

MEMORANDUM

To: Local Superintendents of Education, Officials of Eligible Non-Public Schools, and All Other Education Stakeholders

From: Tamika Lipsey, Director
Division of Educator Licensure

Date: October 7, 2025

Subject: Office of Teaching and Leading – Compendium of Updates and Reminders

Effective October 27, 2025: Revised Foundations of Reading Requirements-Guidance for Current Candidates

As outlined in the *Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12* (Licensure Guidelines), applicants for educator licensure shall meet all requirements for the selected approach in effect on the date the complete application is received in the Division of Educator Licensure. Therefore, candidates who are currently unconditionally admitted may be eligible to meet the revised Foundations of Reading requirements for Elementary Education and/or Special Education and all licensure prerequisites for the selected approach.

Elementary Education Licensure Requirements

All candidates seeking initial licensure in Elementary Education (K-3/K-6/4-6), to include but not limited to the completion of the Master of Arts in Teaching program for Elementary Education 4-6, the Traditional Teacher Education program for Elementary K-6/K-3, and the supplemental endorsement pathway for Elementary Education K-6, will now have two options to meet the reading requirement. Candidates may either earn:

- A passing score on the Foundations of Reading assessment; or
- Complete the Pathways to Proficient Reading with a passing score of at least eighty percent (80%) following an attempt at the Foundations of Reading assessment.

Three-Year Entry-Level Non-Renewable License in Elementary Education

A Three-Year Entry-Level Non-Renewable License has been established in the area of Elementary Education to facilitate the transition of candidates into the teaching profession for traditional teacher education program completers. This license permits candidates who attempt the Foundations of Reading assessment to fulfill the Pathways to Proficient Reading requirement while actively engaging in teaching roles within schools.

Key Provisions:

- Candidates must attempt the Foundations of Reading assessment to obtain the entry-level license.
- If unsuccessful, candidates may complete Pathways to Proficient Reading with a minimum score of eighty percent (80%) to meet the reading requirement during the validity period of the entry-level license.

- Successful completion of Pathways to Proficient Reading allows conversion to a standard, renewable five-year license.
- Candidates who pass the Foundations of Reading are immediately eligible for the five-year license and are not required to hold the Three-Year Entry-Level Non-Renewable License in the area of Elementary Education.

All other licensure prerequisites must be satisfied prior to the issuance of any license.

Local District-Requested Licenses

Documented progress in the Pathways to Proficient Reading course can be accepted as sufficient evidence of progress toward fulfilling state certification requirements, serving as an option for issuing year-two or year-three Special Non-Renewable and Veteran Teacher licenses.

Special Education Licensure Requirements

The *Foundations of Reading* assessment requirement has been amended for candidates seeking licensure in Special Education Mild/Moderate. The assessment will no longer be required for obtaining licensure in the endorsement areas of Special Education Mild/Moderate (Licensure Codes: 221 (K-12) and 223 (K-8)).

Effective October 27, 2025: Revised Foundations of Reading Requirements-Guidance for Candidates Previously Unconditionally Admitted to a Mississippi State Board of Education Approved Program

As outlined in the *Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12* (Licensure Guidelines), applicants for educator licensure shall meet all requirements for the selected approach in effect on the date the complete application is received in the Division of Educator Licensure. Therefore, candidates previously unconditionally admitted may be eligible to meet the revised Foundations of Reading requirements for Elementary Education and/or Special Education under the following provisions (listed in order of appearance within the Licensure Guidelines):

Resident Teacher License Candidates

The Resident Teacher License is valid for three (3) years, with the following exceptions:

- (a) Obtainment of a standard five (5)-year renewable license;
- (b) Rescinded if an individual withdraws, transfers or is removed from the Mississippi Teacher Residency:
 1. Previously enrolled candidates who withdraw, transfer, or are removed from a Mississippi Teacher Residency program and are subsequently re-admitted to the program or admitted to a different Mississippi Teacher Residency program are eligible for the Resident Teacher License;
 2. Under these circumstances the three (3)-year validity period begins again upon re-admission and issuance of the new license. Requirements listed above must be met after re-admission to a different Mississippi Teacher Residency program in order to reissue the Resident Teacher License;
- (c) May be extended at the request of the EPP.

Traditional Teacher Education Candidates

Previously unconditionally admitted Elementary Education Traditional Teacher Education candidates who attempted the Foundations of Reading and completed all other licensure

prerequisites of the State Board of Education approved program may be eligible for the Three-Year Entry-Level Non-Renewable License.

Master of Arts (MAT) in Teaching Candidates

A candidate previously unconditionally admitted to a State Board of Education (SBE) approved non-traditional educator preparation program that withdrew or was removed from or transferred to a different SBE approved nontraditional educator preparation program or Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) and is re-admitted to the non-traditional educator preparation program may be recommended by the admitting SBE approved EPP for one of the following, as appropriate:

- (a) A second and final three-year alternate route internship entry-level license if the candidate transfers to a different SBE approved non-traditional educator preparation program or Educator Preparation Provider (EPP). The candidate shall meet all requirements in effect on the date the complete application for re-admittance is received by the SBE approved EPP. The three-year validity period will begin upon unconditional re-admission and the issuance of the second and final three-year alternate route internship entry-level license.

OR

- (b) A one-time one-year extension of the current or expired three-year alternate route internship entry-level license upon the request of the SBE approved Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) that made the initial recommendation. Under these circumstances the one time one-year extension will only be issued if the candidate meets all requirements in effect on the date the complete application for re-admittance is received by the SBE approved EPP and the individual has secured a teaching position for the purpose of completing the internship criterion. The one-year validity period will begin upon unconditional re-admission and the issuance of the one-time one-year extension of the three-year alternate route internship entry-level license.

Pathways to Proficient Reading Resource

The Pathways to Proficient Reading, professional development based upon the science of reading and offered statewide, requires a rigorous test of scientifically research-based reading instruction and intervention and data-based decision-making principles through both section scores and a post-knowledge inventory score. The weighted average from these two components must be at least eighty percent (80%) for a passing score. For further information regarding course registration for the Pathways to Proficient Reading, visit the AIM MDE landing page at <https://institute.aimpa.org/aim-pathways/aim-pathways-landing-pages/mississippi>

Effective October 27, 2025: Approved Endorsement Pathway for Driver's Education

An additional licensure pathway has been established in Driver Education to address the demand for qualified instructors. This pathway combines occupational expertise with successful technology literacy education and requires a two-year college degree with focused coursework through a Vocational Instructor Preparation program. It is designed to support recruitment efforts for prospective teachers of Driver Education and to ensure compliance with the implementation timeline and related requirements outlined in *Miss. Code Ann. §37-25-5*. More information regarding the requirements can be found in the Career and Technical Educator Guidelines - <https://mdek12.org/licensure/guidelines/>

As always, we appreciate your assistance with disseminating and orally communicating the contents of this memorandum to all prospective and practicing educators. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Educator Licensure team via telephone at (601) 359-3483. We value and appreciate the opportunity to serve you.