

OFFICE OF CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
April 16-17, 2015

OFFICE OF EDUCATOR QUALITY

15. Approval of educator certification licensure requirements as recommended by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development

A. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To Approve the Foundations of Reading test and corresponding passing score for initial elementary education licensure

Foundations of Reading Assessment
Passing scale score: 229

B. Background Information:

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-2 (6)(a)(ii), effective July 1 2016, for initial elementary education licensure, a teacher candidate in Mississippi must earn a passing score on a rigorous test of scientifically research-based reading instruction and intervention and data-based decision-making principles as approved by the State Board of Education. The purpose of the test is to ensure that each licensed educator has the subject matter knowledge essential for entry-level teaching in the field. The approval of this license supports the critical role of the classroom teacher in ensuring that students exit third grade reading on grade level.

The test measures proficiency in and depth of understanding of the subject of reading, reflects scientifically based reading research, conforms to the recommendations of the National Reading Panel, and is in alignment with Mississippi's 2014 College- and Career-Readiness Standards.

A diverse taskforce of Mississippi educators, and IHL faculty convened to evaluate multiple reading licensure tests, recommend a test, and to determine the Mississippi-specific passing standard for the *Foundations of Reading Test* for elementary education licensure requirements beginning in July 2016.

Upon adoption by the State Board, the test will be made available to candidates seeking licensure in Mississippi beginning in the fall of 2015.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Mississippi Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, Licensure, and Development

Elementary Licensure Reading Test Recommendation

March 6, 2015



Elementary Education Teacher Licensing

Mississippi Statute Requirements

Effective July 1, 2016, for initial elementary education licensure, a teacher candidate must earn a passing score on a rigorous test of scientifically research-based reading instruction and intervention and data-based decision-making principles as approved by the State Board of Education (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-2).

This requirement:

- ❑ Underpins the *Literacy Based Promotion Act* which requires that students are reading on grade level by the end of third grade
- ❑ Recognizes that teachers are the most important school based factor in student success
- ❑ Ensures that teachers are prepared to guide students toward meeting this critical reading milestone

Selection Process for the Test of Reading

September 2014 – Convened 15 member Task Force

- ❑ Diverse stakeholders – IHL faculty, reading teachers, principals, Reading Panel members, MDE personnel

September – December 2014

- ❑ Multiple meetings and conference calls
- ❑ Reviewed research pertaining to reading licensure tests
- ❑ Reviewed four tests (content, practice tests, reports, ancillary materials, costs, technology interface with ELMS)
- ❑ Interviewed leads from various states regarding the reviewed tests
- ❑ Selected test for recommendation to Commission and State Board of Education

Task Force Recommendation

The Foundation of Reading Test

administered by
Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson

Foundations of Reading Test

National Recognition – NCTQ

National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) 2014 State Teacher Policy Yearbook – National Summary

Policy Strength: “Elementary teacher candidates must pass a science of reading test to ensure knowledge of effective reading instruction.”

Foundations of Reading Test

- Massachusetts
- Connecticut
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- Wisconsin

Foundations of Reading Test

National Recognition – NCATE

**Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN):
2006 Report on Licensure Alignment with the Essential
Components of Effective Reading Instruction.**

“Our consensus was that the Massachusetts Foundations of Reading test is a good test of the principles of effective reading instruction and a candidate’s success on the test would mean that he or she had learned the five components identified by SBRR.”

Elementary Education Teacher Licensing Massachusetts' Success

The Foundations of Reading Test

Redefine the knowledge and skills expected of teachers through rigorous testing requirements

- Grounded in research
- Addresses today's initiatives for career and college ready citizens

"...students used to perform at the middle of the pack, but now they rank first among their national peers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and mathematics assessments..."

