

# NATIONAL PARENTS UNION

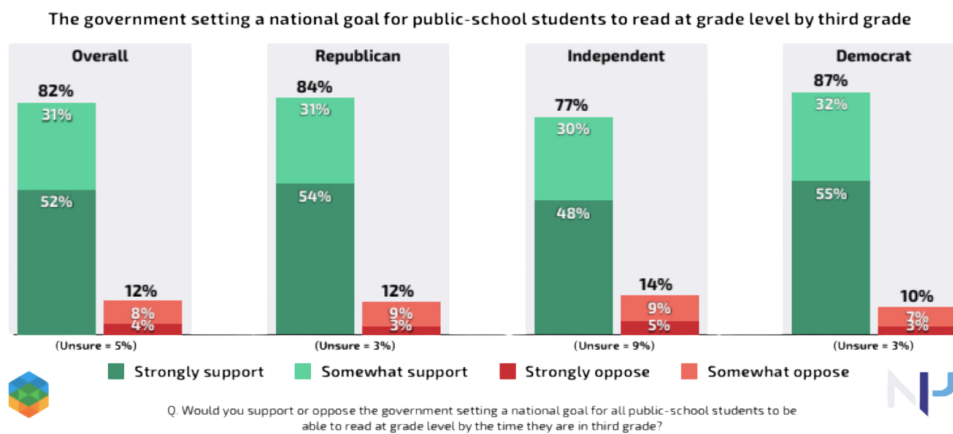
With nearly 1,500 affiliated parent organizations in all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, the **National Parents Union** is a united, independent voice of modern American families. We channel the power of parents into powerful policies that improve the lives of children, families and communities across the United States.



**IN MONTANA,  
ONLY 34% OF FOURTH-GRADE STUDENTS  
ARE REACHING GRADE-LEVEL PROFICIENCY IN READING.** \*NAEP 2022

## THE NATIONAL PARENTS UNION IS CALLING ON MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO WORK TOWARD BIPARTISAN SOLUTIONS TO OUR NATION'S LITERACY CRISIS.

**More than 8 in 10 parents in both political parties support setting a national goal for all students to read at grade level by third grade**



## WHY IS LITERACY POLICY NECESSARY?

**The urgency could not be clearer:** In 2020, only one-third of fourth and eighth graders could read proficiently. By 2022, the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) recorded the largest decline in reading performance in thirty years, with the average reading performance of nine-year-olds dropping five points.

From nationwide research, we know:

- Only **33% (3 out of 10)** of U.S. fourth-grade students are reaching grade-level proficiency in reading.\*
- **9 out of 10** high school dropouts were struggling readers in 3rd grade.\*\*
- **7 out of 10** of this year's fifth graders are getting ready to enter middle school and are not grade-level readers\*\*\*
- **65 to 70%** of students need systematic instruction in foundational skills to become proficient readers\*\*\*\*

\*U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992-2022 Reading Assessments.

\*\*ExcelinEd's Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy Toolkit.

\*\*\*National Parents Union Read to Rise Campaign

\*\*\*\*International Dyslexia Association (IDA), 2017

## RESEARCH SHOWS

- The research behind this body of evidence has proven time and time again that nearly every child – **95%, according to a study from EAB** (formally the Education Advisory Board) – can learn to read with confidence when taught using a curriculum based on the Science of Reading. More than that, struggling readers who receive extra, evidence-based instruction also improve.
- Investing in early literacy interventions is an investment in the future, as it equips students with the essential skills needed for a lifetime of learning, personal growth, and active participation in society.

# NPU'S CALL TO CONGRESS

- 1 SET A NATIONAL GOAL THAT EVERY CHILD IS READING ON GRADE LEVEL BY THE 3RD GRADE:** Recognizing the pivotal role of third-grade reading proficiency, it becomes imperative to address the needs of students who are not on grade level by this critical juncture. **Join us in our call to the Department of Education to issue guidance to states around the Science of Reading and to enforce improvement planning as required by ESSA to ensure every child learns to read by 3rd grade.**
- 2 INVEST IN TRAINING AND ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** A 2020 study conducted by the EdWeek Research Center found that more than 70% of special education and K-2 teachers used literacy instruction methods that are not grounded in the Science of Reading. **Join us in supporting S.3907 - A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to carry out a grant program to assist local educational agencies with ensuring that each elementary school and secondary school has at least one reading, literacy, or biliteracy specialist on staff.**
- 3 GUARANTEE ACCESS EVIDENCED-BASED MATERIALS:** Utilizing high-quality instructional materials is paramount in ensuring that students receive effective and evidence-based reading instruction. **Join us in supporting H.R. 2889- The Right to Read Act, which guarantees students access to materials to learn to read.**
- 4 COMMIT TO MEASURING STUDENT PROGRESS:** The need for ongoing assessment in education cannot be overstated, particularly when it comes to literacy development. Ongoing assessment is not merely a tool for gauging academic achievement; it serves as a compass guiding educators to provide timely and individualized interventions. **Join the National Parents Union in advocating for increased investments in assessment, research and accountability through supporting ESRA reauthorization.**
- 5 COMMIT TO ACCOUNTABILITY:** WE need to see measurable, meaningful results for kids now. In its review of a nationally generalizable sample of comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) plans, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimated that less than half (42%) appeared to address all three required elements under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.\* **Join the Dear Colleague letter urging the Department of Education to follow the law and require states and districts to have public strategies about how to improve the quality of education for kids.** \*<https://edreformnow.org/2024/02/01/gao-report-on-essa-implementation/>

## HOW MONTANA MONITORS STUDENT PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTS THE SCIENCE OF READING:

Here is an analysis of states' implementation of K-3 reading policies aligned to ExceInEd's fundamental principles of an early literacy policy.

