

# Strengthening New York'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.<sup>1</sup> 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 New York

In New York, only **30% of 4th grade students read proficiently** based on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). That number falls precipitously for some of New York'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**.

## New York's Reading Data

| Student group                                       | # of students in New York | % who read proficiently in 4th grade |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ALL STUDENTS  | 2,441,317                 | 30%                                  |
| Hispanic students                                   | 733,117                   | 20%                                  |
| Black students                                      | 412,843                   | 14%                                  |
| English language learners                           | 233,627                   | 9%                                   |
| Students with disabilities                          | 532,943                   | 7%                                   |
| Students eligible for National School Lunch Program | 1,420,866                 | 20%                                  |

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

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

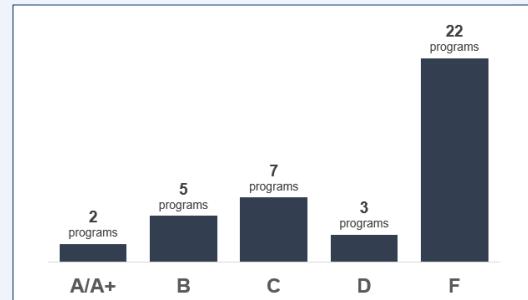
The National Council on Teacher Quality, a research and policy nonprofit, evaluated nearly 700 programs across the country, including 39 in New York, on how well they prepare aspiring elementary teachers to teach reading.

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).

<sup>1</sup> See [appendix](#) for citation for this statement and data included throughout.

**In New York, two of the 39 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.**



**New York ranks among the worst in the nation for the average number of components of reading its programs adequately address. In New York:**

- Programs are most likely to cover **comprehension** and least likely to cover **phonemic awareness**.
- **None of 39 programs provide at least one practice opportunity** in each of these components.
- There are 26 programs (67%) in New York that teach **multiple** techniques or approaches contrary to research-based practices, which can inhibit the reading progress of many students.
- Eighteen programs devote some instructional time to supporting **Struggling readers**.
- Eighteen programs devote some instructional time to supporting **English language learners**.

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

| State policy question   | Answer for New York  |
|---|--|
| Does New York have standards for teacher prep programs that address all five core components of scientifically based reading? | No, the standards do not explicitly address phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension     |
| Does New York require a licensure test that addresses reading?  | Yes, the state requires a licensure test that addresses reading  |
| What are the required or optional licensure tests that address reading?   | New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE) Multi-Subject: Teachers of Childhood (Grade 1- Grade 6) |
| Does New York require the review of reading course syllabi as part of preparation program renewal?                            | Yes  |

*“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](http://www.nctq.org/review/standard/reading-foundations).**

**Questions? Contact Shannon Holston, NCTQ Chief of Policy and Programs at [shannon.holston@nctq.org](mailto:shannon.holston@nctq.org).**

## Program grades in New York

| School                  | Program Level | Grade | <b>Adequate coverage of core components: Graded</b><br>(Up to 12 points per component; 8 points for adequate coverage;<br>4 or more contrary practices results in letter grade deduction) |                |               |                 |                    |  | <b>Support for a range of learners: Ungraded</b><br>(Up to 8 points per group) |       |                                |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------|---|----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|--|-------|--------------------------------|
|                         |               |       | Phonemic Awareness  | Phonics        | Fluency       | Vocab-<br>ulary | Compre-<br>hension | Count of Contrary Practices (out of 9) | Struggling readers   | ELLs  | Speakers of language varieties |
| Alfred University       | UG            | C     | No (6 pts)  | Yes (8.25 pts) | No (7.25 pts) | Yes (9 pts)     | Yes (9 pts)        | 0                                      | 2 pts  | 2 pts | 0 pts                          |
| Canisius College        | UG            | B     | Yes (9.33 pts)  | Yes (8.5 pts)  | No (7.69 pts) | Yes (9.5 pts)   | Yes (8 pts)        | 3                                      | 3.5 pts  | 3 pts | 2 pts                          |
| Canisius College        | G             | F     | No (6.89 pts)   | No (7 pts)     | No (3.56 pts) | No (7 pts)      | No (4.5 pts)       | 3                                      | 4 pts  | 2 pts | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - Brooklyn College | UG            | F     | No (0.21 pts)   | No (0.38 pts)  | No (0 pts)    | No (1 pt)       | No (5 pts)         | 2                                      | 2 pts  | 2 pts | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - Brooklyn College | G             | F     | No (0 pts)  | No (0.56 pts)  | No (0 pts)    | No (1.12 pts)   | No (3.67 pts)      | 4                                      | 0 pts  | 0 pts | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - City College     | UG            | D     | No (4.96 pts)   | No (5.41 pts)  | No (5.69 pts) | Yes (8 pts)     | Yes (8.25 pts)     | 3                                      | 0 pts  | 2 pts | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - City College     | G             | F     | No (0.96 pts)   | No (0 pts)     | No (0 pts)    | No (0 pts)      | No (6 pts)         | 4                                      | 0 pts  | 1 pt  | 0 pts                          |

