



Approved Reading Curriculum Guidance Document

Arkansas Literacy Curriculum Review Process 2019-2022

**Revised March 2022*

The following document provides clarification on pertinent literacy legislation and guidance for any public school district including an open enrollment public charter school. The guidance below has been created to help school districts understand reading curriculum requirements and timelines.

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I. Curriculum and Instructional Materials

Prior to the 2020-2021 school year, DESE identified and created 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, and evidence-based reading programs.

[Act 83 Of 2019](#)

II. Approved Reading Curriculum Programs

DESE has identified a list of approved curriculum programs. Approved programs can be found on the [DESE website](#).

[Act 83 Of 2019](#)

Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, any public school district including an open enrollment public charter school that purchases a curriculum program shall choose a curriculum program from DESE’s approved list of curriculum programs.

Right to Read Rules - Will be linked upon State Board Approval

A public school district receiving *Level 1: General Support* or *Level 2: Collaborative Support* that chooses to purchase a curriculum program that is not from DESE’s approved list of curriculum programs shall submit the following information to DESE for approval:

[Request for Approval: Rationale](#)

- The rationale for choosing the alternative curriculum program;
- Evidence-based research regarding the alternative curriculum program; and
- A signed letter from the Superintendent and School Board President requesting approval of the alternative curriculum program.

A public school district receiving *Level 3: Coordinated Support*, *Level 4: Directed Support*, or *Level 5: Intensive Support* for reading, **may only select an approved curriculum program from the list published** and may not choose an alternative curriculum program.

[District Literacy Support Plan 2021](#)

Note: A public and open enrollment charter school districts shall include a building level literacy plan¹ in the annual school-level improvement plan that shall include without limitation a curriculum program and a professional development program that is:

- Aligned with the literacy needs of the district; and
- Based on the Science of Reading

III. FAQ: Literacy Plan and Science of Reading Approved Reading Programs

Q1: Does a school have to stop using the current reading curriculum program if it does not appear on the Approved List?

All schools will have to meet the Science of Reading criteria whether they modify the use of the current program, purchase new programs, or a combination of the two.

¹ Level 3 (Coordinated Support), 4 (Direct Support), and 5 (Intensive Support) schools must include a District Literacy Plan of Support

Q2: If a school does not have a program on the Approved List, what are the next steps?

Assess the use of the current program and identify areas that are not meeting the Science of Reading.

Consider:

- ❑ Identifying the curriculum program and determine if it meets the Science of Reading in all 5 components (i.e., Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension) and revise school improvement plan to address curriculum needs
- ❑ Purchasing a program or combination of programs to meet the Science of Reading in all components
- ❑ Purchasing additional **core** or **component-specific core program** for reading components not met with current program
- ❑ Prioritizing purchases based on needs assessment and update literacy plan; and, develop curriculum support and teacher guidance for areas not meeting the Science of Reading until the district can purchase materials to meet needs

Q2a: What if a school district is receiving Level 3: Coordinated Support, Level 4: Directed Support, Level 5: Intensive Support?

Until purchasing a new program, consider the following:

- Identify the curriculum program and determine if it meets the Science of Reading in all 5 components (i.e., Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension) and revise school-level improvement plan to address curriculum needs.
- Prioritize purchases based on needs assessment and update literacy plan; develop curriculum support and teacher guidance for areas not meeting the Science of Reading until the district can purchase materials to meet needs.

When purchasing a new program, the district may only select an approved curriculum program from the list published and may not choose an alternative curriculum program. Consider the following:

- Purchasing a program or combination of programs to meet the Science of Reading in all components
- Purchasing an additional **core or component specific core program** for reading components not met with current program

Q2b: What does this mean for Middle and High Schools?

By 2019-2020 school year, a public school district shall include a literacy plan in the annual school-level improvement plan that shall include without limitation a curriculum program and a professional development program that is

- Aligned with the literacy needs of the district; and
- Based on the Science of Reading

Consider:

- Identify the curriculum program and determine if it meets the Science of Reading
- Provide curriculum support and guidance
- Identify the intervention courses and programs to support students in reading and provide those courses
- Purchase intervention or dyslexia program(s) based on needs assessment

Q3: What if the Core Program chosen has the Efficacy Rating of No Evidence?

