

Understanding Ohio Literacy Information

Four Questions for Families and Educators

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Introduction: Ask what the information actually answers

A reading-screening result, an instructional plan, a promotion decision, and a school report-card rating answer different questions. Confusing them can lead readers to expect more from a score or document than it can establish. This guide offers a consistent way to interpret each: What information do we have? What question does it answer? What does it not tell us? What should we examine next?

Why a separate guide? Ohio already publishes the pieces: the Ohio Revised Code sets the requirements, ODEW's Third Grade Reading Guarantee guidance tells districts how to carry them out, report-card technical documentation explains how ratings are calculated, and family resources such as Ohio State's parent-request page walk through individual steps. Each is written for its own audience and purpose. Families and educators, however, may meet a screening label, a reading plan, a promotion decision, and a district rating at the same time, and it is easy to read one as if it answered another's question. This guide adds one set of four questions that applies to all four kinds of information, with the official source for each point, so readers can tell what each piece of information establishes and where to look next.

The student-support sections address the 2026–2027 school year. The accountability section addresses interpretation of the 2025–2026 report-card year. Keep those timeframes separate: an explanation of current services does not establish how a historical report-card measure was calculated.

Sources also serve different purposes. Ohio Revised Code provisions establish statutory requirements. Ohio Administrative Code rules provide additional regulatory requirements. ODEW guidance explains implementation and includes recommendations. Technical documentation defines reporting calculations, inclusion rules, and display conventions. A recommendation should not be described as a statutory mandate, and a promotion rule should not be substituted for a report-card calculation rule.

This independently developed guide is not an official Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) publication, legal advice, or certification of compliance. Examples are fictional. The guide does not evaluate any district's instructional effectiveness.

1. Student reading status

What information do we have?

Identify the assessment and its purpose before interpreting the result. Ohio's TGRG reading diagnostic identifies on-track or not-on-track reading status. Tier 1 dyslexia screening addresses risk indicators under a separate set of requirements. The processes may use related tools, but their purposes, timelines, and grade coverage should not be assumed to be identical. [Sources: R.C. 3313.608(B); R.C. 3323.251; ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 5–12.]

For 2026–2027, the TGRG reading diagnostic deadline is September 30 for K–3 students, with separate guidance for transfers. Do not apply that deadline automatically to dyslexia screening. Consult the dyslexia-screening statute and ODEW screening resource for the applicable circumstances. [Source: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 6, 9–10.]

What question does it answer?

Screening helps identify students who meet or fall below the assessment's grade-level expectations and who may need additional instructional support. A useful conversation identifies the assessment, date, benchmark, and skills measured—not only the overall label. [Source: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 5, 9–12.]

What does it not tell us?

A screening label is not a diagnosis. It also should not be treated as a complete explanation of why a student is having difficulty or as a description of the student's overall abilities. The appropriate next question is which reading skills require further examination, not whether the label explains everything about the child.

What should we examine next?

When screening indicates difficulty, examine targeted diagnostic information about the relevant skills and the instruction needed next. Depending on the concern, this may include phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension. The goal is an instructional starting point, not simply another overall score. [Source: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 11–12.]

Hypothetical example: Aria's screening result

Aria, a first grader, receives a not-on-track result on the fall TGRG diagnostic. Follow-up information suggests difficulty decoding unfamiliar words. The school begins targeted reading support and examines the specific skills involved. A dyslexia-risk screening result, if available, is considered separately. Neither screening label alone establishes a diagnosis. A useful next question is: "Which skills were assessed, what did the follow-up show, and how will that information guide instruction?"

Key distinction: Screening identifies a concern; additional information helps specify the instructional response.

2. Instructional support and progress monitoring

What information do we have?

A Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) documents identified reading needs, supplemental instruction, family involvement, and a monitoring process. For K–3 students identified as not on track, the plan must be developed within 60 calendar days after diagnostic results are received. Targeted reading instruction or intervention begins immediately; the plan-development period is not a waiting period for support. [Sources: R.C. 3313.608(B)(2), (C); ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 11–13.]

