

READING FIRST TEACHER EDUCATION NETWORK

***REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH  
THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF  
EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION***

**Prepared by Diana W. Rigden**  
Senior Associate, AACTE

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## *Foreword*

In my travels about the country, I have observed that the professional teaching community is beginning to reach a consensus—compelling research is pointing us toward effective reading practice. Presidents of colleges and universities participating in the Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN) have committed themselves to preparing candidates in their teacher education programs to be effective teachers of reading. That is RFTEN’s purpose.

In 2006, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is concluding its administration of a grant supporting the RFTEN project from the U. S. Department of Education. Institutions participating in the project are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges. The immediate purpose of RFTEN is to incorporate research findings—identified by the National Reading Panel and underlying the Federal “Reading First” grants—into the base of faculty knowledge, courses, supplementary materials, clinical and practice teaching experiences of candidates for elementary teaching. The Federal program is one means to help close a gap between strong research conclusions about effective instructional practices for reading, and the initial preparation of teachers that will assure these practices can actually be used in support of student learning in the classroom.

Many teachers prepared in RFTEN institutions will enter their careers, and often continue their careers, in schools serving large proportions of children who do not read well. We know this from National Assessment of Educational Progress data. But *some* children in all of our nation’s diverse communities have difficulty learning to read, and *all* children need effective instruction in the fundamental building blocks of language and print. Without it our children are ill-prepared for learning in other school subjects that depend on reading facility. I think that the RFTEN experience can serve as a model that all teacher education institutions might adapt to their elementary teacher preparation programs.

This report was prepared by Diana W. Rigden, PhD, as one piece of our RFTEN evaluation. Diana is a Senior Associate at AACTE, professional staff member at the former Council for Basic Education, a participant in development of the NCATE/ACEI 1999 standards for preparation of elementary teachers, and a co-director of the AACTE/CBE “STEP” (Standards-Based Teacher Education Project) effort. The task that we asked Diana to undertake had two parts, both related to data needs for evaluation of the RFTEN project and to the surrounding context in which NCATE functions with its partnering states and specialized professional associations. The first task was to determine how well state licensure tests are aligned with the statutory definition of “essential components of reading instruction,” (defined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary development; reading fluency, including oral reading skills; and reading comprehension strategies). The impetus for this task was to determine whether one of the existing state teacher tests might serve as an indicator that candidates had attained proficiencies in these essential components of reading as implemented through the RFTEN grant. The second task was to examine the correspondence of NCATE/specialty professional association standards with these essential components. Program standards are the primary way that NCATE and specialty professional associations communicate what new education professionals should know and be able to do. Integrating the essential

components of reading instruction into those standards would suggest that RFTEN purposes can be sustained following conclusion of the project.

Diana's report was extensively researched, and is backed up with a lengthy bibliography, list of interviewees, and two state by state analyses. One of these examines the correspondence of K-4 standards in reading/English language arts with the essential components of reading instruction in RFTEN states. The other describes licensure tests and other reading requirements for elementary teachers in RFTEN states. She has shown that only three of the sixteen RFTEN states administer licensure tests that document proficiencies in the essential components of reading. Yet all states participate in the Reading First grant program. There is a huge unrealized opportunity in most states to connect teacher preparation fully with expected requirements for new teacher practice. Diana identifies, as well, ways that NCATE's program standards, especially those for preparation of elementary teachers, could be strengthened—giving greater explicitness to the essential components of reading instruction and greater priority, for elementary teachers, to reading instruction.

The report will provide information for our use in evaluating RFTEN as that task is completed over the coming weeks. However, the large topics addressed in the report—data from state licensing tests, the alignment of those tests with standards, and the alignment of specialty professional association standards with knowledge from research and practice—are all significant considerations for accreditation. That means that the report will serve as a point of reference for NCATE's continuing examination of ways to strengthen its accreditation processes. In that regard, for several weeks this spring and summer the NCATE web site provided access to draft language for a revised reading instruction standard for elementary teachers. That language emerged from a collaboration of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). Our invitation for comment generated several dozen responses for deliberation by the ACEI standards committee and Board. The Association's recommendations will be acted upon by NCATE's Specialty Areas Studies Board (SASB) in October 2006. The NCATE web site ([www.ncate.org](http://www.ncate.org)) will have additional information as the new standards are completed and adopted and I invite readers of this report to check for updates.

Boyce C. Williams, PhD.  
Vice President for Institutional Relations,  
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education  
and Project Director for RFTEN

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

FOREWORD	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	10
WHAT ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION DOES SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED READING RESEARCH IDENTIFY?	12
ALIGNING LICENSURE TESTS WITH THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION	14
THE TEACHER CANDIDATE LICENSURE TESTS REVIEWED	15
WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE TEST MAKERS	16
A. Educational Testing Service (ETS)	16
B. National Evaluation Systems (NES)	18
C. NES in Practice: The California Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA)	19
D. A Note about the Virginia Reading Assessment, an NES Licensure Test	21
HOW WELL THE LICENSURE TESTS ALIGN WITH THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION	21
Test review of Praxis Test 0011: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	22
Test review of Praxis Test 0014: Elementary Education: Content Knowledge	24
Test review of Praxis Test 0200: Introduction to the Teaching of Reading	26
Test review of Praxis Test 0201: Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary	27
Test review of Praxis Test 0049: Middle School English Language Arts	29
Comments on Massachusetts Foundations of Reading Test (Pre-K-6)	30
Comments on California Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA)	33
Comments on Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA)	35
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NCATE'S SPECIALTY STANDARDS	37
The NCATE Program Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation	38
English Language Arts and Reading Specialty Standards	41

REFERENCES	43
APPENDICES	49
A. Scientifically-based Reading Research (SBRR) Defined	49
B. Early Elementary Reading/English Language Arts Standards in RFTEN States and How They Align to Scientifically-Based Reading Research	50
C. Licensure Tests Required in RFTEN States (with contact information)	55
D. The Nation's Report Card in Reading, 2005: National Assessment of Educational Progress in RFTEN States	68

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is quite possible – maybe even probable – that candidates can be licensed to teach elementary students in 2006 without demonstrating their knowledge of essential components of effective reading instruction derived from research. This assertion is warranted by evidence that only three of sixteen Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN) states require prospective teachers to pass licensure tests that examine knowledge of effective reading practice based on sound research.

Concerned about this possibility in the context of its RFTEN grant from the U. S. Department of Education, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) commissioned this study to determine the correspondence of the construct and items on state licensure tests in reading with the five essential components of successful reading instruction as identified by scientifically-based reading research (SBRR). NCATE's interest in how well teacher licensure tests align with SBRR is an outgrowth of its RFTEN project sites in sixteen states.<sup>1</sup> NCATE needs to know how well, and in what ways, its expectations for teacher knowledge and skills, and the assessment evidence gathered on candidate proficiencies, are aligned with the SBRR principles underlying RFTEN.

**Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction as defined by Scientifically-based Reading Research.** From its review of hundreds of research studies on reading instruction, the National Reading Panel (2000) identified five components as essential in teaching children to read:

1. **Phonemic awareness.** Teach children to focus on and manipulate phonemes (the smallest units composing spoken language) in spoken syllables and words.
2. **Phonics.** Teach beginning readers explicitly and systematically to understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences, to recognize spelling patterns, and to apply this knowledge in their reading.
3. **Reading fluency.** Offer beginning readers repeated opportunities for guided oral reading to promote better word recognition, fluency and comprehension.
4. **Vocabulary development.** Teach vocabulary both directly and indirectly, with repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items. Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology all enhance the acquisition of vocabulary.
5. **Reading comprehension.** Teach comprehension skills explicitly by demonstrating, explaining, modeling, and implementing specific cognitive strategies to help beginning readers derive meaning by intentional, problem solving thinking processes.

Ensuring that these elements are incorporated into the preparation of elementary teachers would be most likely to occur when required state licensure tests feature the findings of scientifically-based reading research in both individual test items and in test specifications; when state P-12 English language arts standards incorporate the five components of effective reading instruction; and when state regulations for program approval and accreditation criteria demand evidence that

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<sup>1</sup> The 16 RFTEN states include Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

the five components of effective reading instruction, from scientifically-based reading research, are embedded in the elementary program.

In highlighting these five components as essential to effective reading instruction, the panel was careful to acknowledge that its “silence on other topics should not be interpreted as indicating that other topics have no importance or that improvement in those areas would not lead to greater reading achievement” (page 1-3). Indeed, the value of motivating students to read and the efficacy of reading practice are widely acknowledged by reading research and practitioners.<sup>2</sup> The importance of identifying the five “essential components” is that they serve as the base-line for reading instruction for children. The National Reading Panel (NRP) concluded that all elementary teachers must know the content of these strategies and be able to teach them to students, and both the Federal Reading First Program and the RFTEN grant are built on them. This study was commissioned to determine if it is possible to judge whether new teachers reach the NRP minimum benchmark in reading instruction when they successfully pass initial licensure tests for teaching.

To be effective in teaching children to read, classroom teachers need to know how students learn to read (acquisition), how to teach students to read (instruction), how to judge how well students read (assessment), and how to strengthen students’ reading skills (remediation). These four areas – acquisition, instruction, assessment, and remediation – incorporate a myriad of other topics that include understanding what motivates students to read, differentiating instruction to students with varying needs, selecting reading materials and making assignments that will encourage students to read, and so on. Teacher education programs are encouraged to educate teacher candidates in the conceptual foundations of the reading process (including the historical evolution of English, phonological awareness, and reading research) and in linguistics and the structure of language. In addition, candidates need supervised practice in teaching reading which includes opportunities to become proficient in fostering phoneme awareness and knowing ways to teach letter name and shape recognition; introduce regular sound-symbol patterns, letter clusters, and syllable types; and promote knowledge of word meanings and vocabulary development, among other things (Orton, pages 12-15).

### **How Well Licensure Tests Align with the Essential Components of Effective Reading**

**Instruction.** States that rely on multi-subject licensure tests for elementary teachers cannot be assured that those teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to teach children to read. To examine how well teacher licensure tests align with scientifically-based reading research, we reviewed the following:

Expanded test specifications and existing tests for five teacher licensure tests in the Praxis series developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS):

*Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (0011)*

*Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (0014)*

*Introduction to the Teaching of Reading (0200)*

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<sup>2</sup> The National Reading Panel report, especially in Chapter 4 on Comprehension, describes a number of effective strategies by which teachers help readers interact with and understand the text: “A common aspect of individual and multiple-strategy instruction is the active involvement of motivated readers who read more text as a result of the instruction” (page 4-6).

*Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary* (0201)

*Middle School English Language Arts* (0049)

Sample materials from three licensure tests developed by the National Evaluation Systems (NES):

The Massachusetts *Foundations of Reading (PreK-6)*, test 90

California's Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA): *Test Information and Sample Written Examination Form* (2002)

The Virginia Reading Assessment for Elementary and Special Education Teachers (2004)

With one exception, the licensure tests reviewed for this report that were developed specifically to measure a teacher candidate's knowledge of reading are generally well aligned with the essential components of effective instruction as defined by scientifically-based reading research (SBRR). The multiple-choice items on the three state reading licensure tests developed through the National Evaluation Systems (NES) explicitly measure how well the candidate understands the five components of successful reading instruction. The multiple choice items on Praxis Test 0201, *Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary*, developed by the Educational Testing Service are aligned with the findings of SBRR. ETS Praxis Test 0200, *Introduction to the Teaching of Reading*, is not aligned with SBRR.

This means that if licensure tests are the public assurance of teacher knowledge, then only four of the licensure tests we reviewed can serve to assure their citizens that elementary teachers who pass them know how to teach reading: only Massachusetts (not a RFTEN state), California, and Virginia through their own state-specific tests, and Tennessee, which requires Praxis Test 0201, are able to assure schools and districts that their new teachers have the training to be effective reading teachers. Most states require future elementary teachers to take multi-subject licensure tests that have few items directed explicitly to the teaching of reading and those items are not closely aligned to the essential components of effective reading instruction as identified by SBRR.

**Recommendations Based on this Analysis.** Good reading skills are the necessary foundation for every individual to enjoy a productive and satisfying life, and it is the responsibility of educators to ensure that every individual learns to read. That being the case, every lever at our disposal should be used to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful reading teachers. States have an obligation through their education standards, requirements for teacher preparation programs, and licensure tests to make sure that every teacher is highly qualified in reading instruction. NCATE has a unique opportunity to guide and influence the quality of teacher preparation programs in the United States by its standards and program review process.

In the *NCATE Program Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation*, Standard 2.1 for English language arts needs to state explicitly that teachers are adept at teaching reading when they use scientifically-based reading strategies to develop phonemic awareness, phonics skills, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. The section on Instruction (3.a-e) would also provide an opportunity to emphasize that teaching reading is an instructional priority for elementary teachers.

Finally, NCATE needs to consider how it can more effectively incorporate the components of scientifically-based reading research into the Specialized Professional Association (SPA) standards for both English Language Arts and Reading. At the present time, neither set of standards provides explicit guidance to a teacher education program for developing a sequenced course of study, based on the research. While NCATE's elementary education teacher standards have the most pervasive influence on teacher preparation, that influence would be complemented and enlarged if NCATE were to make corresponding revisions in these related SPA standards.

## INTRODUCTION

It is quite possible – maybe even probable – that candidates can be licensed to teach elementary students in 2006 without demonstrating their knowledge of essential components of effective reading instruction derived from research. This assertion is warranted by evidence that only three of sixteen Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN) states require prospective teachers to pass licensure tests that examine knowledge of effective reading practice based on sound research.

In its 1999 report, *Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science: What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able To Do*, the American Federation of Teachers described the chasm between classroom instruction and the research knowledge-base on literacy development. Teaching reading is a complex task, and it is the primary duty of elementary teachers K-3 to teach children to read. Fortunately, there is a solid research base on the type of instruction that can effectively teach one to read. Yet, for most teacher education programs, preparing elementary candidates to teach reading is not the highest priority. The AFT report makes clear that elementary teacher candidates are not expected to learn linguistics and the structure of the English language. They do not receive solid training in the reading instruction methods that research has demonstrated are most effective in teaching children to read: literacy development, phonemic awareness, phonics, and how to assess and diagnose reading problems. They do not have routine classroom-based opportunities to observe good reading instruction and to practice how to teach reading effectively. Compounding the problem is the evidence that most states have lax standards when it comes to ensuring that preK-4 teachers can teach reading. English Language Arts content standards<sup>3</sup> often do not reflect the components of effective reading instruction as identified by scientifically-based reading research. AFT notes that states, through their selection of teacher licensure tests, signal to teacher education programs what they expect elementary teachers to know about teaching reading. Yet these signals are frequently confusing and contradictory, rather than stringent and clear.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) commissioned this study to determine the correspondence of the construct and items on state licensure tests in reading with five essential components of successful reading instruction as identified by scientifically-based reading research (SBRR). NCATE's interest in how well teacher licensure tests align with SBRR is an outgrowth of its RFTEN project with colleges and universities in sixteen states.<sup>4</sup> NCATE needs to know how well, and in what ways, its expectations for teacher knowledge and skills, and the assessment evidence gathered on candidate proficiencies, are aligned with the SBRR principles underlying RFTEN. This paper reveals that the “chasm” AFT

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix A provides a brief summary of early elementary reading/English language arts standards in the states participating in the Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN) and describes how well they align to the components of scientifically-based reading research. For a review for all 50 states, see *The State of English Standards 2005* at <http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/global/page.cfm?id=303>

<sup>4</sup> The 16 RFTEN states include Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

identified between classroom instruction and research knowledge also exists between licensure tests for elementary teachers and the reading research knowledge-base.

