

Reading Legislation Guidance Document

Updated Sept. 3, 2019

The following document provides clarification on pertinent literacy legislation that districts are required to implement. The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is in the process of developing rules for the various components of reading legislation. These rules will outline the process for ensuring teachers are able to demonstrate proficiency or awareness in scientific reading instruction as applicable to their teaching position. The chart below has been created to help educators understand requirements and timelines. Educators are encouraged to read the laws in their entirety.

Professional Development	
Elementary and Special Education Teachers, including Reading Specialists- Proficiency Pathway	
Beginning 2018-19, a school district shall provide professional development in scientific reading instruction for teachers employed at the elementary level or in special education. Districts are required to provide professional development to educators in one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtain a proficiency credential. ○ There are over 18 Pathways available to educators through the various educational service cooperatives, institutions of higher education, and private vendors. All pathways may be found on RISEArkansas.org. ○ Each Proficiency Pathway has two phases that must be successfully completed: ■ Phase I- Acquiring Knowledge ■ Phase II- Demonstration of Proficiency	Act 1063 of 2017 <i>Note: Required for all K-6 Core Content Teachers (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) and K-12 Special Education Teachers, Including Reading Specialists</i>
All Other Teachers- Awareness Pathway	
Beginning 2018-19, a school district shall provide for all others educators professional development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining awareness credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction. ○ Arkansas IDEAS - Science of Reading Learning Path ■ This pathway may be completed by individuals or facilitated by a school district within a blended learning environment. Facilitator guides are provided on the Arkansas IDEAS portal for districts that choose a blended approach. It is not recommended to watch or facilitate more than 2-3 courses in a single day of professional development. ■ Currently 9 digital learning courses have been released: ● Right to Read Act ● Science of Reading Overview ● The Reading Brain ● Essential Elements ● Phonology ● Critical Foundational Skills-Decoding ● Critical Foundation Skills-Encoding ● Permanent Word Storage ● Vocabulary ■ The entire Learning Path must be completed to obtain the awareness credential. ■ Currently 15 courses are scheduled for the completion of the path. Other awareness pathways may be found on RISEArkansas.org.	Act 1063 of 2017 <i>Note: Required for all non-core elementary teachers (art, music, PE, etc), all grade 7-12 teachers, librarians, CTE, counselors, etc.</i>
Administrators	
All administrators, including those at the district level, must complete an <u>awareness</u> pathway. It is highly recommended for all K-6 administrators and LEA supervisors to be Certified Assessors. The DESE has established an observation protocol for Certified Assessors to determine if a teacher has demonstrated knowledge and skills of the science of reading, other than passing the stand alone Foundation of Reading Assessment. Building or district administrators who have completed appropriate training will be	

able to determine if teachers are proficient in their implementation of strategies based on the science of reading. Demonstrating is NOT a one-time event and determination will take place throughout the year through informal and formal observations and conversations. Certified Assessors will coach teachers into proficiency. A Certified Assessor is a licensed educator that has completed the appropriate Science of Reading training, and who, in the normal scope of his or her duties, is tasked with observing teachers and required to conduct evaluation of personnel. Administrators who complete the Certified Assessor requirements have met Awareness Certified Assessor Requirements: • Must successfully complete a Phase I of a prescribed pathway for proficiency (RISEArkansas.org) • Must successfully complete Science of Reading (SOR) Assessor Training (2 day)	
District Responsibility	
NEW By 2019-2020 school year and <u>annually</u> thereafter, school districts shall establish a professional development program that shall include instruction based on the science of reading and be aligned to the literacy needs of the district. Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, a school that does not provide the professional development shall be placed on accreditation probation and provide notice to parents that the district has not met the requirements.	Act 83 of 2019
Demonstrating Proficiency or Awareness by 2021-2022 for Employment	
By the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year: All teachers employed in a teaching position that requires an elementary education (K-6) license or special education (K-12) license shall demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction. All other teachers shall demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices of the scientific reading instruction.	Act 1063 of 2017
Classroom Teachers in Grades K-6 and Literacy Specialist	
By the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year: All teachers employed in a teaching position that requires an elementary education license for grades K-6 including K-12 literacy specialist shall demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction. It will be the district's responsibility to ensure that teachers employed and teaching in grades K-6 have met the proficiency criteria. ○ This includes any classroom elementary educator in grades (K-6) self-contained or departmentalized (Math, Science, ELA, or Social Studies) and K-12 literacy specialist or coaches. ○ Those employed under a licensure exception or waiver will have one year to demonstrate proficiency. ○ Those who are licensed and returning to the classroom in one of the above mentioned positions will have one year to demonstrate proficiency. An educator license that expires December 31, 2021 and thereafter will not be renewed if the educator has not met the awareness requirement for the Science of Reading. Applicants are responsible to provide documentation of awareness of best practices in the scientific instruction of reading unless previously documented. Educators described above who have not met proficiency requirements for employment by the 21-22 school year, will have one year to complete the requirement. The educator and district will be responsible to provide documentation to show that the educator is working towards the credential during the one year period.	Act 1063 of 2017
Special Education	
By the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year:	Act 1063 of 2017

