may identify as necessary to address to meet the needs of their students and families.

Using the flexibility provided by *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), as well as other philanthropic funds, states can support pilot programs to allow for local innovations that can meet local literacy needs.

Promoting Oral Language Experiences for Young Children

One important element in young children’s reading is their exposure to oral language. The influential study of variations in exposure to spoken language by family income conducted by Hart and Risely (1995) underscored both the breadth of differences and the cumulative effect of these differences in children’s learning. As a result, attention was focused on building opportunities for children to engage in conversation with others to build their language skills. Initiatives, like Thirty Million Words, were launched to bring attention to and develop programs to encourage children’s language use.⁶ Some programs were embedded within local communities. In the *Supermarket Speak* program, conversation prompts are provided by signs placed throughout local groceries to encourage families to have conversations while shopping (Ridge et al., 2015). This project is part of a broader effort to build opportunities for learning into the built ecosystem of families. For example, the *Learning Landscapes* project intentionally integrates opportunities for children to learn through play, alone, with other children and with adults (parents, teachers, others) into the parts of the environment built by design, including structures (like walls, benches), equipment (like climbing apparatus), and pathways and walkways.⁷ Preliminary data show high levels of engagement, and evidence of learning especially in mathematics. These community-embedded models go beyond encouraging learning outside the classroom and provide necessary supports for families to do so.

Community-based and Community-informed Approaches

A recent blog on the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) highlighted the potential for grassroots programs to grow and support literacy among African American children.⁸ Likewise, efforts have been undertaken to understand the community context for Latino children and families (e.g., Reese & Goldenberg, 2008).

⁶ See <https://tmwcenter.uchicago.edu/>.

⁷ For an overview, see <https://www.brookings.edu/research/learning-landscapes-can-urban-planning-and-the-learning-sciences-work-together-to-help-children/>.

⁸ See <https://ncte.org/blog/2020/01/grassroots-community-engagement-initiatives-african-american-literacy-development/>.



Addressing English Language Learners

As noted above, English learners are among the groups less likely to be proficient readers by 3rd grade. There are considerable resources available to guide program development for children who are coming from homes where English is not the first or primary language used. The National Academies of Sciences Consensus Report *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English* provides an extensive review of research-based practices to English language learners from Pre-K through 12th grade.⁹ A brief focused more specifically on program design was recently developed by the Migration Policy Institute.¹⁰ The programs focus on sustaining the learning of their first (sometimes referred to as “home” or “primary”) language, modifying assessments and materials to accommodate learning and using multiple languages, and providing for more equitable linguistic and cultural representation in spoken and written resources.

Reach Out and Read

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a model for supporting young children literacy development that provides literacy supports to families with infants and young children visiting participating pediatric clinics and offices. The model has extensive research showing positive impacts in young children’s literacy, including Latino children and children living in low income families.¹¹ ROR has statewide and regional affiliates.¹²

MAKING CHOICES FOR LITERACY

The national focus on literacy, especially on improving literacy for young children is not new. It has generated a broad range of policy options and programs while building consensus on what works to support young readers.¹³ Faced with such a range of choices, state and local policy makers need to determine how they will prioritize different policies and programs. Three critical issues emerge in this decision-making: effectiveness, funding and return on investment, and leveraging current systems that work.

When focused on 3rd grade reading, states confront two critical constraints—time and money. There is a finite amount of time between when a child is born and when the child leaves 3rd grade, and the level of funding provided for programs during that period is limited. Funding programs that do not support early reading instead of those that do amount to a waste of both of these essential resources.

⁹ Available at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24677/promoting-the-educational-success-of-children-and-youth-learning-english>.

¹⁰ See <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/english-learner-program-models-k-12-education>.

¹¹ See <https://www.reachoutandread.org/why-we-matter/the-evidence/>.

¹² The Reach out and Read website lists an Indiana affiliate, but no other information is available.

¹³ Although there continues to be some lingering debate, the findings from the National Reading Panel (see <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/research/supported/nrp>) continues to be the best summary of research, and the International Reading Association report (2007), *Teaching reading well: A synthesis of the International Reading Association’s research on teacher preparation for reading instruction* provides a summary of research on preparing teachers to use effective instruction in reading.



Effectiveness of Programs and Practices

The most critical consideration for policy and programs is the degree to which they are effective at achieving their goals. Analyzing systems for effectiveness requires a clear articulation of metrics by which effectiveness can be identified (e.g., “90% of students in 3rd grade meet or exceed scores for proficiency in reading”). It also requires an ability to articulate what specific components (practices, policies, programs) have evidence that they are effective. Importantly, the *Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA)* specifies four levels of evidence - strong evidence; moderate evidence; promising evidence; or evidence that demonstrates a rationale.¹⁴ Effectiveness is most readily attributable to the top two levels (strong or moderate evidence), but states have flexibility to support promising practices that do yet have accumulated evidence of effectiveness.

