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NEWS RELEASE
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**NEW RESOURCE HELPS OKLAHOMA PARENTS AND TEACHERS
NAVIGATE THE STRONG READERS ACT**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (September 24, 2026) – The Oklahoma Education Impact Initiative (OKEII) is providing a new resource helping parents and teachers understand the Oklahoma Strong Readers Act before the law takes effect during the next school year. Lawmakers passed the law during the 2026 legislative session.

A special question and answer document posted at [OKEII.ORG](https://okeii.org) is designed to support families and educators as the state transitions to the mandates. The Q and A document provides clear, actionable guidance to ensure every child across the state develops the foundational literacy skills required for lifelong academic success.

The Strong Readers Act establishes a structured statewide framework designed to catch reading difficulties early, deliver targeted interventions, and keep parents actively involved in their child's academic journey. With the law's third-grade proficiency requirements set to take effect for the 2027-2028 school year, the document bridges the gap between state policy and classroom reality by offering specialized Question-and-Answer (Q&A) talking points tailored specifically for households and educators.

"Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a vital watershed moment in a child's life. By equipping our dedicated educators with evidence-based strategies grounded in the Science of Reading, and by engaging parents directly in the intervention process, we are

creating a sustainable ecosystem for all students to succeed,” said Ed Harris, professor emeritus of educational leadership, Oklahoma State University. Harris oversees OKEII’s initiatives.

HIGHLIGHTS: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

The parent-facing Q&A resources on [OKEII.ORG](https://okeii.org) strip away bureaucratic jargon to answer the most pressing questions families have about their child’s reading development:

- **Early Detection, Not Failure:** A reading deficiency identification is not a failure; it simply triggers immediate, specialized support to catch difficulties before they spiral into larger academic hurdles.
- **The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):** All children receive strong core instruction, but those who struggle will seamlessly graduate into targeted or intensive small-group interventions tailored to their specific needs.
- **Protected Instruction Time:** The law explicitly prohibits schools from pulling children out of core math instruction to receive reading interventions.
- **No Digital Substitutes:** Reading interventions cannot be done solely on a computer; the majority of support must consist of direct, face-to-face instruction from a trained educator.
- **The Student Reading Proficiency Team:** Parents are legally designated members of the team that builds and monitors their child's individual reading plan, alongside teachers and literacy specialists.
- **The 3rd Grade Transition:** Third grade is a critical "watershed year" marking the transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. Retention is not automatic or based on a single test, and the law outlines clear good-cause exemptions.

HIGHLIGHTS: WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

For educators, the OKEII Q & As reinforce the instructional shifts and administrative support structures established by the Act:

- **The Science of Reading:** K-3 reading instruction must strictly incorporate the five core elements of literacy—phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

- **Banned Methods:** The law strictly prohibits the use of the "three-cueing system" (MSV), balanced literacy, or whole language models that encourage students to look at context clues or guess words.
- **Immediate Interventions:** First and second-grade students who miss reading targets must immediately trigger a sequence of interventions, including transitional settings, tutoring, or mandatory summer reading academies.
- **Professional Backing:** Every public elementary school is required to have direct access to at least one certified reading specialist, interventionist, or literacy micro-credentialed teacher.
- **Empirical Validation:** Recent quasi-experimental research highlighted in policy briefs from Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and Mississippi shows that early screening, systematic teacher training, and structured retention policies yield persistent, long-term academic gains.

Parents and educators are encouraged to visit [OKEII.ORG](https://okeii.org) to read the complete Q&A talking points, review the five critical questions parents should ask teachers and access district planning templates.

ABOUT OKEII

The Oklahoma Education Impact Initiative is a non-profit organization dedicated to rapidly transforming Oklahoma's public education system. The initiative is undertaking a comprehensive research effort conducted by an independent team of leading scholars from the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University. For more information, visit www.okeii.org.