- Excerpt from Massachusetts' R2T application

Foundations of Reading

Test Content

- Fully focused on reading development
- Based on scientifically based reading research
- Breadth of content coverage
- Depth of content

Foundations of Reading Test Content

Multiple Choice Items	Weight
Foundations of Reading Development	35%
Development of Reading Comprehension	27%
Reading Assessment and Instruction	18%

Open Response Items	Weight
Integration of Knowledge and Understanding	20%

Foundations of Reading

Test Design, Sessions, Circulation, and Fees

- 100 multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- Two constructed-response items (CRI)
- Four-hour test session
- Two MCQ test forms and two randomly assigned CRI sets in circulation at all times
- \$125.00 test fee + \$30.00 registration fee

Foundations of Reading for Mississippi

Test Validation and Passing Score Setting Activities

1. Establish Mississippi Validation Panel
 - ❑ Eight college reading faculty representatives
 - ❑ Eight licensed and practicing teachers
 - ❑ One elementary principal
 - ❑ One member of the MS Reading Panel
2. Met on February 12, 2014
3. Conduct confirmatory item content validation
4. Conduct standard setting (i.e., passing score setting)

Foundations of Reading for Mississippi

Standard Setting Activities – February 12, 2015

1. Simulated Test Taking Activity
2. Discussion of Mississippi expectations for elementary educators
3. Training and practice with the Modified-Angoff approach
4. Two rounds of item-based judgments
5. Final test-based judgment with consideration of:
 - Mississippi expectations for elementary educators
 - The Benchmark (MA) passing score
 - Test item difficulty data
 - Ratings of participating panelists

Foundations of Reading for Mississippi

Standard Setting Panel-Based Recommendation

Preliminary Pass Rate Information for the Foundations of Reading Test for Mississippi

Summary of Pass Rates at the Benchmark and at the Item-based Panel Recommendation

	Passing Score at the Benchmark		Passing Score at the Test-based Panel Recommendation*	
	Scaled Passing Score	% Pass	Scaled Passing Score	% Pass
090 Foundations of Reading N = 1185	240	66%	229	80%

*The passing score at the Test-based Panel Recommendation is equivalent to -1 S.E.M. below the Benchmark Passing score.

Interpretive Notes

- Examinees whose data are presented in this document may not reflect the same performance as that of examinees who will take these tests in the future.
- The examinees for whom results are presented in this document may not reflect the same proportion of all the types and capabilities of examinees in the population who will take the tests in the future.

Foundations of Reading Test Implementation

A Considered Approach Tailored to Each State's Goals

State	Test Implementation	Initial Scaled Passing Score	Passing Score Review/Reset	Current Scaled Passing Score	Approach
MA	Fall 2002	240	Fall 2003	240	Passing score review / reset 12 months after initial implementation
CT	Spring 2009	240*	--	240*	* Passing score is on a different scale than Massachusetts
WI	Spring 2013	229	Fall 2014	240	Passing score review / reset 16 months after initial implementation
NH	Winter 2013-14	240	--	240	SBOE adopted MA Benchmark prior to test implementation
NC	Spring 2014	229	Fall 2016	229	Passing score review scheduled for 30 months after initial implementation
MS	Fall 2015				

Recommendation to the Commission and Mississippi Board of Education

- ❑ Approval of the *Foundations of Reading Test* for initial elementary education licensure as outlined in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-2 beginning July 1, 2016
- ❑ Approval of the passing scale score of **229** for 2016-2017 with a review of the score following the first year of administration to determine progression toward the Benchmark

Questions?



Trends in teacher certification

Equipping teachers to prepare proficient readers

Julie Rowland

January 2015

Ensuring that students are reading proficiently by third grade is a key component of keeping students on track to graduate high school and pursue college and careers. Because of the magnitude of this academic milestone, states typically pursue policies that promote early identification and intervention for struggling readers.¹

However, teachers are the most important school-based factor in student success. To ensure that teachers are well-prepared to guide students toward meeting the critical milestone of reading proficiency by third grade, states have begun to require that teacher candidates pass a reading instruction-specific assessment prior to licensure. These assessments address the science of reading instruction and target early childhood and elementary teacher candidates.