The U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) is a central resource for best practices in education. It includes practice guides, reports that provide “...recommendations for educators to address challenges in their classrooms and schools... based on reviews of research, the experiences of practitioners, and the expert opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts” as well as specific intervention reports.¹⁵ The WWC currently includes critical evidence reviews of more than 100 literacy programs and interventions.¹⁶ These reviews can inform local decisions about which programs have the most promise for local needs.

Funding and Return on Investment

Another critical focus for policy makers is the level of funding allocated to programs and their expected return on investment (ROI). Essentially, ROI analyses compare the total costs of a programs with an economic estimate of the programs’ impact on participants. Simply considered, an ROI greater than one means the benefits outweigh the costs – and ROI of \$2 suggests a net benefit of \$2 per dollar spent.¹⁷ The ROI arguments are especially strong when looking at the provision of high-quality early childhood education programs. Economists studying the long term impacts of high quality programs regularly note an ROI of approximately \$9–\$13 per dollar spent.¹⁸ A study modeling the impact of investments in early childhood education in Indiana (conducted in 2016) were somewhat less optimistic but still strong, suggesting an ROI of \$4 per dollar spent.¹⁹ While ROI arguments can be compelling, they require that policy-makers are willing to realize gains over a period of years, sometimes beyond their time in office, and that policy makers invest enough funds to meet a minimum standard of quality necessary to realize gains.

Often ROI arguments are made for launching new programs or when expanding pilot programs to scale. It is useful in anticipating whether an expense “is worth it” – to what extent does the benefit outweigh the cost? An alternative consideration is driven by cost effectiveness – what is the minimal level of funding

¹⁴ For a brief summary of these levels, see <https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/what-do-we-mean-evidence-based/>.

¹⁵ The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) is accessible at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW/>.

¹⁶ Evaluations of interventions are continuously reviewed and added to the WWC web site. For current listings see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW/Results?filters=Literacy>.

¹⁷ Return on investment (ROI) arguments are complicated by differences in how costs are estimated, and what benefits are considered (and how they are valued). For example, modest income differences attributed to an intervention can accumulate over time into very large benefits, driving the ROI higher than models excluding wages. Such differences can result in broad differences in ROI estimates for any program.

¹⁸ See, for example, <https://heckmanequation.org/>.

¹⁹ See <http://www.elacindiana.org/documents/economic-impacts-investing-early-childhood-education-indiana.pdf>.



necessary to effectively meet the stated goal? In this context, all funded programs can be examined to determine their effectiveness, or if the financial resources they require could be allocated to more effective programs.

Leveraging Current Systems that Work

The listing of policy options identified by the New America report noted above is both comprehensive and daunting in its coverage. As their report notes, no state meets all of the indicators they identified, and very few states employ more than a majority of the options they identify. Building a comprehensive system is less overwhelming when states identify their current policy strengths and identify policies and programs closely adjacent on which to focus. For example, Indiana has a 3rd grade reading law in place, making modification to it is more attainable than creating and implementing a new law. Likewise, improvements to state-funded pre-kindergarten programs are much more attainable with an established system in place. At the broadest level, a review of policies in the two areas provided by the New America framework (and their indicators) can be used to identify foundations upon which other policies and programs can be built effectively and efficiently.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This brief was developed in response to a request made to the Region 8 Comprehensive Center to identify and learn from states that are having great success in meeting 3rd grade reading proficiency. In looking at data on students' reading scores and state policies, Indiana appears to be at an important midpoint. Based upon an evaluation of state policies from birth to 3rd grade undertaken by New America, guided by the National Governor's Association recommendations, Indiana was ranked with a group of states in the middle of the pack (there was a group of five states rated as group higher). There are some critical components in place to build a comprehensive approach for the state.

Final Thoughts

- ◀ Consider adapting the New America *From Crawling to Walking* 2015 report criteria to build a comprehensive Birth to 3rd Grade literacy approach using Indiana's current strengths as a foundation.
- ◀ Use current data, and consider expanding collecting of student assessment scores, to more effectively monitor achievement, especially disparities in scores. Capitalize on the continuity of learning to track students' progress across grades to monitor growth.

The New America report, summarized above, provides one framework for implementing a comprehensive birth to 3rd grade approach that supports children's 3rd grade reading. While the policy areas covered in the New America report are intentionally broad, they all support a robust early literacy learning system. The indicators used provide one potential guide for Indiana to consider additional policy and programmatic steps that may be taken to further support students' literacy.