All K-12 special education teachers employed in a <u>teaching</u> position shall demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction. It will be the district's responsibility to ensure that special education teachers employed and teaching have met the proficiency criteria. ○ This includes resource and self-contained special education teachers in grades K-12 all subjects ○ Those employed under a licensure exception will have one year to demonstrate proficiency. ○ Those who are licensed and returning to the classroom in one of the above mentioned positions will have one year to demonstrate proficiency. An educator license that expires December 31, 2021 and thereafter will not be renewed if the educator has not met the Awareness requirement for the Science of Reading. Applicants are responsible to provide documentation of awareness of best practices in the scientific instruction of reading unless previously documented. Educators described above who have not met proficiency requirements for employment by the 21-22 school year, will have one year to complete the requirement. The educator and district will be responsible to provide documentation to show that the educator is working towards the credential during the one year period.	
All Other Classroom Teachers	
By the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year: All other teachers employed in a teaching position shall demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction. It will be the district's responsibility to ensure that teachers employed have met the awareness criteria. ○ This includes 7-12 general education teachers, school and district administrators ○ K-6 speciality educators (music, PE, art, library media, etc.) ○ Those employed under a licensure exception or waiver will have one year to show awareness. ○ Those who are licensed and returning to the classroom in one of the above mentioned positions will have one year to show awareness.. An educator license that expires December 31, 2021 and thereafter will not be renewed if the educator has not met the Awareness requirement for the Science of Reading. Applicants are responsible to provide documentation of awareness of best practices in the scientific instruction of reading unless previously documented.	Act 1063 of 2017
Educator and College Preparation Programs	
K-6 or special education teachers (K-12) who started their education preparation program in the fall of 2017 and thereafter must pass the approved stand-alone reading assessment. (Foundations of Reading for Arkansas) ● Depending on preparation program there may be a gap between curriculum alignment and the assessment requirements for current graduates ○ Candidates who complete a program of study approved as aligned to 2019 competencies, and ○ Pass the Foundations of Reading for Arkansas are considered proficient ○ <u>Graduates prior to May 2021 will need to complete a proficiency pathway Phase I</u> as a condition of employment unless they complete a program considered an early adopter. All graduates in May 2021 and thereafter will meet the proficiency requirement.	Act 540 of 2019 Act 416 of 2017
Licensure for New Teachers or Reciprocity	
K-6 or special education teachers (K-12) who apply for reciprocity after September 1, 2017, must take and pass the stand-alone reading test. The test requirement is waived with a valid out-of-state teaching license and 3 years documented teaching experience. By 2021-2022 school year these teachers shall demonstrate proficiency upon employment within one year by completing a proficiency pathway Phase I. No later than May 2023 an applicant seeking Elementary (K-6) or Special Education licensure by reciprocity or by adding an endorsement, must demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills to teach reading consistent with the best practices of scientific reading instruction.	Act 416 of 2017 Act 1063 of 2017