Why effective reading instruction is important: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading scores of 2005 reveal that “between 1992 and 2005, there was no significant change in the percentage of fourth-graders performing at or above [the] *Basic* [level], but the percentage at or above *Proficient* increased at this time.” The national average score for 2005 is 219 (on a 500-point scale); this is up two points from a score of 217 in 1992, the first year of the current NAEP reading assessment. Thirty-six percent of fourth graders in the United States read below basic on the 2005 NAEP reading assessment. In eight of the 16 RFTEN states the percentage of nine-year olds reading below basic exceeded the national average.<sup>5</sup>

According to the National Institute for Literacy, Level 3 on the prose scale of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy is the proficiency requirement for new jobs in projected high-growth occupations (for example, math, computer, and natural sciences); Level 2 is the proficiency level required for jobs in declining occupations. A number of national and state organizations in the U.S., including the National Governor's Association, have identified Level 3 proficiency as a minimum standard for success in today's labor market. Findings from the International Adult Literacy Survey indicate that only half of the U.S. adult population 16-65 years of age reached Level 3.<sup>6</sup>

Data from studies such as these on how well Americans read prompted the U.S. Department of Education to launch the Reading First initiative in 2002. Forty-seven states and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are engaged in training teachers in effective strategies for teaching children to read. Reading First bases its approach to reading instruction on what the National Reading Panel identified as the essential components of successful reading instruction in its 2000 report, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*.

To varying degrees, states have incorporated research-based practice into state content standards and assessments of reading and language arts.<sup>7</sup> However, they have failed to follow through with rigorous implementation of these standards in their requirements for approval of teacher preparation programs or in their adoption of licensure tests. Teacher education programs are required by neither state approval nor national accreditation standards to make reading instruction the “top priority” suggested in the AFT reading report—that is, by preparing elementary teachers to be effective teachers of reading through programs based on scientifically-based reading research. A few states – California, Virginia, and Massachusetts (which is not a RFTEN state), most notably – have adopted specialized reading licensure examinations for new

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix C provides the 1992 and 2005 NAEP scores for the RFTEN states. Further discussion of these scores appears in *Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-based Education* (Education Week, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> “Almost all adults in Level 1 can read a little but not well enough to fill out an application, read a food label, or read a simple story to a child. Adults in Level 2 usually can perform more complex tasks such as comparing, contrasting, or integrating pieces of information, but usually not higher level reading and problem-solving skills. Adults in levels 3 through 5 usually can perform the same types of more complex tasks on increasingly lengthy and dense texts and documents.” National Institute for Literacy, <http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/facts/workforce.html>

<sup>7</sup> Appendix B includes information on licensure and other requirements in terms of reading in the RFTEN states.

teachers and veteran teachers that reflect the content and practices identified by research. Tennessee has adopted *Praxis 0201, Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary*, for licensure and Maryland has identified the test as an alternative for practicing teachers who need to meet newly legislated reading requirements but would rather test out of taking the three mandated courses. Most states use elementary tests that have only a few questions on reading instruction, insufficient for valid conclusions about candidate knowledge of effective reading instruction. Moreover, the items usually bear no discernable relationship to the findings of SBRR. In summary, many states have failed to create comprehensive and research-based policies on reading instruction that encompass standards and assessments, but that are also enforced through consistent policies on program approval and licensure testing.

### **WHAT ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION DOES SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED READING RESEARCH IDENTIFY?**

In 1997, Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel of researchers, educators, and parents to examine research on effective approaches to teaching children to read. For two years, the panel reviewed hundreds of research studies to determine the best strategies to teach reading. The resulting report, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, was issued by the National Reading Panel in 2000, and outlined five components to successful reading instruction:

**Phonemic awareness.** Teach children to focus on and manipulate phonemes (the smallest units composing spoken language) in spoken syllables and words.

*“Correlational studies have identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the two best school-entry predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of instruction.” (page 2-1, NRP report)*

**Phonics.** Teach beginning readers explicitly and systematically to understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences, to recognize spelling patterns, and to apply this knowledge in their reading.

*“Findings of the meta-analysis allow us to conclude that systematic phonics instruction produces gains in reading and spelling not only in the early grades (kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades) but also in the later grades (2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades) and among children having difficulty learning to read.” (page 2-122, NRP report)*

**Reading fluency.** Offer beginning readers repeated opportunities for guided oral reading to promote better word recognition, fluency and comprehension.

*“An extensive review of the literature indicates that classroom practices that encourage repeated oral reading with feedback and guidance leads to meaningful improvements in reading expertise for students – for good readers as well as those who are experiencing difficulties.” (page 3-3, NRP report)*

**Vocabulary development.** Teach vocabulary both directly and indirectly, with repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items. Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology all enhance the acquisition of vocabulary.

*“Many studies have shown that reading ability and vocabulary size are related, but the causal link between increasing vocabulary and an increase in comprehension has not been demonstrated.” (page 4-15, NRP report) However, “a comprehensive analysis of*

*the collective research studies suggests that a variety of direct and indirect methods of vocabulary instruction can be effective.” (page 4-27, NRP report)*

**Reading comprehension.** Teach comprehension skills explicitly by demonstrating, explaining, modeling, and implementing specific cognitive strategies to help beginning readers derive meaning by intentional, problem solving thinking processes.  
*“The empirical evidence reviewed favors the conclusion that teaching of a variety of reading comprehension strategies leads to increased learning, to increased memory and understanding of new passages, and, in some cases, to general improvements in comprehension.” (page 4-52, NRP report)*

Incorporating these elements into the preparation of elementary teachers will occur only when the required state licensure tests feature the findings of scientifically-based reading research in both individual test items and in test specifications, when state P-12 English language arts standards incorporate the five components of effective reading instruction, and when program approval and/or accreditation demand evidence that the essential components of effective reading instruction are embedded in the elementary program.

In highlighting these five components as essential to effective reading instruction, the panel was careful to acknowledge that its “silence on other topics should not be interpreted as indicating that other topics have no importance or that improvement in those areas would not lead to greater reading achievement” (page 1-3). Indeed, the value of motivating students to read and the efficacy of reading practice are widely acknowledged by reading research and practitioners.<sup>8</sup> The importance of identifying the five “essential components” is that they serve as the base-line for reading instruction for children. All elementary teachers must know the content of these strategies and be able to teach them to students. This study is intended to determine if it is possible to judge whether new teachers reach this minimum benchmark in reading instruction when they successfully pass initial licensure tests for teaching.

To be effective in teaching children to read, classroom teachers need to know how students learn to read (acquisition), how to teach students to read (instruction), how to judge how well students read (assessment), and how to strengthen students’ reading skills (remediation). These four areas – acquisition, instruction, assessment, and remediation – incorporate a myriad of other topics that include understanding what motivates students to read, differentiating instruction to students with varying needs, selecting reading materials and making assignments that will encourage students to read, and so on. Teacher education programs are encouraged to educate teacher candidates in the conceptual foundations of the reading process (including the historical evolution of English, phonological awareness, and reading research) and in linguistics and the structure of language. In addition, candidates need supervised practice in teaching reading which includes opportunities to become proficient in fostering phoneme awareness and knowing ways to teach letter name and shape recognition; introduce regular sound-symbol patterns, letter

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<sup>8</sup> The National Reading Panel, especially in Chapter 4 on Comprehension, describes a number of effective strategies by which teachers help readers interact with and understand the text: “A common aspect of individual and multiple-strategy instruction is the active involvement of motivated readers who read more text as a result of the instruction” (page 4-6).

clusters, and syllable types; and promote knowledge of word meanings and vocabulary development, among other things (Orton, pages 12-15).

### **ALIGNING LICENSURE TESTS WITH THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION**

NCATE's interest in how well teacher licensure tests align with the essential components of effective reading instruction as defined by scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) is an outgrowth of its Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN) project. The task of this project is to determine the correspondence of the construct and items on these state licensure tests in reading with SBRR concepts and frameworks. It is hoped that this report will inform the RFTEN project so that candidate scores on the licensure tests can be interpreted as measures of SBRR proficiency.

This NCATE project is not the only one examining the alignment of licensure tests and the research. The Education Testing Service (ETS) has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education to examine each of its elementary licensure tests to determine how well they conform to SBRR. Phase I of this project has been to look at individual test items in terms of the five components of effective reading research as defined by the National Reading Panel and to identify the pool of items that seem to be aligned with the research. In Phase II, expert reviewers will make a judgment about the research basis of each item on the licensure tests, primarily considering whether each is supported by SBRR and whether the item tests the kind of knowledge beginning teachers need to know about the evidence. During Phase III a second panel, that will include writers of the original National Reading Panel report, will consider how well the tests cover the research elements and identify other topics that should be addressed in the tests. The analysis of this second panel will be completed in Spring 2006. As a result of this study, ETS hopes to be able to defend test items by research-based evidence. The study is being undertaken as a research project, and ETS will be able to publish its own report of the findings at the conclusion of the work.

Sandra Stotsky, former senior associate commissioner at the Massachusetts Department of Education and now an independent researcher, has just completed an analysis of teacher licensure tests required of those who teach elementary age children, or who supplement or supervise the work of those who do, to determine the extent to which these tests assess research-based pedagogical knowledge for developing phonemic awareness, phonics or decoding skills, and vocabulary knowledge. Using website and other information offered for various tests, Dr. Stotsky analyzed a number of tests developed by National Evaluation Systems (NES), the Educational Testing Service (ETS), and the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) to explore the effectiveness of federal policy through Title II of the 1998 Higher Education Act in improving teacher quality. Title II requires states to report annually on the number of prospective teachers who pass the state's tests for licensure, but the law neither

specifies the content of these licensure tests nor recommends a passing score. Dr. Stotsky analyzed over 30 tests now used for licensing elementary teachers, reading teachers, reading specialists, early childhood teachers, and special education teachers. Her study suggests that to require nothing more than a state-determined passing score on a licensure test that may not cover the content needed for effective reading instruction will neither ensure qualified elementary teachers or hold schools of education accountable for teaching all prospective teachers of elementary age students or their supervisors what they need to know to teach reading or support those who do (Stotsky 2006).

It is worth noting that there is another related project to these that examine the alignment of licensure tests to the reading research. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) has reviewed course requirements, syllabi, and textbook recommendations for college and university-based programs that prepare teacher candidates to teach reading and issued a report, *What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading—and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning* (Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox).

### **THE TEACHER CANDIDATE LICENSURE TESTS REVIEWED**

For this project, reading expert Joan Sedita and I reviewed available materials for reading licensure tests developed by the Education Testing Service (ETS) and the National Evaluation Systems (NES). Ms. Sedita, the founder and director of Sedita Learning Systems, is one of 14 certified national LETRS<sup>9</sup> trainers, helping teachers learn to implement each component of reading instruction (phoneme awareness, decoding, spelling and word study; oral language development; vocabulary; reading fluency; comprehension; and writing) as well as to understand the foundational concepts that link them. She was also one of three lead teacher trainers for the Massachusetts Reading First Program. Ms. Sedita is a leading expert, author, nationally recognized speaker, and teacher trainer in the areas of reading, study skills, and learning disabilities.

We reviewed both the Test at a Glance website information and an actual test for each of the following five teacher licensure tests in the Praxis series developed by ETS:

*Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (0011)

*Elementary Education: Content Knowledge* (0014)

*Introduction to the Teaching of Reading* (0200)

*Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary* (0201)

*Middle School English Language Arts* (0049)

We reviewed the test information booklet for the Massachusetts *Foundations of Reading (PreK-6)*, test 90 (MA-SG-FLD090-03. Massachusetts Department of Education).

And we reviewed California's Reading Instruction Competence Assessment: *Test Information and Sample Written Examination Form* (2002) printed from [www.rica.nesinc.com](http://www.rica.nesinc.com).

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<sup>9</sup> Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, a professional development program closely aligned to the components of effective reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel.

The available information on the Virginia Reading Assessment for Elementary and Special Education Teachers includes a *Study Guide* (2004) and the *Validation and Standard Setting Report* (2005). I have looked at both of these items and reviewed them in comparison to the other two NES licensure tests.

### **WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE TEST MAKERS**

In conducting this study, I had the opportunity to spend a full day with staff from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), including test developers; and on the following day, Joan Sedita and I reviewed the Praxis tests in an all-day meeting with four test developers. Susannah Patton and I spent a morning in conversation with staff from the National Evaluation Service (NES), and I met with a number of people at the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing in Sacramento to learn about the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). The approaches to and purposes of the various licensure tests differ, and it may be useful to provide some context before presenting our analysis of the tests.

#### **Educational Testing Service (ETS)**

Ten of the sixteen RFTEN states require one or more PRAXIS licensure tests: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia. The states are listed in the following section that discusses each specific test and how it aligns with the findings of scientifically-based reading research.

*ETS Framework.* When ETS designs its teacher licensure tests, the company wants to determine whether a candidate knows enough to work independently as he or she enters the job of teaching. For ETS, the validity of a licensure test is determined solely by its relevance to the job. To determine the boundaries of a licensure test, ETS judges the legitimacy of each item by asking: Is the knowledge being tested deemed important for beginning practice? Since it is not possible to test everything a person has been taught, the core of what is tested is defined by practice. It is in their relationship to the job – in providing access to the profession – that licensure tests are legally defensible. ETS makes the point that the test must be valid as a requirement for a license to a job *as it currently exists*, an important distinction for those who may wish that licensure tests would drive teacher education reform. Based on its approach to licensure testing, ETS has successfully defended against all court cases questioning the Praxis licensure tests.

ETS develops its tests to be aligned with national academic standards because the company believes that there is little significant difference among various state standards. Multiple forms exist for each test, with some overlapping items. Revising tests that have been established for some time is difficult because there is a limit to the number of changes one can make on an individual test without jeopardizing its validity.

ETS establishes a test development committee for each of its licensure tests that is both diverse and representative of the field, comprised of curriculum supervisors, master teachers who work with student teachers, practicing teachers, content experts, and higher education faculty. The committee analyzes the standards (national and sometimes state) within its discipline and

reviews sample curricula from faculty at top programs in the subject. ETS uses an evidence-centered design model that focuses on three questions:

- what do you want to be able to say about the test taker?
- what evidence will allow you to say that about the test taker?
- what are the tasks that will give you the evidence so you can say what you want to say about the test taker?

This model helps define test construct and design, driving the test specifications and the types of test items that will be included in the test. The bottom-line question for these tests is: What does the beginning teacher need to know and be able to do? Once the committee determines test specifications, the draft specifications are sent out in a survey to about 50,000 teachers who rate them on importance (0-5 scale) in terms of the teaching job. Researchers analyze the data from the completed surveys and send everything back to the committee. Any item or specification that ranks lower than a 3.5 must have a rationale for its being defensible and therefore should be kept on the final test<sup>10</sup>.

When reviewing existing tests for revision, test developers must decide whether to develop a new pool of test items or modify an existing pool. Each item goes through multiple reviews that include a content review, fairness review, edit review, and special needs considerations. Reviewers are both internal and external to ETS, but the test item writers are people from the field, who have been prepped on how to write appropriate items, and do not include ETS employees. Once items are determined to be suitable, the test is put back together according to its specifications. Another review is then made of the entire test, and sometimes it is piloted to see which items, if any, are routinely causing problems for test takers. In summary, the test creation cycle at ETS includes the following nine steps:

1. Review state licensure requirements and standards;
2. Conduct a job analysis;
3. Develop the test specifications;
4. Develop the test items;
5. Construct the test and send out for extensive external reviews;
6. Conduct a pilot test administration;
7. Conduct the state review of the test;
8. Advise state leaders in setting the standards (cut score) for the test;
9. Administer the test; and
10. Review the results by states and institutions before the state sets the final passing score.

