



42% OF MISSOURI'S FOURTH-GRADERS CAN BARELY READ

As Missouri test scores hit a 20-year low, states like Mississippi prove that strong reading reforms work.

We should do what they're doing. Let's start with three steps:

- 1** Give every third-grade student in Missouri the same reading test to see if they are ready for the fourth grade.
- 2** Set one statewide standard that clearly defines what it means to pass that test and demonstrate basic reading skills.
- 3** If a child fails the test twice at the end of third grade, require them to repeat the grade (with some exemptions).

Different schools in Missouri use different reading tests, and there is no statewide score that counts as "passing."

In fourth grade, instruction shifts from learning to read to reading to learn—and unprepared students typically fall further behind.

This crisis will not fix itself. Policymakers need to act. It's time to change the law so every Missouri child has the best chance to become a confident, capable reader.

**Talk to a
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