

Figure 2

Mississippi's Low-Income Student Improvement in Fourth Grade Reading: Comparison to Other States in 2003 and 2022



exposure to phonics had increased since 2003. balanced literacy was pervasive.

Finding insufficient improvement in programs, the second study led to the formation of the Governor's Task Force to Strengthen Teacher Preparation for Early Literacy Instruction. Working in partnership with the MDE, the University of Mississippi's Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction, and the associate commissioner of higher education, BRI designed and executed a professional growth

model for higher education faculty patterned after the K-3 professional development and coaching model. By the close of the institute, more than 50 elementary education, special education, and early childhood education faculty had received training at no cost to the educator preparation programs. Seven of 10 Mississippi programs ranked A or above on the National Council on Teacher Quality's recent 2023 review (see <https://www.nctq.org/review/standardScores/Reading-Foundations>).