States are expanding policies that hold teachers and teacher-preparation programs accountable for student success. Requiring rigorous, content-specific assessments prior to licensure is part of a broader trend of holding teachers to higher standards, requiring greater transparency in teacher-preparation programs and modernizing the teaching profession.²

Key Takeaways

Fourteen states require teacher candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the science of reading instruction on a stand-alone assessment prior to licensure:

- 6 states use a state or as-yet unspecified test (CA, MS, NM, OH, OK, VA).
- 5 states use the Foundations of Reading test (CT, MA, NH, NC, WI).
- 3 states use the Praxis Teaching Reading test (AL, TN, WV).

Making every teacher a reading specialist

In the absence of teachers who are well-trained in reading instruction, many states assign struggling readers to a certified reading specialist or literacy coach. However, these specialists are “more likely than other elementary teachers to have part-time or itinerant assignments,” often splitting their limited time among a number of classrooms and schools, which can diminish their impact on student achievement.³

Rather than relying entirely on interventions for struggling readers, some states have begun to emphasize the need for all elementary school teachers to possess the necessary skills to effectively teach reading. Access to highly qualified teachers provides students with the equivalent of a constant reading specialist, ensuring that struggling readers are identified and supported as quickly and effectively as possible and helping alleviate the need for later interventions. One strategy to ensure highly qualified teachers is to require teacher candidates to pass an assessment of reading instruction skills prior to licensure.

The emerging trend

While many states offer professional development opportunities focused on reading instruction, state policies requiring teacher candidates to *demonstrate* some level of understanding of reading instruction are increasing in popularity.

For example, Idaho teacher candidates at all grade levels must pass an assessment that includes “a demonstration of teaching skills and knowledge congruent with current research on best reading practices.”⁴ Like many states,⁵ Idaho satisfies this condition by requiring elementary teachers to pass a multiple subject exam that includes a reading and language arts subtest. In the Praxis Elementary Multiple Subject test, the science of reading instruction comprises 49 percent of the reading and language arts subtest, or just one-eighth of the entire exam.⁶ In contrast to these multiple subject tests, the tests highlighted below focus entirely on the science of reading instruction.

The 14 states highlighted below use assessments that meet the following key components:

- Required as part of initial teacher licensure.
- Required of all early childhood and/or elementary teachers rather than for a reading endorsement or reading specialist position.
- Explicitly required by state law or policy.
- Focused on the science of teaching reading and not a subtest of a general education assessment.

What is the science of reading instruction?

The National Reading Panel, established by Congress in 1997, identified five key components of research-based reading instruction.

These were later incorporated into the No Child Left Behind Act’s *Reading First* program.

1. Phonemic awareness
2. Phonics
3. Fluency
4. Vocabulary
5. Comprehension

Common elements of teacher candidate assessment laws:

1. Requires assessment as part of initial licensure.
2. Specifies grade levels for which assessment is required.
3. Requires scientifically research-based reading instruction.
4. Specifies entity who will set passing score.

Table 1: States requiring reading instruction Assessments

State-Developed or Unspecified Test of Reading Instruction ¹	Foundations of Reading Test	Praxis Teaching Reading Test
California ⁷ (EC, EM, SE)	Connecticut (EC, EM, SE)	Alabama (EC, EM)
Mississippi ⁸ (EM)	Massachusetts (EC, EM)	Tennessee (EC, EM, SE)
New Mexico (EM)	New Hampshire (EC, EM) ⁹	West Virginia (EC, EM)
Ohio ¹⁰ (EC, EM)	North Carolina (EC, EM, SE)	
Oklahoma ¹¹ (EC, EM, SE)	Wisconsin (EC, EM, SE)	
Virginia ¹² (EC, EM, SE)		

- **EC:** Early Childhood
- **EM:** Elementary
- **SE:** Special Education

Sample statutory language

Indiana: IND. CODE § 20-28-5-12(b)

“The department may not grant an initial practitioner license to an individual unless the individual has demonstrated proficiency in the following areas on a written examination or through other procedures prescribed by the department:

- (1) Basic reading, writing, and mathematics.
- (2) Pedagogy.
- (3) Knowledge of the areas in which the individual is required to have a license to teach.
- (4) If the individual is seeking to be licensed as an elementary school teacher, comprehensive scientifically based reading instruction skills, including:
 - (A) phonemic awareness
 - (B) phonics instruction
 - (C) fluency
 - (D) vocabulary
 - (E) comprehension.”