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|------------------------------------|---------------|-------|--|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|--|---|----------|--------------------------------|
|                                    |               |       | Phonemic Awareness   | Phonics         | Fluency        | Vocabulary     | Comprehension   | Count of Contrary Practices (out of 9) | Struggling readers  | ELLs     | Speakers of language varieties |
| CUNY - College of Staten Island    | UG            | F     | No (0 pts)   | No (4.31 pts)   | No (0 pts)     | No (1 pt)      | No (6.17 pts)   | 1                                      | 0 pts   | 0 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - College of Staten Island    | G             | F     | No (3.21 pts)  | No (5.25 pts)   | No (4.5 pts)   | No (4.5 pts)   | No (4.67 pts)   | 4                                      | 4.5 pts   | 0 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - Lehman College              | UG            | F     | No (5.14 pts)  | No (3 pts)      | No (3 pts)     | Yes (8.75 pts) | No (6.83 pts)   | 0                                      | 4 pts   | 6 pts    | 2 pts                          |
| CUNY - Lehman College              | G             | F     | No (1.07 pts)  | No (0.23 pts)   | No (0 pts)     | No (7.25 pts)  | No (7.17 pts)   | 3                                      | 0 pts   | 2 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - Medgar Evers College        | UG            | F     | No (0 pts)   | No (0 pts)      | No (0 pts)     | No (1 pt)      | No (0 pts)      | 0                                      | 6 pts   | 1 pt     | 3.5 pts                        |
| CUNY - Queens College              | UG            | C     | Yes (8.64 pts)   | Yes (8 pts)     | No (7.5 pts)   | No (6.5 pts)   | Yes (11 pts)    | 1                                      | 2 pts   | 4.5 pts  | 2 pts                          |
| CUNY - Queens College              | G             | F     | No (1.96 pts)  | No (2.97 pts)   | No (1.12 pts)  | No (1.38 pts)  | No (4.75 pts)   | 4                                      | 2 pts   | 1.5 pts  | 0 pts                          |
| CUNY - York College                | UG            | F     | No (4.96 pts)  | No (5.12 pts)   | No (3.56 pts)  | Yes (8.25 pts) | No (7.25 pts)   | 6                                      | 2.75 pts  | 8 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| Manhattan College                  | UG            | B     | No (2.14 pts)  | Yes (9.97 pts)  | Yes (11 pts)   | Yes (9 pts)    | Yes (8.75 pts)  | 2                                      | 3.5 pts   | 3.5 pts  | 3.5 pts                        |
| Relay Graduate School of Education | G             | A     | Yes (8.09 pts)   | Yes (8.77 pts)  | Yes (8.83 pts) | Yes (8.89 pts) | Yes (8.88 pts)  | 0                                      | 4.87 pts  | 5.67 pts | 5 pts                          |
| Roberts Wesleyan College           | UG            | A     | Yes (8.29 pts)   | Yes (11 pts)    | Yes (8.53 pts) | Yes (11 pts)   | Yes (11.25 pts) | 1                                      | 6 pts   | 4 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| St. John's University              | UG            | F     | No (0 pts)   | No (6 pts)      | No (6 pts)     | No (5.25 pts)  | No (5 pts)      | 1                                      | 0 pts   | 0 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| St. John's University              | G             | C     | No (7 pts)   | Yes (9.5 pts)   | No (3 pts)     | Yes (9 pts)    | Yes (8 pts)     | 3                                      | 1 pt  | 0 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Binghamton University       | G             | C     | No (6.93 pts)  | Yes (11.25 pts) | Yes (8 pts)    | Yes (8 pts)    | No (7.25 pts)   | 0                                      | 0.75 pts  | 2 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Buffalo State               | UG            | B     | No (6.79 pts)  | Yes (10 pts)    | Yes (10 pts)   | Yes (10 pts)   | Yes (12 pts)    | 3                                      | 4 pts   | 6 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Buffalo State               | G             | C     | No (5.79 pts)  | Yes (9.25 pts)  | Yes (8.25 pts) | Yes (9.5 pts)  | Yes (10 pts)    | 4                                      | 1.5 pts   | 1.5 pts  | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Fredonia                    | UG            | F     | No (2.3 pts)   | No (3.59 pts)   | No (6 pts)     | No (7.81 pts)  | Yes (11 pts)    | 5                                      | 4 pts   | 3 pts    | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Geneseo                     | UG            | D     | Yes (10.12 pts)  | Yes (10.97 pts) | No (6.84 pts)  | No (6.94 pts)  | No (7.62 pts)   | 3                                      | 2.75 pts  | 6 pts    | 2 pts                          |