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APPENDIX A: COMPLETE LIST OF POLICY INDICATORS

From Crawling to Walking: Ranking States on Birth - 3rd Grade Policies That Support Strong Readers²⁰

◀ Educators: Policy Indicators

- State has an early childhood educator license (PreK–3rd or birth–3rd)
- Kindergarten teachers are required to have an ECE license
- Requires elementary school teachers to have preparation in the science of reading
- Requires child development coursework for elementary licensed teachers
- Elementary teacher candidates are required to pass a reading pedagogy test
- ECE teacher candidates are required to pass a reading pedagogy test
- Requires elementary principals to have preparation in early language and literacy development
- Requires elementary principals to have preparation in early childhood
- Teachers are observed at least once every year
- State teacher evaluation systems include multiple measures
- Lead teachers in childcare center settings are required to have at least some training (more than high school)
- Directors of childcare centers are required to have at least some training (more than high school)

◀ Standards, Assessment, and Data: Policy Indicators

- Comprehensive early learning standards that include infants, toddlers, and preschoolers
- K–12 college and career ready standards
- K–3 ELA standards include language, literacy, communication skills, and mechanics of reading
- K–3 standards incorporate nonfiction and informational texts
- Early learning standards mention dual language learners (beyond the introduction)
- Social-emotional learning standards with indicators for specific grade levels
- Developmental screenings included in state childcare licensing requirements
- Developmental screenings included in Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) requirements
- Requires multiple domain assessment for state funded pre-K

²⁰ Full report available at <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/from-crawling-to-walking/>.



- Requires multiple-domain Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)
- Statewide KEA (common across districts)
- Provides recommendations or requirements for K–2 literacy and math assessment
- State-funded pre-K, childcare, and Head Start data are part of state longitudinal data system
- Links child-level data across state-funded early childhood programs
- Collects KEA data
- Collects early childhood screening and/or assessment data
- Collects information about chronic absences
- State has a QRIS
- QRIS rates programs on learning environment and teacher-child interactions
- QRIS rates programs on use of curriculum
- QRIS rates programs on use of child assessment
- ◀ Equitable Funding: Policy Indicators
 - At least one state-funded pre-K program is funded through the state’s school funding formula
 - State provides per-pupil funding of at least \$11,110 (U.S. average)
 - State has a progressive funding distribution
 - State’s local and state spending on education is in relation to the state’s economic productivity
 - Rate of Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy reimbursement rate is equal to or above the 75th percentile of current market rate
 - Reimburses for days a child receiving CCDF subsidy is absent
- ◀ Pre-K: Policy Indicators
 - State-funded pre-K program
 - Percentage of four-year-old children served
 - Percentage of three-year-old children served
 - Maximum ratio 10 to 1
 - Full-day option of at least six hours per day, five days per week
 - Conducts site visits
 - Teachers are required to hold a BA
 - Teachers are required to have specialization in early childhood
 - Assistant teachers are required to hold at least CDA
- ◀ Full-Day Kindergarten: Access and Quality
 - State requires districts to offer full-day kindergarten



- State bans districts from charging tuition for full-day kindergarten
- Minimum length of day for full-day kindergarten is equivalent to first grade
- State requires class ratio of no more than 18 to 1
- ◀ Dual Language Learner (DLL) Supports Policy Indicators
 - K-12 rules around native language instruction
 - Funding support
 - Enacted legislation that encourages family engagement among non-English fluent parents
 - State-funded pre-K programs required to screen for DLLs
- ◀ Third Grade Reading Law Policy Indicators
 - State law requires annual reading assessments for students in K-3 assessment prior to K entry
 - State law requires assessment prior to kindergarten entry
 - State law requires intervention before third grade
 - State law requires communication with families about child's reading progress
 - State law requires retention
 - If retention is required, students held back are assigned to a different teacher
 - If retention is required, students have the opportunity for promotion if they participate in an intervention
 - If retention is required, exemptions are allowed



APPENDIX B: SCORING RUBRIC AND SCORES FOR POLICY INDICATORS (2015 AND 2020)

From Crawling to Walking: Ranking States on Birth - 3rd Grade Policies That Support Strong Readers²¹

Indicators	Points	Indiana Score (2015) ²²	Indiana Score (2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators: Policy Indicators 	23	16	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State has an early childhood educator license (PreK-3rd or birth-3rd) 	2	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kindergarten teachers are required to have an ECE license 	2	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires elementary school teachers to have preparation in science of reading 	2	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires child development coursework for elementary licensed teachers 	2	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elementary teacher candidates are required to pass a reading pedagogy test 	3	3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ECE teacher candidates are required to pass a reading pedagogy test 	3	3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires elementary principals to have preparation in early language and literacy development 	1	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires elementary principals to have preparation in early childhood 	2	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers are observed at least once every year 	1	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State teacher evaluation systems include multiple measures 	1	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead teachers in childcare center settings are required to have at least some training (more than high school) 	2	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directors of childcare centers are required to have at least some training (more than high school) 	2	2	

²¹ Full report available at <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/from-0.5crawling-to-walking/>.