K-6 Core Program Approvals were not contingent on the Efficacy Rating. Efficacy was provided to determine to what extent the program meets Evidence-Based as defined in ESSA. The tiers of evidence include *Strong, Moderate, Progressing, and No Evidence*. Keep in mind that it takes time to determine efficacy for a program as it requires at a minimum a well-designed correlational study that shows a statistically significant, positive outcome. To that end, DESE communicated the following to publishers:

DESE approved reading programs through a review of the research and evidence-based practices in the curriculum resources. Efficacy ratings were considered and will be noted; however, if a district has selected a literacy program from the approved list, the district is in compliance with the requirements of the Right to Read Act.

Programs with the *No Evidence* rating have met the Science of Reading as indicated on the [Approved Science of Reading Curriculum page](#). The validity and research basis were approved for each program on the list. Validity indicates the theoretical foundations for the program, and Research Basis indicates how the research was used to determine the content, instructional strategies, and assessments.

Q4: Does it matter if I choose a program from the Approved List of Programs that partially meets expectations?

If a program is on the [Approved List of Reading Programs](#), it is considered to meet the Science of Reading. The one-pager reports provided for each program explain the considerations a school district would need to acknowledge to use the program and meet the Science of Reading.

Q5: What if a school district that is in *Level 1: General Support* or *Level 2: Coordinated Support* wants to continue to purchase the consumables of a curriculum program not on the approved list?

- School districts in *Level 1: General Support* or *Level 2: Coordinated Support* that are purchasing consumables for a curriculum program that is not on the approved list must submit a [rationale](#) to DESE as outlined in the rules.

Q6: How should schools use supplemental programs in Core Instruction?

- Supplemental programs should be used for additional practice of skills and concepts taught during core instruction.
- Supplemental programs are not replacement of core instruction; it is in addition to what is taught in core.

IV. FAQ: K-12 Reading Intervention Programs

Reading Intervention curricula are approved by reading component. Program Provider Profiles will comprise detailed information about each reading component in the program. Districts will need to consider the presence of essential criteria or the lack thereof for each component.

Q7: What should the district consider when selecting Reading Intervention programs?

A reading intervention curriculum should be selected based on the specific identified needs of each individual student.

Q8: Is a district or school required to purchase a K-12 Reading Intervention program from the Approved Science of Reading Curriculum List?

By 2021-2022 school year, any public school district that purchases a reading intervention program shall choose a program from the DESE's approved list.

If a district chooses an alternative curriculum program, they shall [submit a rationale](#) to the department for approval of the alternate program. The rationale shall include the reason for choosing the alternative curriculum program and the evidence-based research regarding the alternative curriculum program.

Q9: How did DESE determine recommended grade levels for Reading Intervention programs?

Recommended grade levels were determined based on grade-level appropriate content, resources, practices within the programs, and Arkansas Academic Standards.

V. FAQ: K-12 Dyslexia Curriculum Programs

K-12 Dyslexia Curricula are approved by the tenets of the law (A.C.A. § 6-41-602). Program Provider Profiles comprise detailed information about each tenet of the law. Districts will need to consider the presence of essential criteria or the lack thereof for each tenet to ensure that K-12 dyslexia interventions are provided as defined by A.C.A. § 6-41-602. Districts are encouraged to review the [Dyslexia Rules](#) and [Dyslexia Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Q10: Can a program be approved for Dyslexia Intervention and K-12 Intervention?

An approved K-12 Dyslexia Curriculum qualifies as a K-12 Reading Intervention Program.

Q11: Can a digital program be used for Dyslexia Intervention?

Digital Programs will not be approved for dyslexia interventions. Arkansas Code § 6-41-607 (b)(3) states a school district shall have individuals to serve as dyslexia interventionists. Arkansas Code § 6-41-602 (2) defines a "Dyslexia interventionist" as a school district or public school employee trained in a dyslexia program. Arkansas Code § 6-41-602 (6) defines "Dyslexia therapy" as an appropriate specialized reading instructional program specifically designed for use in a dyslexia program that is delivered by a dyslexia interventionist.

Q12: Is a district or school required to purchase a dyslexia program from the Approved Science of Reading Curriculum List?

By 2021-2022 school year, any public school district that purchases a curriculum program shall choose a curriculum program from the DESE's approved list.