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|------------------------------|---------------|-------|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--|---|---------|--------------------------------|
|                              |               |       | Phonemic Awareness   | Phonics        | Fluency        | Vocabulary    | Comprehension | Count of Contrary Practices (out of 9) | Struggling readers  | ELLs    | Speakers of language varieties |
| SUNY - New Paltz             | UG            | C     | No (5.29 pts)  | Yes (8.25 pts) | No (7 pts)     | Yes (9 pts)   | Yes (9 pts)   | 3                                      | 2 pts   | 6 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - New Paltz             | G             | C     | No (3.64 pts)  | Yes (9 pts)    | Yes (8 pts)    | Yes (8 pts)   | No (7 pts)    | 2                                      | 2 pts   | 2 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Oswego                | UG            | B     | Yes (8.89 pts)   | Yes (12 pts)   | Yes (11 pts)   | No (7.88 pts) | Yes (9 pts)   | 0                                      | 8 pts   | 3 pts   | 2 pts                          |
| SUNY - Oswego                | G             | B     | No (7.39 pts)  | Yes (11 pts)   | Yes (8.44 pts) | Yes (9 pts)   | Yes (11 pts)  | 1                                      | 8 pts   | 4 pts   | 4 pts                          |
| SUNY - Potsdam               | UG            | F     | No (5.93 pts)  | No (7.5 pts)   | No (6.56 pts)  | No (6.38 pts) | No (2.75 pts) | 3                                      | 2 pts   | 3.5 pts | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY - Potsdam               | G             | F     | No (3.32 pts)  | No (4.12 pts)  | No (5.81 pts)  | No (6 pts)    | No (5 pts)    | 5                                      | 2.75 pts  | 0 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Brockport    | UG            | F     | No (3.14 pts)  | No (4.19 pts)  | No (4.75 pts)  | No (4 pts)    | No (4 pts)    | 6                                      | 2 pts   | 8 pts   | 2 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Cortland     | UG            | F     | No (5.14 pts)  | No (5.62 pts)  | No (4.12 pts)  | No (3.75 pts) | Yes (11 pts)  | 2                                      | 0 pts   | 0 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Cortland     | G             | F     | No (2.96 pts)  | No (2.27 pts)  | No (4.12 pts)  | No (3.38 pts) | Yes (9 pts)   | 2                                      | 0 pts   | 0 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Old Westbury | UG            | F     | No (1.5 pts)   | No (7.12 pts)  | No (0 pts)     | No (5 pts)    | No (6 pts)    | 2                                      | 0 pts   | 0 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Oneonta      | UG            | F     | No (3 pts)   | No (7.12 pts)  | No (6.56 pts)  | No (7.12 pts) | No (7.5 pts)  | 2                                      | 0 pts   | 5.5 pts | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Plattsburgh  | UG            | F     | No (0.64 pts)  | No (3.19 pts)  | No (5.25 pts)  | No (3.75 pts) | No (4 pts)    | 0                                      | 2 pts   | 0 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY College at Plattsburgh  | G             | F     | No (3 pts)   | No (4.5 pts)   | No (3 pts)     | No (1.5 pts)  | No (3 pts)    | 0                                      | 0 pts   | 0 pts   | 0 pts                          |
| SUNY University at Buffalo   | G             | D     | No (5.82 pts)  | Yes (11.5 pts) | No (5.25 pts)  | Yes (8 pts)   | No (4.25 pts) | 2                                      | 3.5 pts   | 3.5 pts | 2 pts                          |

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