Strengthening Ohio's Implementation of the Science of Reading through Teacher Preparation

Literacy is critical for success in school, work, and civic engagement. Research finds that reading failure can be reduced to fewer than 1 in 10 students when teachers provide scientifically based reading instruction.[1] In the wake of learning loss experienced in the COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever, we must ensure aspiring teachers are prepared to teach children to read using scientifically based reading instruction.

The stakes for students in Ohio

In Ohio, only **35% of 4th grade students read proficiently** based on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). That number falls precipitously for some of Ohio's historically underserved students. This dismal data has nothing to do with the students and families and everything to do with **inequities in access to effective literacy instruction**.

Ohio's Reading Data

Student group	# of students in Ohio	% who read proficiently in 4th grade
ALL STUDENTS	1,612,524	35%
Hispanic students	115,177	14%
Black students	280,617	14%
English language learners	60,049	7%
Students with disabilities	270,977	11%
Students eligible for National School Lunch Program	768,403	20%

Teacher prep programs are key to implementing and sustaining science of reading at scale.

Are Ohio's teacher prep programs ensuring aspiring teachers learn the most effective methods to teach reading?

The National Council on Teacher Quality, a research and policy nonprofit, evaluated nearly 700 programs across the country, including 26 in Ohio, on how well they prepare aspiring elementary teachers to teach reading.

This review considered attention to **the five core components of scientifically based reading instruction**—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—across four different instructional approaches (instructional hours, background materials, objective measures of knowledge, and opportunities to practice).

The review also deducted points when programs teach aspiring teachers content contrary to research-based practices; and considered whether programs provide instruction in how to support a range of learners (struggling readers, English language learners, and students who speak language varieties other than mainstream English).

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1   See appendix for citation for this statement and data included throughout.

In Ohio, 31% of the 26 programs evaluated earn an A for preparation in reading, meaning they adequately teach all five components of reading and provide little or no instruction on content contrary to research-based practices.
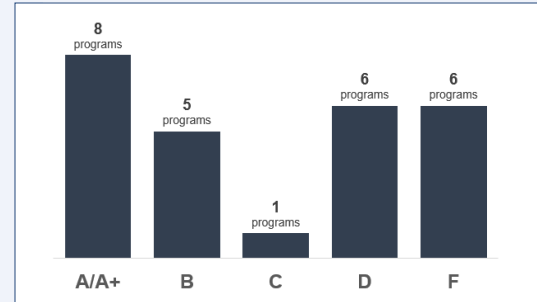
Ohio ranks above the national average for the average number of components of reading its programs adequately address. In Ohio:

- Programs are most likely to cover **phonics** and least likely to cover **fluency.**
- **One of 26 programs provides at least one practice opportunity** in each of these components.
- There are 14 programs (54%) in Ohio that teach **multiple** techniques or approaches contrary to research-based practices, which can inhibit the reading progress of many students.
- Twenty-three programs devote some instructional time to supporting **Struggling readers.**
- Fifteen programs devote some instructional time to supporting **English language learners.**
- **Exemplary (A+) programs in Ohio include the undergraduate programs at Mount St. Joseph University, University of Dayton, University of Findlay, and University of Rio Grande.**

Better teacher preparation is essential to ensure all students effectively learn to read.

State policy question	Answer for Ohio
Does Ohio have standards for teacher prep programs that address all five core components of scientifically based reading?	Yes, the standards address all five core components with details related to the knowledge and skills needed to teach them
Does Ohio require a licensure test that addresses reading?	Yes, the state requires a reading licensure test
What are the required or optional licensure tests that address reading?	Foundations of Reading
Does Ohio require the review of reading course syllabi as part of preparation program renewal?	No

"Every child has the right to read. Sending teachers into the classroom without the science behind how kids learn to read puts everyone in an unfair position. As teachers, we are in this profession to always do what is best and necessary. If we aren't properly taught by the institutions we put our trust and dollars into, we are made ineffective."

- Virginia Quinn-Mooney, First grade teacher

Recommendations for state leaders:

- Set specific, explicit, and comprehensive preparation standards for scientifically based reading instruction.
- Incorporate a specific evaluation of reading instruction in program renewal or reauthorization processes, and take action if programs are not aligned to the state's standards for scientifically based reading instruction.
- Require a reading licensure test aligned with scientifically based reading instruction for any PK–5 teachers to earn licensure, and publish the pass rates.
- Deploy a comprehensive strategy to implement scientifically-based reading instruction, and prioritize teacher prep.
- Use the bully pulpit to draw attention to the importance of teacher prep to sustain implementation of improved reading instruction.

For more detail on these recommendations, visit www.nctq.org/review/standard/reading-foundations.

