

Right to Read Act Guidelines for Educator Preparation Providers

Rhode Island Department of Education

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Great Teachers and Leaders for All Students





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Purpose of the Reference Guide.....	3
Background.....	3
What is meant by <i>Scientific Reading Instruction</i> and <i>Structured Literacy</i> ?.....	4
The Role of Educator Preparation Providers in the Right to Read Act Implementation	4
What Programs are affected by the Right to Read Act?.....	4-5
What is the difference between <i>proficiency</i> and <i>awareness</i> ?.....	6
How will EPPs demonstrate that program completers have met the Right to Read Act expectations?.....	6
Right to Read Act Reporting and Program Approval.....	6
Reporting requirements.....	6
How will the Right to Read Act affect the PREP-RI process?.....	6-7
Appendix I: Essential Components of Proficiency Training.....	8
Appendix II: Essential Components of Awareness Training.....	10



INTRODUCTION

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), approximately 35% of fourth graders are reading at or above a proficient level, and an average 35% of students are reading below a basic level. These numbers have remained stagnant for nearly thirty years. It is more important than ever for Rhode Island to take measures to ensure students can accurately decode and fully comprehend grade-level text by third grade and beyond. A key lever in altering this trajectory is to enhance educator knowledge in the science and research of how students learn to read and instructional approaches that align with this research.

Rhode Island legislators saw the necessity to support educator knowledge in these domains and passed The Rhode Island [Right to Read Act](#) in July of 2019. This law requires educators to develop either *proficiency* in or *awareness* of the knowledge and practices of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy depending upon the educator's current assignment. This guidance document outlines responsibilities and expectations for Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, and educators for planning purposes to meet the intent of the Right to Read Act. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will work to support LEAs as they select and implement professional learning experiences to fulfill the requirements of this law. An additional document will be forthcoming to address information and requirements for Rhode Island Educator Preparation Programs.

PURPOSE OF THE REFERENCE GUIDE

The purpose of this reference guide is to provide clarification to Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) regarding the [Right to Read Act](#) legislation passed in July 2019. The guidance provided in this reference guide is one piece of a larger, ongoing effort by RIDE to provide EPPs, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and teacher candidates with support and technical assistance toward meeting the requirements promulgated in the Right to Read Act legislation. This initial reference guide is not an exhaustive or all-purpose document. Additional resources can be found on the [Right to Read Act page](#) of the RIDE website as well as the Right to Read Act [LEA Guidance Document](#).

The sections of the reference guide enclosed in text boxes reflect language directly quoted from the Right to Read Act legislation.

BACKGROUND

Rhode Island legislators passed the Rhode Island Right to Read Act in July of 2019. This law requires educators to develop either *proficiency* in or *awareness* of the knowledge and practices of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy depending upon the educator's current assignment. RIDE has issued [guidance](#) that outlines responsibilities and expectations for Local Education Agencies (LEA)s, schools, and educators for planning purposes to meet the intent of the Right to Read Act. Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will work to support LEAs as they select and implement professional learning experiences to fulfill the requirements of this law.

The Rhode Island Right to Read Act articulates that educator candidates enrolled in Rhode Island EPPs must also develop *proficiency* in or *awareness* of the knowledge and practices of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy in relation to applicable certification programs.



What is meant by Scientific Reading Instruction and Structured Literacy?

- (1) The term "scientific reading instruction" means instruction that is instructionally centered, empirically based, and further based on the study of the relationship between cognitive science and educational outcomes; and
- (2) The term "structured literacy instruction" means an approach by which licensed personnel teach reading, which includes syllables, morphology, sound-symbol correspondence, semantics, and syntax, in an explicit, systematic, and diagnostic manner.

The Rhode Island Department of Education defines the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy:

The Science of Reading, or *scientific reading instruction*, is defined as empirically-based instruction that is grounded in the study of the relationship between cognitive science and educational outcomes.