*State Framework (numbers 6-9 above).* State licensure requirements for teachers include course requirements and formal study, clinical practice (including internship years), and testing. ETS usually responds to a state's RFP which includes the licensure test requirements as determined by state policy. In its response, ETS proposes tests that meet the requirements, providing a "match" to state standards and national content standards. The review of ETS proposals is

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<sup>10</sup> NOTE: At this point, the rationale need not reflect research. In further conversations with staff, it seems that ETS is moving toward requiring a research-based rationale for keeping an item. This shift may be related to the research ETS is undertaking to determine the alignment between its elementary licensure tests and the findings of SBRR (see page 14).

usually made by a group of people within the state who are practicing under licensure and are involved in teacher preparation; this group makes a recommendation to the certification or testing division of the state department of education. At this point, a state may conduct an informal study of the test to determine the process by which it will judge whether the test is a valid assessment for teacher standards in that state. Next, a formal study of the test – at which time performance standards are recommended – is conducted by a representative group of 15-20 people, usually teachers at the beginning of their careers, who are trained for this task by ETS. (ETS notes that 30-year practitioners are often too set in their opinions of curriculum and not up-to-date on research). This group reviews the test items and the knowledge being tested in terms of their job relevance to confirm the validity of the test for their state. They then determine what percent would know the answer to an item to establish the cut score. Formal adoption of the test and cut score is usually made by the state board of education or the professional standards board or, sometimes, the office of teacher credentialing. ETS provides national passing data to the state. A state may have a “no fault” year (or more) to get a judgment of how well candidates in its state will perform on the test. When making policy decisions about licensure tests, states consider how to balance teacher supply/demand data, access to teaching, and standards. Once an ETS test has been adopted by a state, it receives data on an annual basis and can make changes to requirements and passing scores based on changes in the data.

*Campus Framework (numbers 8 and 9 above).* Campuses receive information annually from ETS about how their candidates perform in the subcategories of a PRAXIS test with the percent of items answered correctly for each category (except where there are fewer than ten test-takers, the point at which ETS has concerns about maintaining individual candidate confidentiality). The campus data are compared to the test-taking population in the state and nationally. Faculty often complain that the information is not specific enough to identify areas within the program that need to be strengthened, and ETS recognizes that the method of reporting the data is unwieldy and that many faculty members get bogged down from the huge paper report they receive. ETS is trying to streamline this process.

#### National Evaluation Service (NES)

Thirteen states currently use licensure tests developed by the National Evaluation Service (NES), including four RFTEN states: California, New York, Oklahoma, and Virginia. In contrast to the Educational Testing Service, NES does not permit researchers to review its actual tests, but suggests that the test specifications and sample questions that appear on both state and NES websites will be adequate to analyzing the nature of the licensure tests. Because NES works under contract for individual states to design licensure tests specifically aligned to state needs, NES claims that each state owns its test and the testing company is therefore not free to release test items to outsiders.

Another difference between the two major test makers is that, rather than using national standards as the basis for its licensure tests, NES bases its tests on the P-12 student standards in the state with which it is working. This means that the licensure tests are specific to state requirements and standards. For example, the state of Michigan requires that writing be taught by outlining; because K-12 students are tested in their ability to outline as a pre-writing strategy, the licensure test for teachers is aligned with this specific requirement. That element would not

be appropriate in the licensure test of states that do not include the requirement in their K-12 English language arts standards.

An image that NES uses to describe its system is that of a pyramid: P-12 academic content standards appear at the top of the pyramid; P-12 student assessments appear at the left side of the base, and teacher licensure standards are at the right side of the base. The P-12 academic content standards are the important piece in the system, and NES tries to get 100 percent alignment with a state's P-12 academic standards. Keeping "constancy" between the tests and standards means that the state must evaluate the standards themselves and have confidence in them. In addition, material from the national standards is used as part of the resource bank by members of the advisory committees and by those writing items for any of the individual tests.

Test development at NES follows steps similar to those of ETS. An advisory committee is set up in each state and that committee establishes test objectives based on how well they align to the standards and how well they relate to classroom practice. Test item writers at NES create the test itself, then about 100 teachers in the state, randomly selected, review both the objectives and the items to conduct a validation (like a job analysis). An expert review panel then looks at both elements, and the items are field tested at colleges to provide feedback. Both a bias review committee and the advisory committee participate in each step of the process. From the beginning of test development to the final review takes about 18 months. Upon adoption of the test, the state board usually sets the cut scores with advice from NES.

Two NES RFTEN state reading licensure tests were reviewed for this report: California's Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA). In addition, we looked at the Massachusetts' Foundations of Reading test, also developed with NES.

NES in Practice: The California Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA). In 1998 California mandated passage of the RICA as a requirement for the California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, the typical credential for elementary teachers. The rationale behind RICA was for the state to gain assurance that candidates had the same knowledge about effective reading instruction, regardless of the teacher preparation program they attended. According to most of those interviewed for this report, RICA has helped to standardize what teachers are taught in their preparation programs. RICA tries to be comprehensive, although some of those interviewed described inadequacies with the current version of the test, including a lack of attention to the reading needs of English language learners, an absence of technology, and very slight attention paid to reading fluency, one of the major areas of SBRR research. It is important to remember that RICA was developed before the release of the National Reading Panel's report in 2000, although RICA test developers were greatly influenced by research the panel was reviewing. In addition, there were advisors to California's test development committee who overlapped with those involved in the SBRR project. Philosophically, RICA is aligned to the findings of SBRR and supports direct, explicit teaching of skills.

RICA has a close correlation with California's K-12 standards, following the recommendations outlined by NES. In 1997, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) created a panel of reading experts, K-12 educators, and higher education faculty to review current

research on reading; examine national, state, and local P-12 academic standards; and define the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of reading teachers. This information guided the development of a set of test specifications that were distributed in survey form to educators. After reviewing the results, the panel prepared recommendations for the Commission, and the Commission contracted with NES to create the test. RICA test items were field tested by teacher candidates from all the various routes into teaching that are available in California. A new panel set the passing standard in RICA based on the results of the field testing, and they recommended the cut score to the Commission. RICA exists in two forms: written and video. The great majority of teachers take the written test, but by law the video test must be available. Both tests are scored by NES.

There are six versions of the RICA written test given each time, with different combinations of items, but the test itself is consistent among the various versions. A perfect score is 120, and 81 points are needed to pass. The test consists of four domains, each domain including two or more content areas:

Domain 1: Planning and Organizing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment

Domain 2: Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading

Domain 3: Developing Reading Comprehension and Promoting Independent Reading

Domain 4: Supporting Reading through Oral and Written Language Development

The written version of the test consists of:

- multiple choice (60 points);
- constructed response: four essays (36 points), one for each of the four domains; and
- a case study (24 points) that integrates the domains.

Candidates have the option of taking the RICA test by making three separate videotapes, each with the following components:

- a written description of the instructional context,
- a 10-minute video-taped lesson, and
- a written analysis of the lesson that reflects on what occurs in terms of teaching and learning.

The videos must demonstrate whole class instruction (Domains 1&2); small group instruction (Domains 1&3); and individual instruction (Domains 1&4).

The California Department of Education is in the process of revising the Reading/Language Arts Frameworks which are based on the English Language Arts P-12 academic standards and guide textbook adoption in the state. This revision may have an impact on the RICA test when it is revalidated in 2006, and staff from CCTC attend the department of education meetings.

Some CCTC board members expressed their concern that, in spite of RICA and high-stakes licensure testing, most teacher preparation programs in California offer only superficial preparation in how to teach reading. These board members fear that the state program approval process, managed by the CCTC, is not aligned with the same rigorous expectations as the RICA licensure test. One explanation could be that teacher education is a fifth-year program in California, and into that one year must go all pedagogical courses (for special ed, exceptional children, English language learners, reading, and student teaching). The state-mandated two-

years of induction support feature pedagogy but have become almost exclusively support in classroom management and discipline rather than content-based instructional support. In addition, there is no routine way for teacher education programs to use RICA results to improve their preparation in reading. The diagnostic report of test results goes exclusively to the candidates themselves. The program receives a report with pass/fail information of its candidates and comparative data with the state. For each subarea of the test, the institution has the average scores of its candidates compared with the average scores of test-takers across the state. To become an elementary teacher in California, one must pass the RICA licensure test, so the pass rate among teachers is 100 percent, and the state does not keep good data on how many teachers take the RICA multiple times before passing.

A Note about the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), an NES Licensure Test. Virginia's Reading Assessment was modeled on the California RICA test, and in both states, all elementary teachers are required to take the test for licensure. Education leaders in Virginia discussed issues related to reading instruction for more than five years, starting with the Virginia standards and considering the kinds of test that would be appropriate for measuring teacher knowledge and skills in reading instruction. California's RICA test was formally presented to a panel of reading specialists and faculty, and reading expert Louisa Moats was hired by Virginia to review the process of test development at both ETS and NES and to make a recommendation to the state. In her review, Ms. Moats asked one major question of educators in California: "How do you know that there has been any difference because RICA has been in place?" She reports three answers:

California no longer scores at the bottom of the NAEP reading test scores;

Teacher education faculty, who had been predisposed against RICA, have accepted it because it is based on research and aligned to the California standards their candidate must be able to teach; and

A study conducted by the California State University system revealed that the quality of the papers candidates write on the licensure test has improved significantly since the implementation of the RICA test and candidate preparation for the test.

Ms. Moats told both NES and California that she was satisfied that RICA was aligned to scientifically-based reading research, and she recommended the NES system to Virginia.

Not only is the VRA patterned on RICA, but it also includes some identical test items. The VRA is still in pilot stage and the state has not yet set a passing score. The VRA materials currently available on the website include test specifications and a study guide with a few sample items, but they do not include a full sample test (like RICA and the Massachusetts reading test provide).

### **HOW WELL THE LICENSURE TESTS ALIGN WITH THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION**

In reviewing several licensure tests developed by the Education Testing Service and the National Evaluation Systems, we have determined that most of the tests specifically designed as reading licensure tests (the California Reading Instruction Competency Assessment, the Virginia Reading Assessment, the Massachusetts Foundations of Reading test, and the ETS Praxis 0201: Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary) are aligned with the five components of effective reading instruction as defined by scientifically-based reading. Those general tests that are

*REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION*

commonly used for initial licensure of elementary teachers, even when they include items on reading instruction, are not aligned with SBRR. States that depend upon these more generic licensure tests do not have a good measure of the knowledge or skills of new teachers in terms of reading instruction.

**A. TEST REVIEW OF PRAXIS TEST 0011: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

This test is required by 19 states including four RFTEN states: Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The median score of test takers on Praxis 0011 is 176. The median score by gender and ethnicity is as follows:

NATIONAL	176	AFRICAN AMERICAN	158
		ASIAN	172
FEMALE	177	HISPANIC	169
MALE	173	NATIVE AMERICAN	174
		WHITE	178

RFTEN state cut scores are:

- Missouri – 164
- North Carolina – not set
- Tennessee – 159
- West Virginia – 155

Praxis test 0011 is comprised of 110 multiple-choice questions in six categories:

- Reading and Language Arts Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – 38 questions – 35% of the test
- Mathematics Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – 22 questions – 20% of the test
- Science Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – 11 questions – 10% of the test
- Social Studies Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – 11 questions – 10% of the test
- Arts and Physical Education Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – 11 questions – 10% of the test
- General Information about Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – 17 questions – 15% of the test

It should be noted that a passing score on Praxis Test 0011 is a combined score; a candidate does not need to pass each section to pass the test.

As is evident in the six categories listed above, the Praxis Test 0011 focuses on instructional skills and pedagogical knowledge set in the context of the subject matters most commonly taught in the elementary school. The test specifications for the 38 questions regarding Reading and Language Arts, which comprise 35% of the test, include the following topics:

- Components of the curriculum
  - balanced reading, writing, speaking, and listening programs
  - integration into other content areas

- curricular materials that are developmentally appropriate
- knowledge and understanding of topics, procedures, and methods (such as various teaching and learning strategies like guided instruction or modeling)
- Instruction: Reading [*NOTE: Instruction topics also include writing, spelling, and listening; motivation; adjusting instruction to student needs.*]
  - determining individual reading levels
  - language acquisition and readiness
  - prereading instruction (K-W-L); word recognition (picture and context cues); structural analysis; semantics; syntactic; phonics; scanning
  - vocabulary development; comprehension; control; reading aloud; word recognition; syllabication; decoding; graphic organizers

*NOTE: spelling is included only in editing writing, not as a topic of its own.*
- Assessment: Informal assessment includes:
  - informal reading inventory
  - miscue analysis
  - close procedure
  - running record
  - anecdotal record

We could not, of course, take specific notes on individual items of the test we reviewed, but it was our impression that Praxis Test 0011 is generic in nature, offering questions on curriculum, instruction, and assessment that could apply to many subject areas. In addition, the test is designed for all elementary grades, and Reading and Language Arts items were not always clear about the stage of reading development being considered. In reading instruction based on the components identified by SBRR, the stages through which readers' skill advances are identifiable, and what is appropriate instruction for a beginning reader would not be suitable as the reader gains skills; other approaches to reading instruction to not differentiate among these stages.

Our analysis of the items related to reading includes the following observations:

- There are a limited number of questions directed explicitly at strategies for reading instruction, and the tone of questions on the building blocks of reading tend to focus on elements more commonly associated with a “whole language” approach to reading instruction rather than instruction that is based on reading research. For example, items we saw emphasized using contextual clues as the best strategy to read unfamiliar words rather than word recognition strategies identified as effective by SBRR. The comprehension and vocabulary items were the most straight-forward and least controversial.
- Probably because of their limited number, the balance of items for the five areas of effective reading instruction based on SBRR is non-existent. There are far more items on comprehension than there are on vocabulary or fluency.
- Several items use terminology that reflects the work of specific researchers, and candidates would be at a disadvantage if they had learned more general terminology.

- Test 0011 is not a good measure of a teacher candidate’s knowledge of the five components of effective reading instruction as identified by SBRR.

Ms. Sedita noted that one of the questions we reviewed included, as a wrong answer, a study strategy that is often taught to struggling readers – something called the “Cornell Method” that involves two-column note-taking to differentiate between main points and supporting material. She suggested that any candidate who has taken a study skills course would be likely to answer that item differently than the ETS-prescribed right answer.

As a way of strengthening this test, Ms. Sedita recommended Marsha Henry’s book, *Unlocking Literacy*, for its discussion on the scope of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in reading as aligned with SBRR as well as Michael Pressley’s research in reading comprehension.

**B. TEST REVIEW OF PRAXIS TEST 0014: Elementary Education: Content Knowledge**

This test is required by 20 states including seven RFTEN states: Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia. The median score of test takers of Praxis 0014 is 162. The median score by gender and ethnicity is as follows:

NATIONAL	162	AFRICAN AMERICAN	145
		ASIAN	161
FEMALE	161	HISPANIC	147
MALE	168	NATIVE AMERICAN	158
		WHITE	164

RFTEN state cut scores are:

- Alabama – not set
- Louisiana – 150
- Maryland – 142
- Mississippi – 153
- South Dakota – 137
- Tennessee – 140
- Virginia - 143

Praxis Test 0014 is comprised of 120 multiple-choice questions in four categories:

- Language Arts – 30 questions – 25% of the test
- Mathematics – 30 questions – 25% of the test
- Social Studies – 30 questions – 25% of the test
- Science – 30 questions – 25% of the test

There are five sections in the Language Arts portion of the test:

- Understanding Literature – 30%
- Test Structure and Organization for Reading and Writing – 5%
- Literary Acquisition and Reading Instruction – 30%
- Language in Writing – 25%

## Communication Skills – 10%

The entire Language Arts category of the test is comprised of 30 questions, and there are only two or three questions devoted to the section entitled, Literacy Acquisition and Reading Instruction. We reviewed the “exploded specifications” for the test, which offer more explicit specifications than those available on the “Test at a Glance” at the ETS website. For this section of the test, the “exploded specifications” state that the candidate must:

demonstrate an understanding of the foundations of literacy and reading instruction as reflected in the stages of reading development and reading theories (*language acquisition, support of second language learners, reading readiness, Holdaway’s stages, Cambourne’s stages*); children’s literature (*children’s classics and the elements of good children’s literature*); strategies for word recognition (*cueing systems*); strategies for comprehension (*prior knowledge, metacognition*); study skills (*SQ3R, graphic organizers, document literacy*).