Questions? Contact Shannon Holston, NCTQ Chief of Policy and Programs at shannon.holston@nctq.org.

Program grades in Ohio

School	Program Level	Grade	Adequate coverage of core components: Graded (Up to 12 points per component; 8 points for adequate coverage; 4 or more contrary practices results in letter grade deduction)						Support for a range of learners: Ungraded (Up to 8 points per group)		
			Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Count of Contrary Practices (out of 9)	Struggling readers	ELLs	Speakers of language varieties
Ashland University	UG	F	No (3.64 pts)	Yes (8 pts)	No (5.53 pts)	No (3.75 pts)	No (6 pts)	7	2 pts	3.12 pts	0 pts
Ashland University	G	F	No (3.64 pts)	Yes (8 pts)	No (5.53 pts)	No (3.75 pts)	No (5.5 pts)	7	2 pts	3.12 pts	0 pts
Bowling Green State University	UG	B	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	4	4 pts	5.5 pts	0 pts
Central State University	UG	B	Yes (8.25 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	No (7.25 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	2	2 pts	2 pts	0 pts
Cleveland State University	UG	D	No (5.11 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	No (6 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	No (5.75 pts)	1	4 pts	0 pts	0 pts
Cleveland State University	G	D	No (5.11 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	No (6 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	No (5.75 pts)	1	4 pts	0 pts	0 pts
Defiance College	UG	F	No (3.89 pts)	No (5.06 pts)	No (2.25 pts)	No (5 pts)	No (3 pts)	3	5 pts	0 pts	0 pts
Kent State University	UG	D	No (5.11 pts)	Yes (9.5 pts)	No (5.69 pts)	No (4.62 pts)	Yes (8 pts)	3	3.5 pts	2.75 pts	0 pts

View this data online at nctq.org for more details. Data updated September 2023.

School	Program Level	Grade	Adequate coverage of core components: Graded (Up to 12 points per component; 8 points for adequate coverage; 4 or more contrary practices results in letter grade deduction)						Support for a range of learners: Ungraded (Up to 8 points per group)		
			Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Count of Contrary Practices (out of 9)	Struggling readers	ELLs	Speakers of language varieties
Kent State University	G	F	No (1.14 pts)	No (2.5 pts)	No (4.12 pts)	No (0.5 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	3	0 pts	2 pts	0 pts
Marietta College	UG	A	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	1	7 pts	5 pts	2.75 pts
Miami University of Ohio	UG	F	No (2.5 pts)	No (7.5 pts)	No (3.28 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	No (4.25 pts)	1	2.38 pts	2 pts	3.5 pts
Mount St. Joseph University	UG	A+	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	0	7.8 pts	6 pts	4 pts
Ohio State University	UG	B	Yes (10.89 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	4	6 pts	6 pts	6 pts
Ohio State University	G	B	Yes (10.89 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	4	6 pts	6 pts	6 pts
Ohio University	UG	A	Yes (8.89 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	1	5.33 pts	6 pts	2 pts
Shawnee State University	UG	D	Yes (9.5 pts)	Yes (9.5 pts)	No (6.56 pts)	No (7.88 pts)	Yes (8.5 pts)	4	4 pts	6 pts	0 pts
University of Akron	UG	A	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	2	4 pts	2.25 pts	2 pts
University of Dayton	UG	A+	Yes (8.29 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	0	4 pts	6 pts	4 pts
University of Findlay	UG	A+	Yes (11.57 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	0	5 pts	2 pts	2 pts
University of Rio Grande	UG	A+	Yes (9.57 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	0	6 pts	6 pts	0 pts
University of Toledo	UG	D	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (8 pts)	No (7.25 pts)	No (6.75 pts)	Yes (8 pts)	5	8 pts	6 pts	3 pts
University of Toledo	G	F	No (3.64 pts)	No (4.12 pts)	No (4.12 pts)	No (3.75 pts)	No (4 pts)	0	8 pts	2 pts	0 pts
Wilmington College	UG	C	Yes (11.62 pts)	Yes (8.75 pts)	No (7.5 pts)	No (3 pts)	Yes (8.33 pts)	1	6 pts	0 pts	0 pts
Wittenberg University	UG	D	Yes (8 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	No (1 pt)	No (6 pts)	No (3 pts)	0	0 pts	0 pts	0 pts
Wright State University	UG	B	No (6.29 pts)	Yes (11 pts)	Yes (8.56 pts)	Yes (9 pts)	Yes (10.25 pts)	2	6 pts	0 pts	0 pts
Youngstown State University	UG	A	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (10 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	Yes (12 pts)	2	7.5 pts	5.5 pts	0 pts

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