High-dosage tutoring is required for students on RIMPs and must align with classroom instruction. It includes at least three days per week or at least 50 hours over 36 weeks.

Delivery may use a state-approved vendor or a locally approved program aligned with ODEW best practices. [Sources: R.C. 3313.608(C)(7); ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 13, 17–18.]

What question does it answer?

The plan answers what instruction and supports are intended. Implementation information answers what was delivered. Progress-monitoring results help answer how the student is responding. These are related forms of evidence, but they are not interchangeable.

What does it not tell us?

A written plan alone does not establish attendance, instructional delivery, fidelity, or skill improvement. It does not guarantee proficiency within a fixed period. Nor should a RIMP be treated as replacing an IEP when a student needs special education. [Source for the RIMP/IEP relationship: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 33–35.]

What should we examine next?

Ask what skill is being monitored, how often, what the results show over time, and how the team will respond. ODEW guidance describes monitoring frequency as individualized and occurring at regular intervals, giving monthly, weekly, or daily checks as examples; more intense needs call for more frequent monitoring. MTSS duration tables are best-practice guidance; keep them separate from specific statutory reading-minute obligations. Although a RIMP can be modified based on progress-monitoring data, interventions, including high-dosage tutoring, must continue for the duration of the RIMP. [Source: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 16, 22.]

RIMP exit criteria also depend on grade and qualifying evidence. Guidance identifies on-track performance on the following fall K–3 diagnostic, proficient OST ELA performance, or proficient AASCD ELA performance as applicable exit evidence. For qualifying upper-grade students, continuation and exit follow the upper-grade rules. In 2026–2027, the phased requirements cover qualifying students in K–7. [Source: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 13, 30–32.]

Hypothetical example: Caleb's plan and evidence

Caleb, a second grader, has a RIMP documenting planned small-group instruction and high-dosage tutoring. That establishes a documented plan—not proof that every session occurred or that the selected approach worked. The team reviews delivery records and an individualized series of progress checks. If progress is insufficient, the next discussion concerns the skills targeted, delivery, and instructional adjustments rather than whether a plan merely exists.

Key distinction: Planned support, delivered support, and student response require different evidence.

3. Promotion eligibility and continuing supports

What information do we have?

During third grade, families may receive OST ELA scaled scores, reading subscores, and any approved alternative-assessment results. The school also considers applicable

retention exemptions. In the guidance reviewed for 2026–2027, a scaled score of 700 or higher or a reading subscore of 50 or higher establishes a state-test pathway for promotion. Approved alternative assessments provide another pathway. These are not the only considerations in the district's promotion and retention procedures. [Sources: R.C. 3313.608(A)(2); ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 23–29.]

What question does it answer?

The results establish whether the student has met a particular assessment pathway. Exemption information establishes whether another statutory pathway applies. Ask the school to identify the precise pathway rather than use "passed," "promoted," and "proficient" interchangeably.

What does it not tell us?

Promotion does not necessarily establish that reading support can end. A student may meet a promotion pathway and still require a RIMP. An exemption does not promise a particular future outcome, and continuing supports must be determined under the requirements applicable to that student. [Source: ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 29–32.]

What should we examine next?

Identify the promotion pathway and the continuing support requirements. Parent-request promotion requires consultation with the reading teacher and building principal; guidance explains that the parent's decision is decisive in a disagreement. Students promoted under that pathway receive a Grade 4 RIMP and at least 90 minutes of daily reading instruction including intensive intervention until reading at grade level. The intensive-remediation/prior-retention pathway has its own altered-instructional-day requirements. Do not assign every exemption the same package. [Sources: R.C. 3313.608(A)(2)(e)–(f); ODEW TGRG Guidance, printed pp. 21, 29–32.]