Our analysis of these test specifications includes the following observations:

- “Children’s literature” is included in the third section, Literacy Acquisition and Reading Instruction, although it does not have anything to do with language acquisition. A better placement of children’s literature would be in the first section entitled Understanding Literature. Moving children’s literature to the literature category would allow more space in the test to include one or two more items related specifically to teaching reading.
- “Holdaway’s stages” and ‘Cambourne’s stages,” named explicitly in the specifications for the Literacy Acquisition and Reading Instruction section, are theories that are not supported by SBRR. There was no mention in the specifications of stage models that are widely accepted as research-based such as Chall’s Stages of Reading (Chall, 1983, 1996), Ehri’s Stages (Ehri, 1966), and the Four-Part Processing Model (Adams, 1990; Rayner et. al., 2001, 2002).
- “Cueing systems” is identified as a strategy for word recognition in the Literacy Acquisition and Reading Instruction section. There is no basis in SBRR research for one to suppose that this is an effective strategy for learning to read.
- The Literacy Acquisition and Reading Instruction section does not currently reflect the five components of effective reading instruction as identified by SBRR, and the test is not now a good measure of a candidate’s knowledge of the SBRR components.

Of the five actual test items we reviewed, three measured teacher knowledge; one was clearly based on “whole language” theory; and one was a test of a teacher’s own mastery of grammar. Rather than measure a teachers’ ability to teach reading, the test seemed to measure a teachers’ own reading ability.

In the discussion with ETS staff about this test, we were informed that (1) ETS considers 0014 a content knowledge test, and not a test of how well a candidate can teach the content, and (2) “an

NCATE panel reviewing the test did not think there were enough questions on reading.” Further, several states have expressed their discomfort with the reading portion of the test specifications.

In addition to noting the absence of the five components of effective reading instruction as identified by scientifically-based reading research in this test, we also observed that it will be very difficult for ETS to produce a test that would include specific questions for teaching reading across grades K-8 because the research clearly shows that the strategies are different for readers at different levels. We also noted that in Section B, Text Structures and Organization for Reading and Writing, the specifications include no mention of sentence structure.

### **C. TEST REVIEW OF PRAXIS TEST 0200: Introduction to the Teaching of Reading**

This test is required by seven states, including two RFTEN states: California and North Carolina<sup>11</sup>. Median test score nationally for Praxis Test 0200 is 670.

RFTEN state cut scores are:

California – 680

North Carolina – 540

Praxis Test 0200 is comprised of 100 multiple-choice questions in five categories:

Reading as a Language-Thought Process – 15 questions – 15%

Text Structure – 20 questions – 20%

Instructional Processes in the Teaching of Reading – 40 questions – 40%

Affective Aspects – 10 questions – 10%

Environmental/Sociocultural Factors – 15 questions – 15%

The test specifications and the sample test items posted on the website “Test at a Glance” illustrated clearly that Praxis Test 0200 is based on a “whole language” approach to reading instruction and does not reflect the findings of scientifically-based reading research. Several items on the website “Test at a Glance” explicitly state a whole language perspective; a few are offered here as examples:

- Sample question 2 (“*Semantic and syntactic cues can be used by a teacher to help identify an unfamiliar word in a sentence because these cues ...*”) reflects a whole language strategy to reading instruction that is not supported by scientifically-based reading research.
- In sample question 6 (“*Of the following, which is likely to be the LEAST effective in fostering a student’s interest in reading?*”), answers B (“*parental support of an involvement in the reading program*”), C (“*a well-stocked reading corner in the classroom*”), D (“*a schoolwide program of sustained silent reading*”), and E (“*a reading*”).

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<sup>11</sup> NOTE: Upon conversation with the CCTC it is clear that Praxis Test 0200 is not used in California as a licensure test. It may be used by a school district and/or a teacher preparation program as an assessment of candidate knowledge.

*laboratory with both printed materials and media components*”) are classic descriptors of the whole language classroom. The question asks which is the LEAST effective, indicating a bias that all the other answers are what constitute effective reading instruction. The correct answer to sample question 6 is: *An intensive basal program for large-group instruction*.

- Sample question 7 (“Which of the following best defines affective aspects of reading instruction?”) devotes an item to an aspect of reading instruction that is core to the whole-language approach although it is not supported as effective by SBRR findings.
- Sample question 9 (“Of the following statements, which is the most consistent with a whole-language approach to instruction?”) amplifies the message that teachers need to know whole-language techniques for teaching reading.

Praxis Test 0200 favors a constructivist approach to teaching reading and a candidate would need to understand the assumptions of the test in order to be successful in responding to the items. After reviewing an actual test, our opinion was confirmed that test 0200 does not reflect the components of effective reading instruction as identified by SBRR.

**D. TEST REVIEW OF PRAXIS TEST 0201: Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary**

This test is required by two states, both involved in RFTEN: Maryland and Tennessee. Tennessee uses the test as a licensure test; Maryland recommends the test to practicing teachers who want a test option to meet a state requirement to take three courses in reading instruction. (When the Maryland state legislature required all teachers in the state to take three courses in reading instruction, the state asked ETS to develop a test that could be used as an alternative for teachers to demonstrate that they knew how to teach students to read. ETS produced Praxis test 0201 as a result. This test is not required for initial licensure in Maryland.)

The median score of test takers of Praxis Test 0201 is 161. The median score by gender and ethnicity is as follows:

NATIONAL	161	AFRICAN AMERICAN	148
		ASIAN	167
FEMALE	162	HISPANIC	165.5
MALE	153	NATIVE AMERICAN	159
		WHITE	164

RFTEN state cut scores are:

Maryland – 173

Tennessee - 153

Praxis Test 0201 is comprised of 60 multiple-choice questions in five categories and three short essays or constructed-response questions. The five categories as they appear in the “Test at a Glance” are:

1. Theory of Reading as a Process; Language Acquisition and Early Literacy – 12 questions – 20%
2. Reading Materials and Instruction; Reading Environment – 18 questions – 30%
3. Reading Comprehension – 12 questions – 20%
4. Assessment of Reading – 8 questions – 13%
5. Vocabulary, Spelling, and Word Study – 10 questions – 17%

The constructed-response portion of the test includes the following content categories:

- Analysis of Student Work and Behavior – 33⅓%
- Reading Materials, Instruction, and Environment – 33⅓%
- Reading Comprehension – 33⅓%

Our analysis of the test specifications for this section includes the following observations:

- The “Test at a Glance” that appears on the ETS website for Praxis Test 0201 includes the statement that “the content is based on categories and competencies developed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association” and does not refer to the recommendations of the National Reading Panel or the essential components of effective reading instruction identified by the panel.
- The “Test Description” on the “exploded specifications” is more closely aligned with the five components of effective reading instruction than is the “About this Test” that appears in the “Test at a Glance.” Few individuals – and no candidates – are able to review the larger set of test specifications. They are used for discussion with state leaders at the time of decision-making about licensure tests, but some states would already have eliminated this test because of what appears on the website.
- The break-down of test content categories as it appears in the “Test at a Glance” (TAAG) does not reflect the existing test we reviewed. The allotment of questions, as it appears on the TAAG, is not appropriate to the findings of SBRR.
- The statement, “Theory of Reading as a Process,” in the first test category is misleading and does not correspond to test items.
- To reflect the existing test we reviewed, the subsection entitled “Vocabulary” needs to be moved from Section V in the TAAG list of contents (“Vocabulary, Spelling, and Word Study”) to a section with reading comprehension to better exhibit the principles of effective reading instruction as defined by SBRR.
- The words “Phonics” and “Fluency” are not included in the TAAG table of contents and need to be added to the section with spelling and word study. These components do appear in the test items, although fluency does not receive much coverage.
- To reflect the test as it exists, the contents and the allocation of questions need to be revised as follows:
  - Language Acquisition and Early Literacy – 12%

- Phonics, Spelling, Word Study, and Fluency – 30%
  - Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary – 20%
  - Reading Materials & Instruction; Reading Environment – 13%
  - Assessment of Reading – 25%
- This reallocation would place more emphasis (75% of the items) on topics that are closely aligned with the findings of SBRR: Phonics, Spelling, Word Study, and Fluency; Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary; and Assessment of Reading. It would reduce the emphasis that now exists with 50% of the questions focused on Reading Materials & Instruction (20%); Reading Environment (10%); and Language Acquisition and Early Literacy (20%).
  - Six of the ten items that appear in the 0201 “Test at a Glance” are identical to those featured in the 0200 “Test at a Glance” and reflect the perspective of whole language reading instruction. Another item (#6) on syntactic cues is not supported by research. The “Test at a Glance” for 0201 is not aligned with the findings of scientifically-based reading research. We pointed this fact out to the test developers in as strong a way as possible. We suggested that a revised “Test at a Glance” be developed that includes the language of the “exploded specifications.”

The multiple-choice items of Praxis Test 0201 are more closely aligned with the findings of scientifically-based reading research than any other licensure test ETS offers, although someone visiting the ETS website and reviewing the “Test at a Glance” would not know this. ETS has hired a reading specialist, trained in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling), as a test developer, and her influence may strengthen this test even further. According to our conversation with ETS staff, the company would like Praxis test 0201 to replace 0200, Introduction to the Teaching of Reading. But, as has already been described, only two states offer 0201 at this time and seven states require 0200, which is based entirely on the assumptions of whole language and contains no evidence of the components of effective reading instruction as defined by SBRR.

Praxis Test 0201 includes three exercises that require essay or “constructed response” answers and the test is weighted with 50% of the total score coming from the constructed response section and 50% from the multiple-choice section. The constructed response items “ask examinees to apply their knowledge about assessing reading; using materials and instructional strategies in a supporting environment to meet all students’ needs; and understanding the development of reading as a complex process of constructing meaning.” The alignment of this part of the test with the findings of SBRR will depend upon how raters score the responses based on their own knowledge of and familiarity with effective reading instruction as defined by the research and their ability to judge how well the candidates’ knowledge of the five components of reading instruction is reflected in their responses.

#### **E. TEST REVIEW OF PRAXIS TEST 0049: Middle School English Language Arts**

This test is required by 27 states including ten RFTEN states: Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The median score of test takers of Praxis 0049 is 172. The median score by gender and ethnicity is as follows:

NATIONAL	172	AFRICAN AMERICAN	157
		ASIAN	163.5
FEMALE	173	HISPANIC	168
MALE	170	NATIVE AMERICAN	170
		WHITE	174

RFTEN state cut scores are:

- Georgia – 144
- Louisiana – 160
- Maryland – 160
- Mississippi – 145
- Missouri – 163
- North Carolina – 145
- South Dakota – 143
- Tennessee – 145
- Virginia – 164
- West Virginia - 147

Praxis Test 0049 is comprised of 90 multiple-choice questions in four categories and two constructed-response questions. The categories for the multiple choice questions include:

1. Reading and Literature – 37 questions – 31% of the test
  2. Language and Linguistics – 16 questions – 13% of the test
  3. Composition and Rhetoric – 37 questions – 31% of the test
  4. Short Essays – 2 questions – 25% of the test
- Literary Analysis
  - Rhetorical Analysis

Praxis Test 0049 was developed to measure middle school teachers’ content knowledge and to ensure that teachers can identify literary elements and authors and grammar and syntactical elements. The wording of the title of the first section, “Reading and Literature Study,” is misleading. The word “reading” should be removed from the title. This is a literature test and does not reflect the findings of scientifically-based reading research.

#### **F. COMMENTS ON MASSACHUSETTS’ FOUNDATIONS OF READING TEST (Pre-K-6)**

The Massachusetts’ Foundations of Reading Test (PreK-6) was designed to assess a candidates’ knowledge of reading and language arts for initial licensure to teach early childhood, elementary, and moderate disabilities. Developed by National Evaluation Systems, the test is comprised of four subtopics:

1. Foundations of Reading Development – 43-45 multiple choice items – 35%

- 0001 – Understand phonological and phonemic awareness
- 0002 – Understand concepts of print and the alphabetic principle
- 0003 – Understand the role of phonics in promoting reading development
- 0004 – Understand word analysis skills and strategies
- 2. Development of Reading Comprehension – 33-35 multiple choice items – 27%
  - 0005 – Understand vocabulary development
  - 0006 – Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to imaginative/literary texts
  - 0007 – Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to informational/expository texts
- 3. Reading Assessment and Instruction – 21-23 multiple choice items – 18%
  - 0008 – Understand formal and informal methods for assessing reading development
  - 0009 – Understand multiple approaches to reading instruction
- 4. Integration of Knowledge and Understanding – 2 open-response items – 20%
  - 0010 – Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to one or more of the following: foundations of reading development; development of reading comprehension; reading assessment and instruction.

We were not able to review an actual test; our comments on the Foundations of Reading test are based on the test information booklet distributed by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The booklet includes introductory sections (pages 1-30) advising candidates on both how to prepare for taking licensure tests and how to take the tests. Ms. Sedita, who teaches study skills as well as reading, found that this section of the booklet provided useful and clear guidance for candidates in terms of offering suggestions for how to prepare for the test.

The section that was specific to the Foundations of Reading test (pages 31-50) includes an overview of the test, a description of test objectives, sample test items, and an answer key to the multiple choice sections and sample responses for the open-response items. Our analysis of the test is concentrated on this part of the booklet.

Generally speaking, Ms. Sedita found the Massachusetts test to cover the five components of scientifically-based reading research adequately, with a few weak spots that will be noted below. The test objectives provide a detailed paragraph of examples to help candidates understand what is expected of them for each of the content areas and categories listed above. Here is what appears under Section 0001, “Understand phonological and phonemic awareness,” in the Foundations of Reading Development section:

For example: the distinction between phonological awareness (i.e., the awareness that oral language is composed of small units, such as spoken words and syllables) and phonemic awareness (i.e., a specific type of phonological awareness involving the ability to distinguish the separate phonemes in a spoken word); the role of phonological awareness and phonemic awareness in reading development; the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics skills; levels of phonological and phonemic awareness skills (e.g., rhyming, segmenting, blending, deleting, substituting); strategies (e.g., explicit, implicit) to promote phonological and phonemic awareness (e.g., distinguishing spoken words, syllables, onsets/rimes, phonemes); and the role of phonological processing in the reading development of individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers. (p. 35)

I have quoted this in full to illustrate the explicit nature of this description and how closely it aligns with the findings of SBRR. Ms. Sedita found the test objectives, in general, to be excellent and to provide clear guidance to the topics in reading instruction on which a candidate will be tested. Among our comments on the test objectives and sample questions are the following:

- Category 0005 (Understand vocabulary development) is excellent in its precision and detail.
- Categories 0006 (Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to imaginative/literary texts) and 0007 (Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to informational/expository texts) both deal with comprehension. They are specific and reveal the necessary strategies for comprehending different types of text.
- There is nothing about fluency in the objectives, although it could be easily added to category 0003 (Understand the role of phonics in promoting reading development) and category 0008 (Understand formal and informal methods for assessing reading development). It is mentioned once, in category 0007 (“the role of oral reading fluency in facilitating comprehension of informational/expository texts”). The question is whether the topic of fluency is shortchanged in the actual test, which we were not able to review.
- While each of the five components of scientifically-based reading research are present in the test objectives, there is no statement to help you understand the framework of the components.
- The stages of reading development, another important aspect to SBRR, are not clearly presented in the material we reviewed.
- Category 0009 (Understand multiple approaches to reading instruction) was the most problematic in terms of SBRR because it suggests that teachers be knowledgeable about all “theories” for teaching reading, including those that may not be supported by research.
- The assessment subtopic 0008 (Understand formal and informal methods for assessing reading development) includes a number of specific strategies, but does not mention progress monitoring (curriculum-based measurement, for example), an element included in SBRR. Ms. Sedita believes that the Reading First project would expect to see this component in assessment.
- Some of the strategies included in the assessment subtopic – such as running records and miscue analysis – are not supported by research at this time.
- The use of grouping/flexible grouping is not included in assessment subtopic.
- Although there were only ten sample multiple-choice items provided with the study guide, they were aligned with the knowledge and skills identified by SBRR.

