

The Science of Reading in Action

NAEP 2024 shows that real progress follows sustained commitment.

NAEP 2024: A Sobering Snapshot

The latest [NAEP 2024](#) scores revealed continued national struggles in reading performance. But amidst the overall flatline, a few states are quietly—and steadily—proving something big:

Long-term commitment to the science of reading is paying off. Change takes courage and the right tools.

District leaders are asking:
Where is progress happening?

The answer lies in implementation.
Not in quick wins, but in the systems that stick.



States That Stayed the Course

Mississippi

(Adopted science of reading: 2013)

- Once among the lowest performers nationally
- Now among the top 10 in fourth grade reading
- Outpaced the national average in post-pandemic recovery

What changed? A decade-long investment in teacher knowledge, Structured Literacy, and aligned curriculum.

Reading (scale range 0–500)

YEAR	SCORE	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL PUBLIC
2024	218.50	+4.23 ⬆
2022	217.16	+1.05 ⬆
2019	219.34	–0.10 ⬆

[See Mississippi’s NAEP Profile](#)

Colorado

(Adopted science of reading: 2019)

- Modest but consistent gains in fourth grade scores since implementation
- Focused on educator training and curriculum alignment

Early evidence shows that science of reading-aligned systems build resilience, especially in recovery years.

Reading (scale range 0–500)

YEAR	SCORE	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL PUBLIC
2024	220.92	+6.64 ⬆
2022	222.85	+6.74 ⬆
2019	224.86	+5.42 ⬆

[See Colorado’s NAEP Profile](#)

Florida

(Adopted science of reading: 2021)

- Too early for large-scale results, but already seeing gaps closing in targeted districts
- Early literacy initiatives showing promise in the third grade cohort

Early signs of progress: When it comes to literacy reform, early investment predicts long-term gain.

Reading (scale range 0–500)

YEAR	SCORE	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL PUBLIC
2024	218	+4.23 ⬆
2022	225	+9.05 ⬆
2019	225	+5.10 ⬆

[See Florida’s NAEP Profile](#)

⬆ Significantly higher than national public ⬆ Not significantly different from national public

Why It Matters to You

District leaders face immense pressure: tight budgets, competing priorities, and scrutiny over results. The question isn’t “**Does the science of reading work?**” It’s: “**Will we stay with the science of reading long enough to let it work?**”

According to EdWeek, rushing to judgment on science of reading programs after only short-term use misses the point.

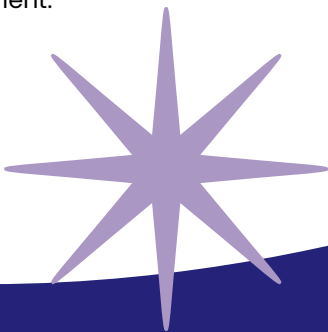
“

This is the steady and unglamorous work of policy implementation, but I have no doubt our scores will climb as a result.”

— [EdWeek, February 2025](#)

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Science of reading implementation works, but it takes time and systemwide commitment.
- ✓ States like Mississippi, Colorado, and Florida are already seeing an impact.
- ✓ Choosing aligned programs today sets the foundation for gains tomorrow.



Need to Know if Your Current Programs Are Science-Aligned

Not all programs that say “science of reading-based” are created equal. See how Lexia®’s comprehensive, science-aligned solutions support sustainable growth, starting with educators.

Explore this reference to assess fidelity and fit: [How to Select Science of Reading-Aligned Solutions That Accelerate Student Literacy](#).