Hypothetical example: Devon's promotion discussion

Devon scores 684 overall and 44 on the reading subscore and has not taken an approved alternative assessment. Those results do not establish the state-test promotion pathway. His family discusses available assessment opportunities and applicable exemptions with the school. If they use the parent-request pathway, consultation includes the reading teacher and principal, and the request is documented under local procedures. A sample letter is a possible tool—not a statement that a particular statewide form is mandatory. The family then reviews the applicable continuing instruction and RIMP.

Key distinction: Promotion eligibility and the decision to discontinue reading supports are separate questions.

4. School and district accountability results

What information do we have?

The Early Literacy component presents an aggregate rating and underlying measures for eligible schools and districts. For this section, identify the 2025–2026 reporting year, the entity being described, and the measures actually displayed. An aggregate result concerns a defined group, not a complete account of any one student.

What question does it answer?

Ask: "What aggregate results does this school or district report under this year's accountability rules?" The component brings together Proficiency in Third Grade Reading, Promotion to Fourth Grade by Meeting Test Score Requirements, and Improving K-3 Literacy. Their definitions must come from the applicable technical documentation. Reading proficiency is not automatically interchangeable with an overall ELA score that qualifies a student for promotion. [Source: ODEW Early Literacy Component Technical Documentation, 2025–2026, pp. 4–6.]

What does it not tell us?

A component rating alone does not establish why an instructional approach succeeded or failed, describe each student's services, or demonstrate a causal effect of a teacher or program. It should not substitute for an individual reading record. Comparisons across years require checking whether definitions, included groups, weighting, or rating thresholds changed.

What should we examine next?

Examine the measure definitions, included students, reporting year, and explanatory notes before interpreting the rating. Measure eligibility, calculation, public display restrictions, and weighting are separate issues. A blank, suppressed result, and an "NC" notation should not be assigned the same meaning or cause without checking the technical documentation. For questions about a child, return to that child's instructional and progress information rather than infer services from the district's rating. For a statewide look at how Early Literacy rules and results changed from SY2021–22 to SY2025–26, see the author's brief, *Ohio's Early Literacy Landscape* (drmikeyspsychology.com/Ohio_Early_Literacy_Brief.pdf).

Hypothetical example: A missing report-card value

A reader sees a value missing from a school's Early Literacy display. The absence alone does not establish its cause. The reader identifies any notation and checks its definition and the reporting rules. It would be premature to conclude that the school provided no intervention, that students made no progress, or that a particular reweighting occurred. The useful question is: "Why is this result not displayed, and which rules apply to the component calculation?"

Key distinction: A public accountability result is a group-level summary—not a student service record or causal explanation.

Putting the four questions to work

Before interpreting a literacy label, plan, decision, or rating, identify its purpose, timeframe, and evidence. Ask what it establishes, what remains unknown, and what information would answer the next question. The aim is not to dismiss the information, but to use it at the level it supports.

About this guide

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Official references and existing resources

Ohio Revised Code 3313.608 — TGRG

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-3313.608>

Ohio Revised Code 3323.251 — Dyslexia screening

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-3323.251>

Ohio Administrative Code 3301-28-07 — Early literacy component

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-3301-28-07>

ODEW TGRG guidance and resources

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/Third-Grade-Reading-Guarantee>

ODEW dyslexia screening

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/Dyslexia/Dyslexia-Screening>

ODEW reading diagnostic assessments

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/Third-Grade-Reading-Guarantee/Third-Grade-Reading-Guarantee-District-Resources/Reading-Diagnostic-Assessments>

OSU family parent-request resource

<https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/resources/ohios-third-grade-reading-guarantee-request-an-exemption/>

ODEW Early Literacy Component Technical Documentation, 2025-2026

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Traditional-Report-Cards/Traditional-Early-Literacy-Component-Technical-Documents/Traditional-Early-Literacy-Component-Technical-Documents.pdf.aspx>

ODEW report-card resources

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Traditional-Report-Cards>

Guidance edition used: Third Grade Reading Guarantee Guidance, cover labeled "Updated September 2026," downloaded October 6, 2026 from the catalog entry labeled "Updated October 2026." Page references are printed manual pages, not PDF viewer page numbers.