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.

## **G. COMMENTS ON CALIFORNIA’S READING INSTRUCTION COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT (RICA)**

The Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) was developed in response to the California Educational Code Section 44283 which specified that the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) “develop, adopt, and administer a reading instruction competence assessment . . . to measure an individual’s knowledge, skill, and ability relative to effective reading instruction.”

The National Evaluation Systems, under contract to CCTC, developed the RICA test to ensure that candidates for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credentials (elementary teachers) and the Education Specialist Instruction Credentials (special ed) had the knowledge and skills to provide excellent reading instruction to students. The RICA Written Examination is in two sections, one multiple-choice and one constructed-response. The multiple-choice section of RICA includes 70 multiple-choice questions, organized into the following four domains:

- Domain I: Planning and Organizing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment – 20%
  1. Conducting ongoing assessment of reading development
  2. Planning, organizing, and managing reading instruction
- Domain II: Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading – 30%
  3. Phonemic awareness
  4. Concepts about print
  5. Systematic, explicit phonics and other word identification strategies
  6. Spelling instruction
- Domain III: Developing Reading Comprehension and Promoting Independent Reading – 30%
  7. Reading comprehension
  8. Literary response and analysis
  9. Content-area literacy
  10. Student independent reading
- Domain IV: Supporting Reading Through Oral and Written Language Development – 20%
  11. Relationships among reading, writing, and oral language
  12. Vocabulary development
  13. Structure of the English language

The constructed-response section of the RICA requires the candidate to write essays, as described below:

- Focused Educational Problems and Instructional Tasks (4 essays, each covering one domain)
- Case Study (1 essay)

Although we were not able to review a current RICA test, we did examine the RICA Test Information and Sample Written Examination Form, which includes Test Information (pages 1-4), Content Specifications (pages 5-14), a full Sample Written Examination Form (pages 15-72), an answer key (pages 73-74), and a Sample Constructed-Response Assignment Responses and Evaluations (pages 75-82).

Based on our review, we determine that the RICA test is thorough, specific, and fully aligned with the five components of reading instruction as defined by scientifically-based reading research. The test specifications are organized so that each domain contains two or more content areas. Each content area is defined and two or more competencies are listed for each content area. The competencies include examples to help candidates understand the knowledge and abilities that will be expected of them. To illustrate the explicit nature of the RICA test competencies, I include Content Area 3 and its three competencies as listed in Domain II: Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DOMAIN II: DEVELOPING PHONOLOGICAL AND OTHER LINGUISTIC PROCESSES RELATED TO READING</b></p> <p>CONTENT AREA 3: Phonemic Awareness</p> <p>Phonemic awareness is the conscious awareness that words are made up of individual speech sounds (phonemes), and it is strongly related to reading achievement. To become effective readers, students must be able to perceive and produce the specific sounds of the English language and understand how the sound system works. Therefore, teachers must understand how and why phonemic awareness skills develop both before students are reading and as they are learning to read. Teachers need to know how to plan implicit and systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and how to choose a variety of materials and activities that provide clear examples for the identification, comparison, blending, substitution, deletion, and segmentation of sounds. Teachers need to analyze students' spoken language development in order to match instruction with the students' needs.</p> <p>3.1 <b>Assessing phonemic awareness.</b> The beginning teacher knows how to assess students' auditory awareness, discrimination of sounds, and spoken language for the purpose of planning instruction in phonemic awareness that meets the students' needs.</p> <p>3.2 <b>The role of phonemic awareness.</b> The beginning teacher knows ways in which phonemic awareness is related to reading achievement both before students are reading and as they are learning to read. The teacher understands the instructional progression for helping students acquire phonemic awareness skills (i.e., words, syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes).</p> <p>3.3 <b>Developing phonemic awareness.</b> The beginning teacher is able to promote students' understanding that words are made up of sounds. The teacher knows how to achieve this goal by delivering appropriate, motivating instruction, both implicitly and explicitly, in auditory awareness and discrimination of sounds, phoneme awareness (e.g., teaching students how to rhyme, blend, substitute, segment, and delete sounds in words), and word awareness (i.e., recognition of word boundaries). The teacher is able to select materials and activities for teaching phonemic awareness skills that are appropriate for students at different stages of reading development.</p>
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Although Ms. Sedita noted that this Content Area 3, Phonemic Awareness, mixes up the terminology a bit (phonological awareness versus phonemic awareness), we noted that the sample items indicate that teachers need to know the difference between the two. This Domain 2 includes three other content areas and items in this domain make up 30% of the test.

Other comments related to the RICA test specifications and items include:

- The content specifications are clear enough to be used to develop a college course on reading instruction.
- RICA includes Competency 5.3, “Developing Fluency,” and Competency 7.3, “Fluency and other factors affecting comprehension,” but there is no separate section on fluency, as that would better represent the importance given to competency as one of the five components identified by SBRR. The sample test items that relate to fluency, however, are closely aligned to the findings of SBRR.
- The general information about the test (pages 1-4 in the booklet) spell out what the candidate can expect in a clear and precise way.
- Content Area 5, “Systematic, Explicit Phonics and Other Word Identification Strategies,” provides a very useful scope and sequence for teaching in a manner that “builds from basic elements to more complex patterns.” This approach is in sync with the findings of SBRR.
- Content Area 6, “Spelling Instruction,” is thorough, and its description and competencies come right out of the research.
- Content Area 9, “Content Area Literacy,” includes an expectation for teachers to know how to teach study skills.
- Content Area 12, “Vocabulary Development,” is explicit and clear, closely aligned to the findings of SBRR and an excellent guide to instruction.
- Content Area 13, “Structure of the English Language,” is a thorough overview of what teachers need to know and why this knowledge will improve their reading instruction.
- The sample test items are excellent in terms of the findings of SBRR. A candidate must know the reading research in order to answer these questions correctly. They are worded essentially without any bias, and the test gets right to what the research says.

#### **H. COMMENTS ON THE VIRGINIA READING ASSESSMENT (VRA)**

In 2001, the Virginia General Assembly asked the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to determine how well Virginia teachers were able to teach systematic, explicit phonics. In learning the answer to that question, the department confirmed a need in Virginia for consistent instruction in reading for both teacher candidates and for teachers already in the classroom. The Board of Education adopted the Resolution to Enhance the Teaching of Reading in Virginia in 2003, and one goal of the plan was to develop a reading assessment aligned with the English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools (SOL) and the National Reading Panel’s five key components of effective reading instruction—phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Working with the National Evaluation Systems, Virginia developed the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), a licensure test required for all candidates

seeking certification in Early/Primary PreK-3, Elementary Education preK-6, Special Education, and Reading Specialist.

The Virginia Reading Assessment consists of 90 multiple-choice items and four constructed-response items. Both multiple-choice and constructed-response items are organized in four domains:

Domain I – Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching – 17-19 items – 20%

Domain II – Oral Language and Oral Communication – 17-19 items – 20%

Domain III – Reading Development – 35-37 items – 40%

Domain IV – Writing and Research – 17-19 items – 20%

There is a constructed-response item required for each domain.

The *Study Guide* for the Virginia Reading Assessment offers candidates the general organization of the test into domains and a few sample test items (12 multiple-choice and a sample constructed-response). A candidate can find the test specifications in another document, The *VRA Test Blueprint*. Like the RICA on which the VRA was modeled, the VRA test specifications offer specific content areas and competencies for each domain. As seen above, the domain names themselves are very general and not obviously linked to scientifically-based reading research. There is no broad definition for the content areas (as there is with the RICA), and the bulleted competencies offer some explicit information but with less detail than appears in RICA. For comparison's sake, below is information from the VRA on phonological awareness:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DOMAIN II: ORAL LANGUAGE AND ORAL COMMUNICATION</b></p> <p>CONTENT AREA 0004: Understand the development of phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate knowledge of phonological awareness (i.e., the awareness that oral language is comprised of smaller units as spoken sounds, syllables, words, and sentences) and effective instructional strategies for promoting students' phonological association skills (e.g., helping students distinguish the syllables within a spoken word).</li><li>• Demonstrate knowledge of phonemic awareness (i.e., a specific type of phonological awareness involving the ability to distinguish the individual sounds within a spoken word) and the role of phonemic awareness in reading development.</li><li>• Identify the types of phonemic awareness skills (e.g., counting phonemes in a spoken word, segmenting a spoken word into phonemes, blending phonemes to form a spoken word, deleting or substituting phonemes to modify spoken syllables or words).</li><li>• Demonstrate knowledge of instructional strategies (e.g., oral rhyming activities, games involving spoken words that have the same beginning and ending sounds) to promote development of phonemic awareness skills by helping students hear, say, and manipulate phonemes in spoken words containing one or more syllables.</li></ul>
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Although the content areas do not include the comprehensive and thoughtful descriptions that appear in the RICA, they do cover the components of scientifically based reading research. Here is the list of content areas:

- 0001 – Understand the characteristics and uses of assessment and screening measures for evaluating students’ language proficiency and reading skills.
- 0002 – Understand the use of assessment data to plan reading instruction.
- 0003 – Understand the development of oral language and oral communication skills.
- 0004 – Understand the development of phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness.
- 0005 – Understand how to promote students’ understanding of concepts of print and basic phonetic principles.
- 0006 – Understand explicit, systematic phonics instruction.
- 0007 – Understand word-analysis skills and vocabulary development.
- 0008 – Understand the development of reading fluency and reading comprehension.
- 0009 – Understand reading comprehension strategies for fiction and poetry.
- 0010 – Understand reading comprehension strategies for nonfiction.
- 0011 – Understand writing skills and processes.
- 0012 – Understand how to promote students’ knowledge of correct spelling, usage, and other writing mechanics.
- 0013 – Understand writing and reading as tools for inquiry and research.

The sample items in the VRA *Study Guide* are aligned with scientifically-based reading research, and candidates passing the licensure test (cut scores will be imposed July 1, 2006) will demonstrate their knowledge of effective reading instruction as defined by SBRR.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NCATE’S SPECIALTY STANDARDS**

Through this project, I have learned more about the central elements of effective reading instruction as defined by the analyses of scientifically-based reading research and reported by the National Academy of Sciences (1998) and the National Reading Panel (2000), among others. Good reading skills are the necessary foundation for every individual to enjoy a productive and satisfying life, and it is the responsibility of educators to ensure that every individual learns to read. That being the case, I believe that we should use whatever levers are at our disposal to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful reading teachers. States have an obligation through their education standards, requirements for teacher preparation programs, and licensure tests to make sure that every teacher is highly qualified in reading instruction. NCATE has a unique opportunity to guide and influence the quality of teacher preparation programs in the United States by its standards and program review process. At NCATE’s invitation, I have offered some recommendations for changes to the Elementary Education Standards and made some observations on NCATE SPA standards in English language arts and Reading.

The Elementary Education Standards have five major sections – Development, Learning, and Motivation; Curriculum; Instruction; Assessment; and Professionalism. I have made recommendations for changes to the second, third, and fourth of these sections. NCATE has

been careful to use generic language in its elementary standards for instruction, so that teacher candidates and teacher education programs can easily adapt the principles to each content area for which elementary teachers are responsible. However, teaching reading is the priority of elementary education. If children do not learn good reading skills during these educational years, their futures are jeopardized. I am, therefore, suggesting an explicit standard on reading content pedagogy to the “Instruction” section of the standards.

My comments and recommendations appear in this section following each of the excerpts from NCATE standards that have been inserted into the text.

## **A. THE NCATE PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION (1999 edition, revised 2003)**

The following text is excerpted from the NCATE elementary education standards’ statement on curriculum.

### CURRICULUM

STANDARD 2.1. English language arts--Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence in use of the English language arts and they know, understand, and use concepts from reading, language and child development, to teach reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening, and thinking skills and to help students successfully apply their developing skills to many different situations, materials, and ideas; ...

What does “concepts from reading, language, and child development” mean? The standard needs to include an explicit statement that elementary teachers must know about the structure of the English language and that their reading instruction must be based on what research demonstrates as the most effective way to teach children to read.

The following quote is excerpted from the Curriculum supporting explanation for English Language Arts.

#### *Supporting explanation*

Candidates are adept at teaching the fundamentals of the English Language Arts. They model effective use of English, including its syntax, lexicon, history, varieties, literature, and oral and written composing processes. Candidates understand how elementary children develop and learn to read, write, speak, view, and listen effectively. They use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and result in their students becoming competent, effective users of language.

They teach students to read competently and encourage students' enjoyment of reading through multiple instructional strategies, technologies, and a variety of language activities. Candidates teach children to read with a balanced instructional program that includes an emphasis on use of letter/sound relationships (phonics), context (semantic and syntactic), and text that has meaning for students. In addition, candidates teach students a variety of strategies to monitor their own reading comprehension. They are also familiar with, able to use, and recommend to students many reading materials based on different topics, themes, and a variety of situations and consisting of different types, including stories, poems, biography, non-fiction, many categories of literature written for children, and texts from various subject areas. As a part of teaching students

*REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION*

how to read, candidates encourage elementary students' understanding of their individual responses to what they read and sharing those responses. They help students think critically about what they read.

The paragraph immediately above is almost devoid of the research-based components for effective reading instruction. "Balanced instructional program" is waffle-language. Consider the Virginia Standards of Learning, reprinted below, to see how well standards for reading instruction can be explicitly stated.

<b>Virginia Standards of Learning: English/Language Arts</b>
<p><b>READING GRADE LEVEL K:</b> Students will learn the concepts of print, basic phonetic principles, comprehension of stories, and letter identification skills through systematic, direct instruction, individual and small group activities, and time spent exploring and reading books and other print material.</p>
<p><b>READING GRADE LEVEL 1:</b> Having developed a concept of word and letter-sound correspondence, students will now concentrate on learning and integrating basic phonetic principles, decoding words in isolation, using meaning clues, and employing language and sentence structure to read and substantially increase their sight-word vocabulary.</p>
<p><b>READING GRADE LEVEL 2:</b> To decipher text, they will use what they have learned about phonemes, decoding, rhyming words, onsets and rimes, contextual clues, and the structure of sentences. Silent and independent reading will increase, with some parts of books read aloud for emphasis, clarification, or pleasure. When they read independently, students will understand and enjoy books that are considerably longer and more complex in plot, syntax, and structure. Students will read and reread to build fluency, which provides the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. ... Students will learn and apply the comprehension strategies of identifying main ideas, making and confirming predictions, and formulating questions about what they are learning across the curricula.</p>
<p><b>READING GRADE LEVEL 3:</b> Students will make the transition from a focus on learning how to read to an emphasis on reading to learn and reading for enjoyment. An emphasis will be placed on learning about words, reading age-appropriate text with fluency and expression, and learning comprehension strategies. They will build reading comprehension through reading a variety of literature, to include but not be limited to narrative fiction, such as folktales, and nonfiction materials, such as biographies and autobiographies. Students will continue to develop strategic reading skills, such as word analysis and construction of meaning from text.</p>

The following excerpt continues from the elementary education standards' supporting explanation.

