The following document provides clarification on pertinent literacy legislation that districts are required to implement. The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has developed rules and regulations to clarify components of the law. These rules outline the process for ensuring that 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**
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# 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 **20 Pathways** available to educators through the various educational service cooperatives, institutions of higher education, and private vendors.

- Each Proficiency Pathway has two phases that must be successfully completed:
  - Phase I - Acquiring Knowledge
  - Phase II - Demonstration of Proficiency

## All Other Teachers- Awareness Pathway

**Beginning 2018-19,** a public school district, including an open-enrollment public charter, shall provide for all other educators professional development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining an **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.
  - The pathway includes 14 digital learning courses:
    1. Right to Read Act
    2. Science of Reading Overview
    3. The Reading Brain
    4. Essential Elements
    5. Phonology
    6. Critical Foundational Skills: Decoding
    7. Critical Foundational Skills: Encoding
    8. Permanent Word Storage
    9. Building Comprehension and Writing Through Vocabulary
    10. Morphology
    11. Syntax
    12. Reading Comprehension Difficulty: Causes and Instructional Scaffolds

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**Act 1063 of 2017**  
**Act 83 of 2019**  
**Act 489 of 2021**

*Note: Required for all K-6 Core Content Teachers (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) and K-12 Special Education Teachers, K-12 Reading Specialists, K-6 English Language Learner Teachers*

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*Note: Required for all non-core elementary teachers (art, music, PE, etc), all grade 7-12 teachers, librarians, CTE, counselors, etc.*
13. Using Graphic Organizers to Support Comprehension
14. Supporting Critical Thinking Through Question Generation

- The entire Learning Path must be completed to obtain the awareness credential.

Other Awareness Pathways may be found on the Prescribed Pathway Credential DESE webpage.

**Administrators**

**All administrators, including those at the district level,** must complete an Awareness Pathway.

It is highly recommended for all K-6 administrators and LEA supervisors to be **Certified Assessors.** 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 who 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 will have met the Awareness in the Science of Reading requirement for licensure.

**Certified Assessor Requirements:**
- Must successfully complete a Phase I of a prescribed pathway for proficiency
- Must successfully complete Science of Reading Assessor Training

**District Responsibility for Professional Development in the Science of Reading**

**By 2019-2020** school year and **annually** 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 professional development shall be placed on accreditation probation and must provide notice to parents that the district has not met the requirements.
### Demonstrating Proficiency or Awareness by 2023-2024 for Employment

**2023-24 School Year**

**By the beginning of the 2023-2024 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 licensed educators shall demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices of the scientific reading instruction.

### Classroom Teachers in Grades K-6, K-12 Reading Specialists, K-6 Teachers of English Language Learners

**By the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year:**

All teachers employed in the positions identified below 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), any K-12 reading specialist, and any K-6 teachers of English Language Learners.
- 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, 2023 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 2023-24 school year may be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency by being placed in intensive support status for a period of time specified by the teacher’s evaluator in the professional growth plan for the teacher.

### Special Education

**By the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year:**

All K-12 special education teachers employed in a teaching 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 in 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, 2023 and thereafter will not be renewed if the educator has not met the awareness requirement for the Science of Reading. Applicants are responsible for providing 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 2023-24 school year may be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency by being placed in intensive support status for a period of time specified by the teacher’s evaluator in the professional growth plan for the teacher.

All Other Classroom Teachers

By the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year:
All other licensed educators shall demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction. It will be the district’s responsibility to ensure that educators have met the awareness requirement.

- 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, 2023 and thereafter will not be renewed if the educator has not met the awareness requirement for the Science of Reading. Applicants are responsible for providing documentation of awareness of best practices in the scientific instruction of reading unless previously documented.

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 the 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
Graduates prior to May 2021 will need to complete a proficiency pathway Phase I 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.

### 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.

DESE 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 Dyslexia Resource Guide](#)):
- 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 paired 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.

### 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.  

### Improvement Plans & Support 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.

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.

#### District Support Plan (additional requirements in Act 930)

**Level 3 Coordinated Support**: 40-49% or more of students in the district scored In Need of Support on ACT Aspire Summative for Reading. Support is offered by DESE, education service cooperatives, and other education partners.

Districts must develop a literacy plan as part of the districts’ support plans. DESE will contact districts that must submit plans to the state.

DESE must approve district support plans (template is available on Indistar as a resource).

- Districts required to submit plans to the state will have to include ESA funds.

**Level 4 Directed Support**: 50% or more of students in the district scored In Need of Support on ACT Aspire Summative for Reading. Support is directed by DESE with support from education service cooperatives, and other education partners.

Districts must develop a literacy plan as part of the districts’ support plans. DESE will contact districts that must submit plans to the state.

DESE must approve district support plans (template is available on Indistar as a resource).

- Districts required to submit plans to the state will have to include ESA funds.
Curriculum and Instructional Materials

By 2020-2021 school year, DESE 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 and evidence-based reading intervention programs.

Education Ombudsman: The office of the Education Ombudsman was developed in compliance with Ark. Code Ann. 6-17-429 to assist and support the Right to Read and associated literacy legislation. The Education Ombudsman acts as a liaison between schools, parents, and DESE to promote the effective implementation of the Science of Reading.
## Levels of Support

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