Ohio: OHIO REV. CODE ANN. § 3319.233(A)

“Beginning July 1, 2017, all new educator licenses issued for grades pre-kindergarten through three or four through nine shall require the applicant to attain a passing score on a rigorous examination of principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction that is aligned with the reading competencies adopted by the state board of education.”

Wisconsin: WIS. STAT. ANN. 118.19(14)(a)

“The department may not issue an initial teaching license that authorizes the holder to teach in grades kindergarten to 5 or in special education, an initial license as a reading teacher, or an initial license as a reading specialist, unless the applicant has passed an examination identical to the Foundations of Reading test administered in 2012 as part of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure. The department shall set the passing cut score on the examination at a level no lower than the level recommended by the developer of the test, based on this state's standards.”

¹ Mississippi and Ohio have not yet selected an assessment.

Author

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Endnotes

¹ Emily Workman, *Third-grade reading policies* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2014), <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/44/11644.pdf> (accessed Dec. 2014).

² See, for example: the U.S. Department of Education's proposed regulations to hold teacher training programs accountable for student success: <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-proposes-plan-strengthen-teacher-preparation>; Jennifer Thomsen, *Teacher performance plays growing role in employment decisions* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2014), <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/42/11242.pdf> (accessed Dec. 2014).

³ National Center for Education Statistics, *Who Teaches Reading in Public Elementary Schools? The Assignments and Educational Preparation of Reading Teachers* (Washington D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), 3, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004034.pdf> (accessed Dec. 2014).

⁴ Idaho Code Idaho Code Ann. § 33-1207A(1)

⁵ In New York, for example, all elementary teacher candidates are required to pass a multi-subject exam. Part one of three focuses on English and Language Arts and explicitly includes the science of reading instruction. See http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/PDFs/NY_fld221_222_245_objs.pdf

⁶ "Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects," ETS, last modified 2014, accessed Dec. 15, 2014, <https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/5001.pdf>.

⁷ The Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) is required for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, which "authorizes the holder to teach all subjects in a self-contained classroom, such as the classrooms in most elementary schools, in grades preschool, K-12, or in classes organized primarily for adults." See *Multiple Subject Teaching Credential* at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl561c.pdf>.

⁸ Mississippi's assessment requirement will be effective July 1, 2016. According to NCTQ, "a recommendation for an assessment will be made to the Licensure Commission in spring 2015." See National Council on Teacher Quality, *Mississippi: Are New Teachers Being Prepared for College- and Career-Readiness Standards?* (Washington D.C.: NCTQ, 2014), http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/2014_State_Teacher_Policy_Yearbook_Mississippi_NCTQ_Report (accessed Dec. 2014).

⁹ Elementary education teachers cover grades K-6 or K-8. N.H. Code Admin. R. Ed 507.11.

¹⁰ Ohio will begin requiring all teachers in grades pre-K through 9 to pass a "rigorous examination of principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction" beginning in July 2017. See R.C. § 3319.233. Currently, Ohio teachers of third-grade students who are on a reading improvement and monitoring plan or retained students now must meet special qualifications under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. One way to fulfill the requirement is to pass the Praxis [Teaching Reading: Elementary Education](#) test.

¹¹ 70 Okl.St. Ann. § 1210.508F specifies that all early childhood, elementary, or special education teacher candidates must pass the Oklahoma Reading Test *prior to graduation* of a teacher preparation program.

¹² Virginia and New Hampshire laws require candidates to demonstrate proficiency in the science of reading instruction, and the boards of education in these states have adopted a stand-alone reading instruction assessment.

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