Candidates provide both instruction in and opportunities for elementary students to develop effective writing and speaking skills so that they can communicate their knowledge, ideas, understanding, insights, feelings, and experiences to other students and to parents, teachers, and other adults. They provide their students with many different writing and speaking experiences in order to teach the skills of writing and speaking. They enable students to explore the uses of different types of writing and speaking with different audiences and in different situations. Candidates help students develop their capacities to listen so that they understand, consider, respond to, and discuss spoken material, including non-fiction, stories, and poems.

Candidates know what preconceptions, error patterns, and misconceptions they may expect to find in students' understanding of how language functions in communication, and they are able to help students correct their misunderstandings of the development and uses of language. Candidates use formative and

summative assessment to determine the level of students' competence in their understanding of and use of language. They use the results of such assessment to plan further instruction.

There is nothing in this standard about vocabulary development, spelling instruction, fluency, or comprehension – all are crucial for both reading and writing. The standard needs to say explicitly that teachers are adept at teaching reading when they use scientifically-based reading strategies: phonemic awareness, phonics instruction – (word study instruction that includes decoding [phonics], multisyllabic word recognition, structural analysis, and irregular word recognition [partially decodable words]), – fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. At present, this standard contains one phrase – “use of letter/sound relationships (phonics)” – that refers to SBRR. It does not provide the expectation that teacher preparation programs demonstrate that they have a well-designed sequence of courses, based solidly in the research, to teach candidates how to teach children to read. It does not mention to teacher education faculty or elementary teacher candidates that there is a scientifically-based body of knowledge about reading instruction that must be mastered if one hopes to be an effective elementary teacher.

Turning to the “instruction” component of the elementary education standards, the following quote is the entire text of the standards.

#### INSTRUCTION

- 3.a. Integrating and applying knowledge for instruction—Candidates plan and implement instruction based on knowledge of students, learning theory, subject matter, curricular goals, and community;
- 3.b. Adaptation to diverse students--Candidates understand how elementary students differ in their development and approaches to learning, and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students;
- 3.c. Development of critical thinking, problem solving, performance skills--Candidates understand and use a variety of teaching strategies that encourage elementary students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills;
- 3.d. Active engagement in learning--Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior among students at the K-6 level to foster active engagement in learning, self motivation, and positive social interaction and to create supportive learning environments;
- 3.e. Communication to foster collaboration—Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the elementary classroom.

Reading should be explicitly featured in the section on instruction because it is imperative that all children learn to read in early elementary grades (K-3) and then continue to strengthen their reading and comprehension skills (K-6). Reading instruction should be the priority in grades K-3, and the NCATE standard should reflect this emphasis.

An additional standard could be added that states: “Teaching reading is an instructional priority – Candidates use explicit and systematic strategies to teach students phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary knowledge, spelling, reading fluency, and how to comprehend both literary and informational texts.”

And, finally, here is the elementary education standard on assessment.

*REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION*

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment for instruction--Candidates know, understand, and use formal and informal assessment strategies to plan, evaluate and strengthen instruction that will promote continuous intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of each elementary student.

It would be useful if the Assessment section included a statement that explicitly mentioned the need to monitor each student's progress in learning. This notion may be implied above by the phrase "informal assessment strategies," but there is little evidence that programs or candidates will incorporate strategies for progress monitoring (or "curriculum-based measurement") if it isn't included directly in the expectations.

The elementary education standards include general statements on development, learning and motivation, and also on professionalism that probably do not need specific references to teaching reading.

## **B. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING SPECIALTY STANDARDS**

A word of caution: It is worth considering how NCATE can more effectively incorporate the components of scientifically-based reading research into the SPA standards for both English Language Arts and Reading. At the present time, neither set of standards provides explicit guidance to a teacher education program for developing a sequenced course of study, based on the research, that will prepare elementary teachers in reading. It is also likely that reviewers who serve on the boards of examiners judging programs for accreditation do not have the commitment to scientifically-based reading research that would result in their willingness or ability to use the research as a guide for program evaluation.

The English Language Arts Standards (developed by NCTE) currently state:

Candidates demonstrate their knowledge of reading processes. As a result candidates:

- 1.3 Integrate into their teaching continuous use of carefully designed learning experiences that encourage students to demonstrate their ability to read and respond to a range of texts of varying complexity and difficulty;
- 1.4 Use a wide range of approaches for helping students to draw upon their past experiences, sociocultural backgrounds, interests, capabilities, and understandings to make meaning of texts;
- 1.5 Integrate into students' learning experiences a wide variety of strategies to interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts and assess the effectiveness of such strategies in promoting student learning.

The Reading Education Standards (created by IRA) list five areas:

1. Foundational Knowledge
2. Instructional Strategies and Curricular Materials
3. Assessment, Diagnosis and Evaluation
4. Creating a Literate Environment
5. Professional Development

Standard 1.4, under Foundational Knowledge, expects candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the major components of scientifically based reading research by being able to explain and articulate the elements.

The standards under Instructional Strategies and Curricular Materials offer no explicit reference to effective practices identified by the research. Instead, the standards suggest that candidates exhibit a “wide range of approaches” to teaching reading and use a “wide range of materials.”

Even if NCATE’s Elementary Education Standards were strengthened to reflect scientifically-based reading research, it is more likely that teacher education programs would make the changes they need to ensure that all elementary teachers are trained in effective reading instruction if NCATE is also willing to make significant changes to these related SPA standards.

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### **Reading Licensure Tests**

The PRAXIS Series. *Test at a Glance:*

*Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (0011)

*Elementary Education: Content Knowledge* (0014)

*Introduction to the Teaching of Reading* (0200)

*Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary* (0201)

*Middle School English Language Arts* (0049)

Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. <http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS>

Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure. Test Information Booklet: *90 Foundations of Reading (PreK-6)*. MA-SG-FLD090-03. Massachusetts Department of Education.

Reading Instruction Competence Assessments: *Test Information and Sample Written Examination Form* (2002). Amherst, MA: National Evaluation Systems, Inc.

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## APPENDIX A

### SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED READING RESEARCH (SBRR) DEFINED

Public Law 107-110, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001  
Title I; Part B--Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants  
Subpart 1 – Reading First;  
Section 1208. Definitions.  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg4.html#sec1208>

- “The term scientifically-based reading research means research that –
- (A) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and
  - (B) research that –
    - (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
    - (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypothesis and justify the general conclusions drawn;
    - (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
    - (iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.”

**APPENDIX B**

**EARLY ELEMENTARY READING/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS  
IN EIGHT STATES AND HOW THEY ALIGN TO THE COMPONENTS OF  
EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION IDENTIFIED BY SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED READING RESEARCH**

<b>STATE</b>	<b>READING/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS, K-4</b>	<b>Is Standard aligned with SBRR?</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	<p><b>Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts Addendum: Reading</b>, Bulletin 1999, No. 17</p> <p><u>K</u> = phonemic awareness, letter/sound association, letter knowledge, word recognition and use, comprehension</p> <p><u>1</u> = phonemic awareness, letter/sound association, vocabulary skills, comprehension, fluency</p> <p><u>2</u> = phonological skills, phonetic strategies, vocabulary skills, comprehension, fluency</p> <p><u>3</u> = phonetic analysis, vocabulary knowledge, comprehension, fluency</p>	<p align="center"><b>YES:</b></p> <p align="center"><i>The five components of SBRR are incorporated into the standard but are not defined explicitly (as in Virginia).</i></p>
<b>Arkansas</b>	<p><b>K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Framework</b></p> <p><u>Standard 8: Foundations of Reading</u> – Students shall apply concepts of print, acquire knowledge of spoken words and understand the relationship of speech to print as they develop a foundation for literacy.</p> <p><u>Standard 9: Comprehension</u> – Students shall apply a variety of strategies to read and comprehend printed material.</p> <p><u>Standard 10: Variety of Text</u> – Students shall read, examine, and respond to a wide range of texts for a variety of purposes.</p> <p><u>Standard 11: Vocabulary, Word Study, and Fluency</u> – Students shall acquire and apply skills in vocabulary development and word analysis to be able to read fluently.</p>	<p align="center"><b>NO:</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Standard 8 includes “developing phonological awareness” for grades K-1, otherwise there is no mention of explicit ways to learn how to read.</i></p>
<b>California</b>	<p><b>English Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools</b></p> <p>READING: Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development</p> <p><u>K</u> = Students know about letters, words and sounds. They apply this knowledge to read simple sentences.</p> <p><u>1, 2, &amp; 3</u> = Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.</p> <p>READING: Comprehension</p> <p>READING: Literary Response and Analysis,</p> <p><b>Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation Programs (2001)</b></p> <p><u>Program Standard 7-A:</u> Multiple Subject Reading, Writing, and Related Language Instruction in English</p>	<p align="center"><b>YES:</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Both academic content standards for K-3 students and teacher preparation program standards specifically include elements of SBRR in expectations for learning and teaching how to read.</i></p>

	<p>The program provides candidates with systematic and explicit instruction in teaching basic reading skills, including comprehension strategies, for all students, including students with varied reading levels and language backgrounds. (7-A, introduction)</p> <p>For each candidate, the study of reading and language arts methods includes instruction and experience in teaching organized, systematic, explicit skills that promote fluent reading and writing, including phonemic awareness; direct, systematic, explicit phonics; and decoding skills, including spelling patterns, sound/symbol codes (orthography), and extensive practice in reading and writing. (7A-d)</p> <p>For each candidate, the study of reading and language arts includes the phonological/morphological structure of the English language, and methodologically sound research on how children learn to read, including English language learners, students with reading difficulties, and students who are proficient readers. (7A-f)</p>	
<b>Florida</b>	<p><b>Language Arts PreK-2</b>  <u>Standard 1:</u> The student uses the reading process effectively.  <u>Standard 2:</u> The student constructs meaning from a wide range of texts.</p>	<p><b>NO:</b>  <i>No mention of learning how to read.</i></p>
<b>Georgia</b>	<p><b>Quality Core Curriculum: Language Arts Written Communication (Reading/Writing)</b>  <u>K</u> = 20 “topics” include 5 explicit SBRR concepts  <u>1</u> = 21 “topics” include 10 explicit SBRR concepts  <u>2</u> = 24 “topics” include 9 explicit SBRR concepts  <u>3</u> = 25 “topics” include 9 explicit SBRR concepts</p>	<p><b>MAYBE:</b>  <i>Some explicit SBRR concepts are listed in the required “topics”, but the emphasis in the Lesson Plan section is not on explicit SBRR instruction.</i></p>
<b>Louisiana</b>	<p><b>Louisiana English Language Arts Content Standards</b>  <u>Standard One:</u> Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.</p> <p><i>Seven benchmarks for K-4 include one that reads: “Gaining meaning from print and building vocabulary using a full range of strategies (i.e., self-monitoring and correcting, searching, cross-checking), evidenced by reading behaviors while using phonemic awareness, phonics, sentence structure, meaning.”</i></p>	<p><b>NO:</b>  <i>Unclear mention of learning how to read.</i></p>
<b>Maryland</b>	<p><b>Voluntary State Curriculum – Reading/English Language Arts, Grades preK-3</b>  Topics under Standard 1.0, General Reading Process, include SBRR areas:  Phonemic Awareness  Phonics  Fluency  Vocabulary  General Reading Comprehension (both information and literary texts)</p>	<p><b>YES:</b>  <i>For each SBRR component in the Voluntary State Curriculum (produced in 2004), Maryland offers specific indicators and objectives that are directly linked to reading research.</i></p>

*REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION*

<b>Mississippi</b>	<b>Mississippi Language Arts Framework</b> Mississippi’s Balanced Approach to a Comprehensive Reading Program: instruction takes place in a language-enriched environment instruction incorporates decoding systems of semantic cues (meaning), syntactic cues (language structure), and graphophonic cues (sound/symbol correspondence) instruction utilizes prior knowledge and applies comprehension to story elements, author’s purpose, and/or reading for information instruction based on on-going diagnosis and prescriptive implementation of intervention strategies	<b>NO:</b> <i>Framework states that “use of phonics is presented as one of the choices teachers may make....” There is very little about explicit ways to learn how to read.</i>
<b>Missouri</b>	<b>Show-Me Standards: Communication Arts</b> speaking, writing, standard English (including grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) reading and evaluating fiction, poetry and drama reading and evaluating nonfiction works and materials writing formally and informally comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas identifying and evaluating relationships between language and culture	<b>NO:</b> <i>No mention of learning how to read.</i>
<b>New York</b>	<b>Learning Standards for English Language Arts</b> <u>Standard 1:</u> Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding. <u>Standard 2:</u> Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression. <u>Standard 3:</u> Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation. <u>Standard 4:</u> Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.	<b>NO:</b> <i>No mention of learning how to read.</i>
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>NC Course of Study: Language Arts</b> Grade Level Recommended Content for Certification K-2: Phonemic awareness Phonics Fluency Vocabulary Text comprehension Balanced literacy techniques Reading/writing connections	<b>MAYBE:</b> <i>The recommended content for certification K-2 (see left) lists SBRR components; but the text for the Course of Study is so unclear it is hard to know how well SBRR has penetrated the standards.</i>

<b>Oklahoma</b>	<p><b>Priority Academic Student Skills: Language Arts</b>  The revised reading standards in the PASS reflect current research-based information on effective, balanced reading practices and are organized in the following related strands (from SBRR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Print awareness</li> <li>Phonological/Phonemic awareness</li> <li>Phonics/Decoding</li> <li>Vocabulary</li> <li>Fluency</li> <li>Comprehension/Critical literacy</li> </ul>	<p><b>YES:</b>  <i>The five components of SBRR are incorporated into the standard but are not defined explicitly (as in Virginia).</i></p>
<b>South Dakota</b>	<p><b>South Dakota Reading Content Standards</b> (Same indicators grades K-3).  <u>Indicator 1:</u> Students are able to apply various reading strategies to comprehend and interpret text.  <u>Indicator 2:</u> Students are able to evaluate text structures, literary elements, and literary devices within various genres to develop interpretations and form responses.  <u>Indicator 3:</u> Students are able to interpret and respond to diverse works from various cultures and time periods.  <u>Indicator 4:</u> Students are able to retrieve, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate a variety of informational texts.</p>	<p><b>NO:</b>  <i>Although a few SBRR reading skills are included (such as letter/sound recognition), the emphasis is on gaining comprehension through contextual cues.</i></p>
<b>Tennessee</b>	<p><b>Content Standard: 1.0:</b> The student will develop the reading and listening skills necessary for word recognition, comprehension, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and appreciation of print and non-print text.  <b>Learning Expectations</b> for the reading standard include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.01 Develop oral language.</li> <li>1.02 Develop listening skills.</li> <li>1.03 Demonstrate knowledge of concepts of print.</li> <li>1.04 Develop and maintain phonemic awareness.</li> <li>1.05 Develop and use decoding strategies to read unfamiliar words.</li> <li>1.06 Read to develop fluency, expression, accuracy and confidence.</li> <li>1.07 Develop and extend reading vocabulary.</li> <li>1.08 Develop and use pre-reading strategies.</li> <li>1.09 Use active comprehension strategies to derive meaning while reading and check for understanding after reading.</li> <li>1.10 Introduce informational skills to facilitate learning.</li> <li>1.11 Develop skills to facilitate reading to learn in a variety of content areas.</li> <li>1.12 Read independently for a variety of purposes.</li> <li>1.13 Experience various literary genres.</li> <li>1.14 Develop and maintain a motivation to read.</li> </ul>	<p><b>YES:</b>  <i>The standard for reading incorporates the five components of SBRR in its learning expectations and the evidence students need to demonstrate. The state issued the Report of the Tennessee Reading Panel in April 2005 with specific expectations for teacher education programs.</i></p>

*REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION*

<p><b>Virginia</b></p>	<p><b>Virginia Standards of Learning: English/Language Arts</b>  <u>READING GRADE LEVEL K:</u> Students will learn the concepts of print, basic phonetic principles, comprehension of stories, and letter identification skills through systematic, direct instruction, individual and small group activities, and time spent exploring and reading books and other print material.  <u>READING GRADE LEVEL 1:</u> Having developed a concept of word and letter-sound correspondence, students will now concentrate on learning and integrating basic phonetic principles, decoding words in isolation, using meaning clues, and employing language and sentence structure to read and substantially increase their sight-word vocabulary.  <u>READING GRADE LEVEL 2:</u> To decipher text, they will use what they have learned about phonemes, decoding, rhyming words, onsets and rimes, contextual clues, and the structure of sentences. Silent and independent reading will increase, with some parts of books read aloud for emphasis, clarification, or pleasure. When they read independently, students will understand and enjoy books that are considerably longer and more complex in plot, syntax, and structure. Students will read and reread to build fluency, which provides the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. ... Students will learn and apply the comprehension strategies of identifying main ideas, making and confirming predictions, and formulating questions about what they are learning across the curricula.  <u>READING GRADE LEVEL 3:</u> Students will make the transition from a focus on learning how to read to an emphasis on reading to learn and reading for enjoyment. An emphasis will be placed on learning about words, reading age-appropriate text with fluency and expression, and learning comprehension strategies. They will build reading comprehension through reading a variety of literature, to include but not be limited to narrative fiction, such as folktales, and nonfiction materials, such as biographies and autobiographies. Students will continue to develop strategic reading skills, such as word analysis and construction of meaning from text.</p>	<p><b>YES</b>  <i>Explicit and clear description of the SBRR concepts each grade level is expected to master.</i></p>
<p><b>West Virginia</b></p>	<p><b>Reading and English Language Arts – Policy 2520.1</b>  <u>Standard 1 Reading:</u> Students will use skills to read for literacy experiences, read to inform and read to perform a task by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying and use the dimensions of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, background knowledge/vocabulary, high frequency words/fluency, comprehension, writing and motivation to read); and</li> <li>• employing a wide variety of literature in developing independent readers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>YES:</b>  <i>The five components of SBRR are incorporated into the standard but are not defined explicitly (as in Virginia).</i></p>

## APPENDIX C

### LICENSURE TESTS AND OTHER READING REQUIREMENTS IN RFTEN STATES

#### ALABAMA

- Dr. Jayne A. Meyer, Director of Teacher Education & Certification, 334-242-9560 [teached@alsde.edu](mailto:teached@alsde.edu)
- Alabama Prospective Teacher Testing Program (APTTP), 334-242-9935 [apttp@alsde.edu](mailto:apttp@alsde.edu)
- Dr. Katherine Mitchell, Assistant State Superintendent of Education for Reading, [kmitchell@alsde.edu](mailto:kmitchell@alsde.edu)

#### Licensure Tests Required

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge (for Highly Qualified status only)

PRAXIS 10049: Middle School English Language Arts (for Highly Qualified status only)

NASDTEC (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- Reading is listed in the Class A certificate, which says that one must earn a master's degree and hold a bachelor's level certification in the teaching field in which Class A certification is sought, with reading, among other categories, as an exception (p. A-3).
- For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Alabama requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading (Table B-5).

#### State Reading Initiatives

The State Board of Education adopted the Alabama Reading Initiative in 1997, as a result of the work of the Alabama Reading Panel. The initiative targets reading performance on three fronts: (1) beginning reading in K-1, (2) expansion of reading skills for students in grades 2-12 and (3) effective intervention for all grades. The initiative includes 16 demonstration sites at elementary schools. Teachers receive two weeks of intensive professional development to learn how to identify and correct students' specific reading problems. Each site has established a partnership with a college or university to provide ongoing support and training. The education department's *Report on the Review of Research* (1998) defines research-based, effective instruction and forms the basis for the initiative's teacher development programs.

The Alabama Reading First Initiative, K-3, is based on scientifically-based reading research. The **Alabama** Department of Education has established a task force to look at teacher preparation in reading. Faculty of teacher education programs participated in a summer 1998 reading academy for teachers and administrators at 16 elementary schools that are being funded as Literacy Demonstration Sites for the 1998-99 school year. Each of the 16 schools has a higher education institution as a partner. The department also plans to offer a one-week professional-development program in reading for 100 teacher-education faculty members in March 1999. ([www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu))

Resulting from the work of the Alabama Reading Panel, the State Board of Education adopted the Alabama Reading Initiative in 1997. The initiative targets reading performance on three fronts: (1) beginning reading in K-1, (2) expansion of reading skills for students in grades 2-12 and (3) effective intervention for all grades. The initiative includes 16 demonstration sites at elementary schools. Teachers receive two weeks of intensive professional development to learn how to identify and correct students' specific reading problems. Each site has established a partnership with a college or university to provide ongoing support and training. The education department's *Report on the Review of Research* (1998) defines research-based, effective instruction and forms the basis for the initiative's teacher development programs. ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

## ARKANSAS

- Donald Stewart, Deputy Commissioner,, 501-682-4205
- Janinne Riggs, Assistant Director of School Improvement and Professional Development, 501-682-4219 [jriggs@arkedu.k12.ar.us](mailto:jriggs@arkedu.k12.ar.us)

### Licensure Tests Required

PRAXIS II Principles of Learning and Teaching

NASDTEC (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Arkansas requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading. (Table B-5)

### State Reading Initiatives

In May 1998, the governor announced the Smart Start initiative for grades K-4 to increase reading and math achievement. The main component of the initiative is professional development training that emphasizes topics related to subject matter content, curriculum alignment with the frameworks, an analysis of assessment results, and use of various instructional techniques. The initiative also provides funding for additional reading specialists.

In 1990, the state began training teachers in Reading Recovery, an intensive one-on-one tutoring program for at-risk 1st graders. In addition, the state developed an Early Literacy Program for grades K-3 that includes small-group instruction, as well as up-to-date teacher training on reading practices and principles. ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

The Arkansas Reading First Literacy Institute was launched in 2003 and is closely aligned with scientifically-based reading research. (<http://arkedu.state.ar.us>)

## CALIFORNIA

California Commission on Teaching Credentials, 888-921-2682; [www.ctc.ca.gov](http://www.ctc.ca.gov)  
Sue Stickel, Deputy Superintendent in the Curriculum & Instruction Branch, (916) 319-0806

### **Licensure Tests Required**

RICA – Reading Instruction Competence Assessment

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

To obtain a preliminary teaching credential in California, a teacher must have a bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution, approved professional preparation program, which includes student teaching, the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), U.S. Constitution, teaching of reading, computers in education, and subject-matter competence by passage of the appropriate exam or completion of an approved subject matter program (p. A-15).

For the initial elementary teaching certificate, California requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading, and all candidates are required to demonstrate these teaching skills through the RICA assessment before they receive a preliminary credential (Table B-5).

### **State Reading Initiatives**

Requirements for Preliminary Credentials (issued for a maximum of five years)

Complete a B.A. or higher degree

Complete multiple-subject teacher preparation program

Pass CBEST

Satisfy Developing English Language Skills including the Reading Requirement by completing a comprehensive reading instruction course that includes the following:  
systematic study of phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding; literature, language, and comprehension; and diagnostic and early intervention techniques.

Pass RICA

Complete a course on the U.S. Constitution

Verify knowledge of the subject(s) to be taught.

([www.etc.ca.gov](http://www.etc.ca.gov))

A.B. 3482 (1995) created the Teacher Reading Instruction Development Program, requiring K-3 teachers to possess the knowledge and skills needed to teach students to read. Funds for this program are used primarily for professional development services. The bill also created the Comprehensive Reading Leadership Program, which encourages and provides funds for school districts to implement a comprehensive K-3 reading program that emphasizes basic and continued improvement of reading skills (CAL. EDUC. CODE sec. 44755-57; 53000-6; 60350-2). ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

A.B. 2A (1999), the Elementary School Intensive Reading Program, provides for up to 10% of 400 schools' K-4 students to receive extra instruction, including classes during the summer, between sessions and on Saturday or after school. In addition, the bill includes the following provisions:

- Public Involvement Reading Campaign to promote reading in public schools
- Governor's Reading Reward Program to distribute \$5,000 grants to K-8 schools whose students read the greatest number of books, as well as other criteria

- A teacher professional development program, the Governor’s Principal Leadership Institute, an administrator preparation program and the California Reading Professional Development Institutes, to be developed by the University of California system regents. A.B. 1178 (1995) required the Commission on Teaching Credentialing to develop, adopt and administer a reading instruction competence assessment to measure knowledge, skill and ability of first-time credential applicants relative to effective reading instruction (CAL. EDUC. CODE sec. 44283). ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

## FLORIDA

Florida Department of Education: 850-245-0505, [www.flboe.edu](http://www.flboe.edu)  
 Bureau of Teacher Certificates: 850-245-9796

### Licensure Tests Required

Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE): Florida General Knowledge test, Professional Education test, and Subject Area test

NASDTEC (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

Professional certification requires meeting professional preparation requirements, passing scores on FTCE examinations including Subject Area tests for each coverage or endorsement shown on the certificate. Reading Grades K-12 is an area in which a teacher may obtain an endorsement (A-38).

For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Florida requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading (Table B-5).

### State Reading Initiatives

Executive Order 01-260 (9/7/01) launched Just Read, Florida!, a Reading First initiative. ([www.justreadflorida.com](http://www.justreadflorida.com))

To add a Reading Endorsement to a teaching certificate, a teacher must master the following competencies and skills:

- Knowledge of the theories and underlying assumptions of literacy processes
- Knowledge of emergent literacy
- Knowledge of decoding and encoding
- Knowledge of comprehension
- Knowledge of content area literacy and learning
- Knowledge of literary genres, elements, and interpretation
- Knowledge of oral and silent engaged reading
- Knowledge of students’ attitudes toward reading
- Knowledge of diverse learners
- Knowledge of literacy assumptions
- Knowledge of print and nonprint media
- Knowledge of literate environments and contexts
- Knowledge of research
- Knowledge of literacy program supervision and administration

[www.firm.edu/doe/sas/ftce/ftce.comp.htm](http://www.firm.edu/doe/sas/ftce/ftce.comp.htm))

## GEORGIA

Department of Education, 404-657-7838; [www.doe.k12.ga.us](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us)

Georgia Professional Standards Board, 404-232-2500, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com)

Georgia Reading Consortium, University System of Georgia Board of Regents, 404-651-2516

### **Licensure Tests Required**

PRAXIS 10522: Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades K-6

PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts

PRAXIS 20201: Reading Across the Curriculum – Elementary (for Highly Qualified status only)

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

Any teacher certified in elementary grades (P-8), early childhood (P-5), English, and certain special education fields must complete acceptable college credit or its equivalent through a Georgia-approved local staff development program in the teaching of reading. Middle grades (4-8) must take a course in the teaching of reading and writing (A-41).

For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Georgia requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading (Table B-5).

### **State Reading Initiatives**

In 1997, the Georgia Professional Standards Review Commission, which recommends standards for teacher certification in the state, began looking at certification requirements in reading. A survey of the 34 teacher-education programs in Georgia found that most required only one course in reading for students preparing for early childhood certification (prekindergarten to grade five).

Suspecting that reading also might be imbedded in courses not specifically focused on reading, the commission conducted another survey to determine how much total instructional time was devoted to reading. The survey found that the average time spent on reading was 17.8 percent of the teacher education curriculum, but the range among institutions was dramatic — from 2 percent to 30 percent!

The commission subsequently has been exploring ways to ensure that students preparing to be teachers receive adequate content in reading, whether in specific courses or as components of other courses. The commission also may recommend a one-year post-baccalaureate internship for all new teachers. In addition, it believes that the current prekindergarten to grade five certification should be split into separate certifications for prekindergarten to grade two and grades three to five. Many rural school districts oppose this idea, however, because they fear it would complicate the task of recruiting teachers.

[www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?](http://www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?))

The 1998 Regents Teacher Preparation Initiative outlined the *Principles for Preparation of Educators for the Schools* which included the following statement:

The University System will guarantee that all teachers prepared in early childhood education can demonstrate accomplishment in teaching children to read and to do mathematics.

- Complete the equivalent of a major in reading and mathematics
- Demonstrate success in diagnosing difficulties
- Achieve a system-wide reading endorsement

([www.usg.edu/academics/teacherprep/principles/phtml](http://www.usg.edu/academics/teacherprep/principles/phtml))

The Georgia Reading Consortium, sponsored by the University System of Georgia, is a professional development program for teachers that has links to scientifically-based reading research. ([www.msit.gsu.edu/readingconsortium/index.html](http://www.msit.gsu.edu/readingconsortium/index.html))

## LOUISIANA

Stan Beaubouef, Director, Teacher Certification and Higher Education: 225-342-3563,  
[stan.beaubouef@la.gov](mailto:stan.beaubouef@la.gov); [www.doe.state.la.us](http://www.doe.state.la.us)

### Licensure Tests Required

PRAXIS 10522: Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades K-6

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge

PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts

NASDTEC (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Louisiana requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading (Table B-5).

According to the Department of Education website, elementary teachers are required to have at least 12 hours of reading instruction; middle and high school teachers are required to have 9 hours of reading instruction. ([www.doe.state.la.us](http://www.doe.state.la.us))

### State Reading Initiatives

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) passed Bulletin 113, entitled “Louisiana’s Reading and Language Competencies for New Teachers,” in July 2004 with the following requirements:

1. Foundational concepts
2. Assessment
3. Phonemic Awareness and Letter Knowledge
4. Phonics and Word Recognition
5. Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text
6. Vocabulary
7. Text Comprehension
8. Spelling and Writing
9. Professional Development

[www.louisianaschools.net/1de/bese/1041.html](http://www.louisianaschools.net/1de/bese/1041.html)

In 1997, the legislature appropriated funds for and required each “governing authority” to implement elementary reading programs to teach students to read at grade level by no later than 3rd grade. The mandate specified that reading programs should include, but not be limited to, phonics. Within the first and last 30 days of the school year, teachers must report the number of students not reading at grade level (LA. REV. ANN. sec. 17:181). In 1998, the state board selected the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) as the assessment to be used to measure student reading levels and provided training to teachers on using the DRA. ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

In **Louisiana**, a committee of dyslexia coordinators from local school districts, university reading specialists and education school deans is studying reading content in teacher preparation programs and is expected to report to the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in October. ([www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?](http://www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?))

## **MARYLAND**

Maryland State Department of Education, 410-767-0412, [www.msde.state.md.us](http://www.msde.state.md.us)  
Maryland Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board

### **Licensure Tests Required**

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge  
PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts  
PRAXIS 20201: Reading Across the Curriculum – Elementary

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

There is no mention of reading in the description of Teaching Certificates. A prospective teacher must have a bachelor’s or higher degree, have completed an approved teacher education program, or appropriate credit count, and have passed PRAXIS tests.

For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Maryland requires twelve credit hours in the Methods of Teaching Reading.