Structured Literacy is defined as an approach to teaching that integrates speaking, listening, reading, and writing by providing explicit, systematic, diagnostic-prescriptive instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness, sound-symbol correspondence (phonics), syllables, morphology, semantics, and syntax. For more information, visit RIDE's [Structured Literacy page](#).

THE ROLE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS IN THE RIGHT TO READ ACT IMPLEMENTATION

What programs are affected by the Right to Read Act?

No later than 2025, the following shall have proficient knowledge and skills to teach reading consistent with the best practices of scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction:

- (1) A person who completes a state-approved educator preparation program; and*
- (2) A person seeking teacher licensure by reciprocity or by adding an endorsement.*

In addition, no later than 2025, a person who completes a state-approved educator preparation program, other than a teacher of elementary education program, shall demonstrate an awareness of the best practices of scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction.

By 2025, teacher preparation programs must ensure that all program completers eligible for Rhode Island Educator certification will graduate with required knowledge (*proficiency or awareness*) of structured literacy and scientific reading instruction.

Tables 1 & 2 delineate which educators are required to demonstrate *proficiency* or *awareness* in accordance with The Right to Read Act expectations. The requirement for *proficiency* or *awareness* is based on the work assignment of the educator. Therefore, it is the responsibility of EPPs to set candidates up to successfully meet the *proficiency* or *awareness* requirement of the grades they will be certified to teach upon program completion.



Table 1: Elementary Proficiency and Awareness Requirements by Certification Area

Elementary (PK-5 th Grade)	
Proficiency	Awareness
Classroom Educator (Elementary program)	World Language Educator
Bilingual & Dual Language Educator	Art Educator
Early Childhood Educator	Dance Educator
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Educator	Health Educator
Reading Coach/Specialist	Library Media Studies Educator
Special Education Educator	Mathematics Specialist
	Music Educator
	Physical Education Educator
	School Nurse Educator
	Technology Educator
	Theater Educator

Table 2: Secondary Proficiency and Awareness Requirements by Certification Area

Middle and High School (6 th – 12 th Grade)	
Proficiency	Awareness
Bilingual & Dual Language Educator	World Language Educator
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Educator	Arts Educator
Reading Coach/Specialist	Business Education Educator
Special Education Educator	Career & Technical Educator
	Dance Educator
	ELA/English Educator
	Family Consumer Science Educator
	Library Media Studies Educator
	Mathematics Educator
	Music Educator
	Physical Education Educator
	School Nurse Educator
	Science Educator
	Social Studies/History Educator
	Technology Educator
	Theater Educator

Table 3: Strongly Recommended to Meet a Minimum of Awareness

All Grades (K-12)	
Building or District Administrator	Occupational and Physical Therapists
School Counselor	School Social Worker
Curriculum Director	Registered School Nurse
School Psychologist	Speech-Language Pathologist



What is the difference between proficiency and awareness?

While both *proficiency* and *awareness* are grounded in the same essential components, they differ in the depth of understanding of the content. Educator candidates requiring *proficiency* (see Tables 1 & 2) will understand the research and frameworks related to the Science of Reading as candidates pursuing these certifications are those who will be directly supporting students in developing skilled reading. These educator candidates are required to dive deeper into the elements of Structured Literacy including explicit, systematic instruction in Phonology, Phonics, Decoding, Encoding, Vocabulary, Semantics, and Syntax to develop Comprehension and will be trained in how to ensure instruction and assessment is aligned with Structured Literacy practices. *Awareness* trainings may range from approximately 8-10 hours while the approved *proficiency* trainings range from 40 to 80+ hours.

- [Appendix I](#) articulates essential components of *proficiency* training.
- [Appendix II](#) articulates essential components of *awareness* training.

How will EPPs demonstrate that program completers have met the Right to Read Act expectations?

RIDE recognizes that *Structured Literacy* and the *Science of Reading* may already be key features of literacy instruction of existing programs. Prior to the 2024-2025 school year EPPs will be required to submit a *Right to Read Act Implementation Plan* demonstrating program completers possess the proficient knowledge and skills to teach reading consistent with the best practices of scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction. Review of this plan will be a one-time approval process with the *Performance Review for Educator Preparation – Rhode Island* (PREP-RI) serving as the primary process for EPPs to demonstrate alignment with the Right to Read Act. The following section provides more details about reporting and PREP-RI.