²² Scores listed here are interpretations of ratings given in New America Atlas – see <http://atlas.newamerica.org/crawling-to-walking>.



Indicators	Points	Indiana Score (2015)	Indiana Score (2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards, Assessment, and Data: Policy Indicators 	18	12	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comprehensive early learning standards that include infants, toddlers, and preschoolers 	1.5	1.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ K-12 college and career ready standards 	1.5	1.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ K-3 ELA standards include language, literacy, communication skills, mechanics of reading 	1	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ K-3 standards incorporate nonfiction and informational texts 	1	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early learning standards mention dual language learners (beyond the introduction) 	0.5	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social-emotional learning standards with indicators for specific grade levels 	0.5	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developmental screenings included in state childcare licensing requirements 	0.5	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developmental screenings included in QRIS requirements 	0.5	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires multiple domain assessment for state funded pre-K 	1.5	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires multiple-domain Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) 	1.5	1.0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statewide KEA (common across districts) 	0.5	0.25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides recommendations or requirements for K-2 literacy and math assessment 	2	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State-funded pre-K, childcare, Head Start data part of state longitudinal data system 	1	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Links child-level data across state-funded early childhood programs 	1	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collects KEA data 	0.5	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collects early childhood screening and/or assessment data 	0.5	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collects information about chronic absence 	0.5	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State has a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) 	0.5	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QRIS rates programs on learning environment and teacher-child interactions 	0.5	0.25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QRIS rates programs on use of curriculum 	0.5	0.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QRIS rates programs on use of child assessment 	0.5	-	



Indicators	Points	Indiana Score (2015)	Indiana Score (2020)
• Equitable Funding: Policy Indicators	18	6.5	
○ At least one state-funded pre-K program is funded through the state's school funding formula	3	-	
○ State provides per-pupil funding of at least \$11,110 (U.S. average)	3	-	
○ State has a progressive funding distribution	4	4	
○ State's local and state spending on education in relation to the state's economic productivity	2	1	
○ Rate of CCDF subsidy reimbursement rate is equal to or above the 75th percentile of current market rate	3	0	
○ Reimburses for days a child receiving CCDF subsidy is absent	3	1.5	
• Pre-K: Policy Indicators	16	1.5	
○ State-funded pre-K program	3	1.5	
○ Percentage of four-year-old children served	3	-	
○ Percentage of three-year-old children served	1.5	-	
○ Maximum ratio 10 to 1	1	-	
○ Full-day option of at least six hours per day, five days per week	2	-	
○ Conducts site visits	1	-	
○ Teacher required to hold a BA	2	-	
○ Teacher required to have specialization in early childhood	0.5	-	
○ Assistant teacher required to hold at least CDA	2	-	
• Full-Day Kindergarten: Access and Quality	13	8	
○ State requires districts to offer full-day kindergarten	3	-	
○ State bans districts from charging tuition for full-day kindergarten	4	4	
○ Minimum length of day for full-day kindergarten is equivalent to first grade	4	4	
○ State requires class ratio of no more than 18 to 1	2	-	
• Dual Language Learner Supports Policy Indicators	6	2.5	
○ K-12 rules around native language instruction	1	0.5	
○ Funding support	2	1	
○ Enacted legislation that encourages family engagement among non-English fluent parents	1	1	
○ State-funded pre-K programs required to screen for DLLs	2	-	



Indicators	Points	Indiana Score (2015)	Indiana Score (2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Grade Reading Law Policy Indicators 	6	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State law requires annual reading assessments for students in K–3 assessment prior to K entry 	1	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State law requires assessment prior to K entry 	1	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State law requires intervention before third grade 	2.5	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State law requires communication with families about child’s reading progress 	1.5	1.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State law requires retention 	-5	-5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If retention is required, students held back are assigned to a different teacher 	1.5	1.5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If retention is required, students have the opportunity for promotion if they participate in an intervention 	1.5	-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If retention is required, exemptions are allowed 	1	1	