If a district chooses an alternative curriculum program, they shall submit a rationale to the DESE for approval of the alternate program. The rationale shall include the reason for choosing the alternative curriculum program and the evidence-based research regarding the alternative curriculum program.

Q13: What if a district or school is using a program not submitted for review?

Schools should continue to follow guidelines for providing dyslexia interventions as determined by A.C.A. § 6-41-601.

Consider:

- Ensuring the program has essential components for dyslexia intervention ([Dyslexia Rules](#) and [Dyslexia Resource Guide](#))
- Accessing the rubrics used during DESE’s dyslexia program review process as a resource to measure program components
- If the current program does not address all intervention components, developing a plan based on the needs of the district to meet requirements for dyslexia interventions.

Q14: Are the identified dyslexia programs on the Arkansas Literacy Curriculum Approved Programs list all-inclusive of programs that can be used to provide Dyslexia Interventions as determined by A.C.A. § 6-41-602?

The approved list of dyslexia programs consists of evidence-based programs that were submitted for review by publishers. The list is dynamic and additional programs may be included through future reviews. Future reviews of programs will be announced by Commissioner's Memo and/or other forms of communication.

Q15: How did DESE determine recommended grade levels for dyslexia curriculum programs?

Recommended grade levels were determined based on grade-level appropriate content, resources, practices within the programs, and Arkansas Academic Standards.

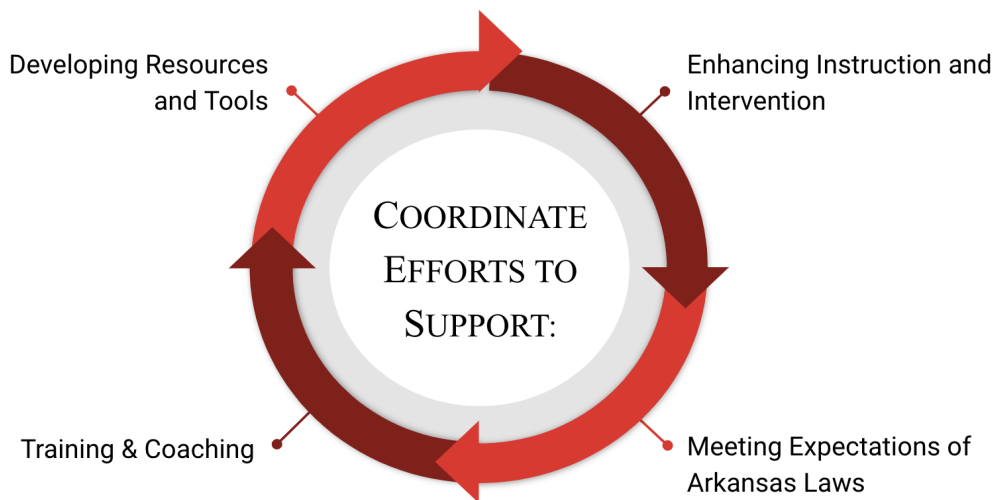
Q16: Should a district or school wait until all programs under review are complete to make decisions about purchases?

Decisions about the timeline of purchases should be based on whether or not a district’s current program meets all of the required components outlined in A.C.A. § 6-41-602.

VI. Coordinating Efforts

Q17: What are the next steps for any public school district including an open enrollment public charter school?

DESE encourages districts to coordinate efforts to support core instruction and intervention practices. Efforts could include but are not limited to determining the need for enhancing core instruction and intervention with training and coaching, through purchasing supplemental programs, and/or with the development of additional resources and tools.



Coordinate Efforts to Support identified needs which enhance instruction and intervention services. Suggestions could include but are not limited to:

Developing resources and tools:

- Work with vendors to develop routines for programs
- Incorporate programming from core practices to reinforce intervention services
- Contact vendor to determine needs for adding tools like manipulatives or multisensory activities

Meeting the expectations of Arkansas Laws:

- Are intervention services meeting the requirements set forth in the dyslexia law?
- Evaluate practices related to intervention service - Is there fidelity?

Determining the need for training and coaching;

- Contact the vendor for additional training and coaching
- Provide additional support for highly trained interventionists
- Contact Co-op Literacy and/or Dyslexia Regional Specialists for support

Levels of Support					
<u>Act 930 of 2017</u>	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 DESE 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 (SBE) 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