RIGHT TO READ ACT REPORTING AND PROGRAM APPROVAL

Reporting Requirements

A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program shall include in its annual report to the department of elementary and secondary education (the "department") a description of the program to prepare educators to teach reading using scientific reading instruction and structured literacy instruction.

Beginning no later than the 2024-2025 school year, Rhode Island approved educator preparation providers must post information on their websites to describe the elements of the various programs in which they will teach best practices in scientific reading instruction and structured literacy. A description of the structured literacy content planned to be taught must be included in the state-approved educator preparation program's annual report. Additional guidance for submission of this annual report will be forthcoming.

How will the Right to Read Act affect the PREP-RI process?

A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program that does not comply with the requirements of this section may be subject to penalties up to and including having the provider's approval status revoked.

The legislation states the EPPs who do not meet the requirements of the Right to Read Act face penalties that could impact the approval status of specific programs or the provider as a whole. The Performance Review for Educator Preparation –



Rhode Island (PREP-RI), the process currently used to review and approve educator preparation programs in the state, will undergo revisions beginning in fall 2021. One of the goals of the revisions is to make clear in the PREP-RI performance rubric the Right to Read Act requirements needed for approval. This revision process will include input from numerous stakeholders—including each EPP—and will go into effect in spring 2023. The revised PREP-RI process will make clear how EPPs may demonstrate conceptual understanding of structured literacy and the science of reading as well as candidate *proficiency* or *awareness* through submitted evidence and staff and candidate interviews.



Appendix I

<p align="center">Essential Components of Proficiency Training Aligned to the Literacy / Dyslexia Endorsement Competencies</p>
<p>Competency I</p> <p><i>Demonstrate and apply foundational knowledge on the science of reading development and reading difficulties derived from interdisciplinary research with special emphasis on language/literacy needs of students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities</i></p>
<p>Knowledge and Skills Related to the Reading Process, Science of Reading Research and Methods</p>
Theoretical Models including the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough’s Rope and the Four-Part Processor
How the brain learns to read
Permanent word storage and orthographic mapping
Neurobiological learning differences including dyslexia (decoding) and developmental language disorder (word comprehension)
Literacy needs of students with language-based learning difficulties
<p>Competency II</p> <p><i>Differentiate, accommodate, and scaffold instruction to address the reading difficulties demonstrated by students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities</i></p>
<p>Instruction</p>
Systematic
Explicit
Incorporating multiple modalities
Code emphasis vs. meaning emphasis in student texts, teaching approaches, and curriculum materials
Differentiating and scaffolding instruction for students with language-based learning differences
Accommodations for students with dyslexia (e.g., audiobooks, speech-to-text)
<p>Competency III</p> <p><i>Select and conduct assessments within a Response to Intervention or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework, analyze assessment data to inform instruction, and communicate findings with students, families and other educators</i></p>
<p>Assessment</p>
Diagnostic-Prescriptive
Criterion referenced assessment measures
Using assessment measures to understand a student’s learning profile
Using assessment data within Multi-tiered Systems of Support Framework
Communicating findings of assessment data with students, families, and other educators
<p>Competency IV</p> <p><i>Implement structured literacy instruction in all major skill domains (phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, automatic and fluent reading of text, vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension, and written expression) and review instruction based on analysis of student data</i></p>
<p>Knowledge and Skills Related to Phonology</p>