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may issue a Provisional License for up to three years to an applicant who has not completed the required professional development to demonstrate proficiency or awareness in scientific reading instruction.	
Dyslexia Requirements	
Dyslexia Requirements (See DRG): • Screening (Required for ALL K-2 students, students who transfer to a new school and have not been screened, students who transfer from another state and cannot provide documentation of similar screening, 3-12 students experiencing difficulty in reading as noted by the classroom teacher) • Parental Notification • Program • Reporting • Website Information The initial screening of students shall be performed with fidelity and include without limitation: 1. Phonological and phonemic awareness 2. Sound symbol recognition 3. Alphabet knowledge 4. Decoding skills 5. Rapid naming 6. Encoding Early screening with progress monitoring should provide the district with actionable information to determine early intervention services for primary students. Districts are encouraged to review their screening and progress monitoring protocols to determine efficiency and timeliness in providing services.	Act 1268 of 2017
Reporting to Parents	
At least two (2) times per year, a public school district shall report in writing to the parent or legal guardian and each teacher of a student in kindergarten through grade eight (K-8) the independent reading level at which the student is reading.	Act 940 of 2017
School Improvement Plans	
School Improvement Plan (additional requirements in Act 930)	
By May 1 annually a school shall submit a school-level improvement plan to the school district. NEW- A literacy plan shall be included in the school level improvement plan and shall include without limitation a curriculum program and professional development aligned to the school's literacy needs and based on the science of reading. By August 1 annually the school-level improvement plan shall be posted on the district website.	Act 83 of 2019
District Support Plan (additional requirements in Act 930)	
NEW Level 3 Coordinated Support: 40-49% or more of students in the <u>district</u> scored In Need of Support on ACT Aspire Summative for Reading. Support <u>offered</u> by DESE, education service cooperatives, and other education partners. District must develop a literacy plan as part of the district's support plan. DESE will contact districts that must submit plans to the state. The DESE must approve district support plan (template is available on Indistar as a resource). • Districts required to submit plans to the state will have to include ESA (NSL) funds.	Act 1082 of 2019
NEW Level 4 Directed Support: 50% or more of students in the <u>district</u> scored In Need of Support on ACT Aspire Summative for Reading. Support directed by DESE with support from education service cooperatives and other education partners. District must develop a literacy plan as part of the district's support plan. DESE will contact districts that must	Act 1082 of 2019

submit plans to the state. DESE must approve district support plan (template is available on Indistar as a resource). Districts required to submit plans to the state will have to include ESA (NSL) funds.	
Curriculum and Instructional Materials	
NEW By 2020-2021 school year, the Department shall identify and create an approved list of materials, resources, and curriculum programs for school districts that are supported by the science of reading and based on instruction that is explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic, including dyslexia programs, evidence-based reading intervention programs, etc. The anticipated list will be released in the Spring of 2020.	Act 83 Of 2019

[Act 930 of 2017](#)

LEVELS OF SUPPORT	GENERAL SUPPORT	COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT	COORDINATED SUPPORT	DIRECTED SUPPORT	INTENSIVE SUPPORT
General definition	General support provides guidance and tools to assist LEA	Collaborative support provides minor or temporary technical assistance or personalization of a Department initiative or state expectation	Coordinated support provides technical assistance and monitoring. District support plan required.	Directed support includes directly guiding the development and implementation of the school-level plans, district support plan, allocation of resources, monitoring and evaluation.	Districts are classified for intensive support by the State Board of Education based on Commissioner's recommendation
District initiated	Contacts for general questions and assistance regarding daily operations	District request for short term assistance	District request for long term assistance	District request for long-term guidance	District request for intensive guidance
DESE initiated		1003 planning grants	ACT 1082 - district in which 40% or more of students score in need of support on the prior year summative assessment for reading	ACT 1082 - district in which 50% or more of students score in need of support on the prior year summative assessment for reading	SBE directed support
DESE requirement	School improvement plans including literacy plan	School improvement plans including literacy plan District support plan - upon request from ADE	School improvement plans including literacy plan District support plan including district literacy plan - shall be approved by DESE	School improvement plans including literacy plan District support plan including district literacy plan - shall work with DESE - plan shall be approved by DESE	School improvement plans including literacy plan District support plan including district literacy plan - shall work with DESE - plan shall be approved by SBE