Phonology
Phonological Awareness
Phonemic Awareness
Articulation of the sounds
Knowledge and Skills Related to Phonics, Decoding and Encoding
Alphabetic Principle
Decoding
Correspondence of letters and sounds
Encoding
Syllable types
Syllable division rules
Schwa
Morphology Supports Word Composition and Spelling (e.g., Latin Bases, Prefixes, Assimilated Prefixes, Inflectional and Derivational Suffixes, and Greek Combining Forms)
Spelling rules and generalizations
Student text selection including decodable text
Assistive technology supports
Knowledge and Skills Related to Fluency
Rate
Accuracy
Prosody
Instruction and practice
Knowledge and Skills Related to Vocabulary
Taught directly and indirectly
Developing vocabulary through oral language
Morphology Supports Word Comprehension and Vocabulary Building Across Contents: (e.g., Latin Bases, Prefixes, Assimilated Prefixes, Inflectional and Derivational Suffixes, and Greek Combining Forms)
Multiple meanings and contexts
Choosing and Leveling Words for Explicit Instruction
Knowledge and Skills Related to Comprehension
Listening and reading comprehension
Background knowledge
Assistive technology accommodations including audiobooks to build background knowledge
Grammar
Text Structures
Pre-Reading, During Reading, and After Reading: Metacognitive Strategies to support Executive Functioning
Connecting writing to reading to further comprehension (e.g., explicit instruction in pronoun referents, cohesive ties, and syntax elements including sentence types and sentence combination activities)



Appendix II

Essential Components of Awareness Training Aligned to the Literacy / Dyslexia Endorsement Competencies	
Competency I	
<i>Demonstrate and apply foundational knowledge on the science of reading development and reading difficulties derived from interdisciplinary research with special emphasis on language/literacy needs of students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. Given the time allotment, we anticipate Competency I being completed within approximately 1 hours' time and the remainder devoted to Competencies II-IV</i>	
Knowledge and Skills Related to the Reading Process, Science of Reading Research and Methods	
Theoretical Models including the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope and the Four-Part Processor	
How the brain learns to read	
Permanent word storage and orthographic mapping	
Neurobiological learning differences including dyslexia (decoding) and developmental language disorder (word comprehension)	
Literacy needs of students with language-based learning difficulties	
Competency II	
<i>Differentiate, accommodate, and scaffold instruction to address the reading difficulties demonstrated by students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities</i>	
Instruction	
Systematic	
Explicit	
Differentiating and scaffolding instruction for students with language-based learning differences	
Accommodations for students with dyslexia (e.g., audiobooks, speech-to-text)	
Competency III	
<i>Have awareness of assessments within a Response to Intervention or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework, analyze assessment data to inform instruction, and communicate findings with students, families and other educators</i>	
Assessment	
Using assessment data within Multi-tiered Systems of Support framework	
Diagnostic-Prescriptive	
Competency IV	
<i>Implement structured literacy instruction in all major skill domains (phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, automatic and fluent reading of text, vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension, and written expression) and review instruction based on analysis of student data</i>	
Knowledge Related to Structured Literacy	
Overview of Structured Literacy	
What Structured Literacy is not	
Knowledge and Skills Related to Phonology	



Phoneme Awareness and the connection to decoding (connect back to orthographic mapping)
Knowledge and Skills Related to Phonics, Decoding and Encoding
Morphology Supports Word Composition and Spelling (e.g., Latin Bases, Prefixes, Assimilated Prefixes, Inflectional and Derivational Suffixes, and Greek Combining Forms)
Spelling rules and generalizations
Assistive technology supports
Knowledge and Skills Related to Vocabulary
Taught directly and indirectly
Developing vocabulary through oral language
Morphology Supports Word Comprehension and Vocabulary Building Across Contents: (e.g., Latin Bases, Prefixes, Assimilated Prefixes, Inflectional and Derivational Suffixes, and Greek Combining Forms)
Multiple meanings and contexts
Choosing and Leveling Words for Explicit Instruction
Knowledge and Skills Related to Comprehension
Listening and reading comprehension
Background knowledge
Assistive technology accommodations including audiobooks to build background knowledge
Text Structures
Pre-Reading, During Reading, and After Reading: Metacognitive Strategies to support Executive Functioning
Connecting writing to reading to further comprehension (e.g., explicit instruction in pronoun referents, cohesive ties, and syntax elements including sentence types and sentence combination activities)