### **State Reading Initiatives**

In July 1998, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) passed regulatory amendments that increased the amount of reading coursework current and prospective teachers must have. Regular and special education teachers at the early childhood and elementary levels have to complete 12 semester hours in specific reading coursework such as language and cognitive development; phonics, semantics, and syntactics; selecting and using reading materials; and reading assessment. Regular and special education teachers at the secondary level, as well as teachers with N-12 certification, have to complete six semester hours in coursework such as cognitive development, reading assessment, reading in the content areas, and the application of theories and practices in daily classroom instruction. The course requirements are consistent for teachers applying for an initial certificate and for those seeking certificate renewal. ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

The Reading Professional Development Committee identified the following competencies that Maryland teachers must demonstrate for certification:

- Early childhood, Elementary, and Special Education – 12 hours:  
processes and acquisition of reading  
instruction of reading  
materials for reading  
assessment of reading
- Secondary, Special Education, and N-12 teachers – 6 hours:  
teaching of reading in secondary content areas, 1  
teaching of reading in secondary content areas, 2

([www.msde.state.md.us](http://www.msde.state.md.us))

## MISSISSIPPI

- Office of Educator Licensure: 601-359-3483; Office of Instructional Development: 601-359-3778, [www.mde.k12.ms.us](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us)

### Licensure Tests Required

PRAXIS 10522: Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades K-6

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge

PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts

NASDTEC (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- There is no mention of reading in the Teaching Certificate requirements. (A-81)
- For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Mississippi requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading. (Table B-5)

### State Reading Initiatives

In 1997 Mississippi launched its Reading Initiative, passed into law in 1998 with Senate Bill 2944, Reading Sufficiency Program of Instruction. The Barksdate Reading Institute established a reading reform model within the Department of Education. Mississippi's efforts in reading have targeted teachers in the classroom and offered professional development.

([www.mde.k12.ms.us](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us))

In **Mississippi**, an education alliance is looking at teacher education programs and certification requirements, with an emphasis on reading. The alliance — which includes representatives of teacher training programs, the state Department of Education, the Institutions of Higher Learning, community colleges and the Public Education Forum — began its work on this topic in summer 1998. ([www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?](http://www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?))

## MISSOURI

- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Teacher Quality and Urban Education: 573-751-0051 or 3847, [www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov)

**Licensure Tests Required**

PRAXIS 10011: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
 PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Missouri requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading. (Table B-5)

**State Reading Initiatives**

Missouri requires three courses (for a total of 8 semester hours) in reading for Elementary teachers. ([www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov))

Missouri implemented legislation in the area of reading instruction in 1999. Under H.B. 889, a pilot project of explicit phonics instruction for K-3 students was to be established in each metropolitan school district. Furthermore, beginning July 1, 2000, if a school district provides reading improvement instruction for K-3 students who fall below the district's objectives for reading on the district's chosen assessment, such students may be counted for additional average daily attendance for state aid if such time falls outside normal school hours, such as summer school. Also, the department of education shall provide a four-year competitive matching-grant program at the district and building level to pay for assessment and training in early reading intervention strategies. Grantees are required to show improvement of students. ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

**NEW YORK**

- Office of Teaching Initiatives, Teacher Certification: 518-474-3901; [www.highered.nysed.gov](http://www.highered.nysed.gov)
- Early Education and Reading Initiatives: 518-474-5807; [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

**Licensure Tests Required**

New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE) ([www.nystce.nesinc.com](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com))

- Liberal Arts and Science Test
- Elementary Assessment of Teaching Skills
- Content Specialty Tests: Literacy

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- For an elementary Teaching Certificate (Pre-K-3) and (4-6), New York requires a bachelor's degree in the liberal arts and sciences from an approved institution, 30 semester hours in specified outcome-based professional education, including six semester hours in the teaching of reading, college supervised student teaching at lower and upper

elementary levels, and qualifying scores on the NY State Teacher Certification Examinations. (p. A-107)

- For the initial elementary teaching certificate, New York requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading. (Table B-5)

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: 919-807-3310; [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)

North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, [www.ncptsc.org](http://www.ncptsc.org)

### **Licensure Tests Required**

PRAXIS 10011: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

PRAXIS 10200: Introduction to Teaching of Reading

PRAXIS 10049: Middle School English Language Arts

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- North Carolina requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading for the initial elementary teaching certificate. (Table B-5)

### **State Reading Initiatives**

Following years of debate over phonics vs. whole language, the state enacted legislation in 1996 that called for “the implementation of balanced, integrated and effective programs of reading instruction.” Based on this guideline, the state board developed a comprehensive plan to improve reading achievement. In addition, several million dollars are appropriated annually to support staff development in reading and math, most of which goes directly to schools (N.C. GEN. STAT., sec. 115c-81.2). ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

Under its Comprehensive Plan for Reading, adopted in 1997, the North Carolina Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction revised the Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts to provide detailed guidance on how to teach phonemic awareness (the understanding that words are made up of distinct identifiable sounds) and phonics (word recognition skills). The revisions, developed with the help of university faculty, formed the basis for a review of reading instruction in college and university teacher-education programs. Under the reading plan, each teacher-education program identified curriculum revisions during the 1997-98 academic year that would ensure “that teachers, kindergarten through third grade in particular, possess the broad base of knowledge and skills ... to enable them to provide the reading approach necessary and appropriate for a wide range of ability levels among students.” Each program in a public college or university submitted a report to the state Board of Education demonstrating that necessary changes had been made. At the same time, the state’s Competencies for Elementary Teachers were revised to include more specific requirements in phonemic awareness and phonics. All teacher-education programs, both public and private, regularly are required to demonstrate to the Department of Public Instruction that they cover all of the competencies in their programs. Any program that fails to do so will be given a limited time to make necessary changes or face the prospect of being closed down. In addition, the

University of North Carolina central administration has proposed that system universities that offer teacher-education programs develop a concentration in reading. The UNC Governing Board has not yet taken final action on the proposal.  
([www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?](http://www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?))

## **OKLAHOMA**

Oklahoma State Department of Education 405-521-3301; [www.sde.state.ok.us](http://www.sde.state.ok.us)

### **Licensure Tests Required**

Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE)

- Elementary Education Subtest 1: Reading/Language Arts/Social Studies
- Elementary Education Subtest 2: Mathematics/Science/Health and Fitness/Fine Arts

### **State Reading Initiatives**

The Elementary Teacher standards, as outlined in the Full, Subject-matter Competencies for Licensure and Certification (approved 1997; revised 2002), include detailed standards for reading instruction that are aligned with SBRR (pages 10-11). ([www.sde.ok.us](http://www.sde.ok.us))

H.B. 2017 (1997) created the Reading Sufficiency Act, a comprehensive plan that provides a framework to districts. The act focuses on five components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, reading fluency and comprehension. The state will issue a reading report card annually for each school. The act also includes the following provisions:

- Multiple, ongoing assessments are used to measure 1st- and 2nd-grade students' acquisition of reading skills. A reading assessment plan will be developed for students not reading at grade level by the end of the current school year.
- Schools will establish a committee to determine a reading assessment plan for each student.
- Districts will adopt and annually update a plan that outlines how each school will comply with the Reading Sufficiency Act provisions.
- A new reading assessment plan will be developed for each 3rd grader not reading at grade level. The plan will include specialized tutoring and may include recommendations for whether a student should be retained in 3rd grade (OKLA. STAT. ANN. 70, sec. 1210.50A-C).
- The Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation has the authority to develop professional development institutes that provide intensive reading instruction to elementary teachers (OKLA. STAT. ANN. 70, sec. 6-200).
- Local boards of education will establish professional development committees and programs for teachers and administrators (OKLA. STAT. ANN. 70, sec. 6-194).

H.B. 2878 (1998) modified the Reading Sufficiency Act in the following ways:

- Added kindergarten as a grade at which reading skills must be assessed
- Specified the elements of reading instruction to be included in assessment plans
- Called for a Reading Report Card for each elementary school.

H.B. 2000 (2000) makes changes in the requirements of professional development. Funds may be used for the cost of mentor training, payment for substitute teachers, on-site facilitation, and any other costs necessary to ensure improved reading by students.  
([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

Office of Accreditation and Teacher Quality: 605-773-3553; [www.doe.sd.gov](http://www.doe.sd.gov)

### **Licensure Tests Required**

PRAXIS 10522: Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades K-6

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge

PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts

### **State Reading Initiatives**

The Reading Content Standards define competencies of K-12 children and teachers for South Dakota. The Reading Standards were approved in 2004. Classroom implementation was to begin in the 2004-2005 school year, and the standards would become the basis for the Dakota STEP test in Spring 2005.

([www.doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/languagearts/docs/ReadingStandards.pdf](http://www.doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/languagearts/docs/ReadingStandards.pdf))

H.B. 1257 (2000) provides for enhanced learning in the public schools. The board of education and the department of education shall work jointly with other state government agencies to ensure that children enter the K-12 education system ready to learn. Those agencies shall develop standards and practices to ensure that, by 3rd grade, all children, to the best of their abilities, have learned fundamental reading skills, among others. Furthermore, the Advanced Reading Enhancement Program will assist and strengthen the teaching and learning of reading in grades 1 and 2. Early intervention strategies shall promote growth in word recognition and comprehension. Technical assistance shall be provided to this end.  
([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

## **TENNESSEE**

Office of Teacher Licensing: 615-532-4885

### **LICENSURE TESTS REQUIRED**

PRAXIS 10522: Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades K-6

PRAXIS 10011: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge

PRAXIS 10049: Middle School English Language Arts (for Highly Qualified status only)

PRAXIS 20201: Reading Across the Curriculum – Elementary

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

In Tennessee, there are endorsements to Apprentice, Out-of-State, and Professional Teachers' Licenses. One such endorsement is for K-8 and 7-12 teachers of reading. They

*REPORT ON LICENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH THE  
ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION*

must hold a master's degree in reading and have three years' teaching experience in an approved school. (p. A-141)

For the initial elementary teaching certificate, Tennessee requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading. (Table B-5)

### **State Reading Initiatives**

S.B. 2485 (2000) requires certain actions by the state department of education, the state board of education and the higher education commission to improve the teaching of reading and literacy in Tennessee. The state department of education shall identify schools with consistently low-performing reading scores and determine that measures for improvement are addressed in the schools' improvement plans. Also, the state board is to ensure that teacher candidates are properly trained and qualified in literacy instruction.

S.B. 1173/H.B. 716 (2001) creates a report that includes:

- The number of identifiable reading programs in grades K-3
- The testing procedures used to evaluate students
- The number of teachers certified as reading specialist in each LEA.

([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

In **Tennessee**, a committee that includes representatives of universities and local school systems is working with the state Board of Education, the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services to revise the state's teacher licensure standards in early childhood education (prekindergarten to grade four). The goal is to bring the teacher licensure standards up to date so that they reflect recent research findings, including those involving beginning reading instruction. ([www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?](http://www.sreb.org/scripts/focus/focus1.asp?code?))

TENNESSEE READING PANEL issued a report in 2005 with recommendations for reading instruction for all children that is closely aligned to the scientifically-based reading research. ([www.state.tn.us/education/ci/finaltrprpt.pdf](http://www.state.tn.us/education/ci/finaltrprpt.pdf))

The Tennessee State Board of Education enacted a new Tennessee Reading Policy in October 2005 to implement the recommendations of the Tennessee Reading Panel. ([www.tennessee.gov/sbe/Oct05/IVD\\_Reading\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.tennessee.gov/sbe/Oct05/IVD_Reading_Policy.pdf))

### **VIRGINIA**

- Thomas Elliott, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Licensure: 804-371-2522; [www.pen.k12.va.gov](http://www.pen.k12.va.gov)

### **LICENSURE TESTS REQUIRED**

PRAXIS 10014: Elementary Education Content Knowledge

PRAXIS 10049: Middle Schools English Language Arts

Virginia Reading Assessment is required for individuals seeking an endorsement as a reading specialist or individuals seeking initial licensure with endorsements in any of the following endorsements (teaching areas): Early/Primary preK-3, Elementary Education preK-6, Special

Education-Emotional Disturbances, Special Education-Specific Learning Disabilities, Special Education-Mental Retardation, Special Education-Hearing Impairments, and Special Education-Visual Impairments. ([www.pen.k12.va.gov](http://www.pen.k12.va.gov))

**NASDTEC** (*The NASDTEC Manual on the Preparation & Certification of Educational Personnel*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

- Virginia requires a course in the Methods of Teaching Reading for the initial elementary teaching certificate. (Table B-5)

**State Reading Initiatives**

Reading First in Virginia has established an electronic library of current research, available at [www.readingfirst.virginia.ed](http://www.readingfirst.virginia.ed)

S.B. 558 (1998) established the Reading Incentive Grants Program. The program awards grants on a competitive basis to schools that demonstrate low performance on reading exams (VA. CODE ANN. sec. 22.1-208.2:11).

H.B. 2401 (2001) establishes the requirement for a literacy passport for all students prior to grade 9. All school boards are encouraged to utilize the pre-test for 4th graders. In order to be classified as 9th graders or above, students shall be required to obtain the Literacy Passport, unless students are identified as disabled. To meet this goal, each school district shall analyze its pass rates and plan remediation programs as needed.

Furthermore, the Virginia Department of Education administers an Early Intervention Reading Initiative for kindergarten through the 3rd grade, a federal Reading Excellence Grant and training forums through the year. ([www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc](http://www.ecs.clearinghouse/12/35/1235.doc))

**WEST VIRGINIA**

- Karen Huffman, Executive Director, Office of Professional Preparation, 304-558-7842; 800-982-2378; <http://wvde.state.wv.us/certification>

**Licensure Tests Required**

PRAXIS 10522: Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades K-6

PRAXIS 10011: Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

PRAXIS 10049: Middle School English Language Arts

**State Reading Initiatives**

Reading for All, begun in 1999, includes the Reading First initiative and phonemic awareness training for teachers. It hosts state-wide symposia on reading for teachers, faculty, and community members. (<http://wvde.state.wv.us/reading/>)

**APPENDIX D**

**Reading proficiency for students in public schools, Grade 4**

**THE NATION'S REPORT CARD IN READING, 2005  
National Assessment of Educational Progress in RFTEN States**

STATE	YEAR	AVERAGE SCORE	BELOW BASIC	BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
National	1992	215	40%	33%	21%	6%
	2005	217	38%	33%	23%	7%
Alabama	1992	207	49%	32%	16%	3%
	2005	208	47%	30%	18%	4%
Arkansas	1992	211	44%	33%	19%	4%
	2005	217	37%	33%	23%	6%
California	1992	202	52%	28%	16%	4%
	2005	207	50%	29%	17%	5%
Florida	1992	208	47%	31%	18%	3%
	2005	219	35%	35%	23%	7%
Georgia	1992	212	43%	32%	20%	5%
	2005	214	42%	32%	20%	6%
Louisiana	1992	204	54%	31%	13%	2%
	2005	209	47%	33%	17%	3%
Maryland	1992	211	43%	33%	20%	4%
	2005	220	35%	32%	24%	8%
Mississippi	1992	199	59%	28%	12%	2%
	2005	204	52%	30%	15%	3%
Missouri	1992	220	33%	37%	24%	6%
	2005	221	33%	34%	25%	7%
New York	1992	215	39%	32%	23%	5%
	2005	223	31%	35%	22%	7%
North Carolina	1992	212	44%	31%	20%	5%
	2005	217	38%	32%	23%	7%
Oklahoma	1992	220	33%	38%	25%	4%
	2005	214	40%	35%	21%	5%
South Dakota	1992	not available				
	2005	222	30%	37%	27%	6%
Tennessee	1992	212	43%	33%	19%	4%
	2005	214	41%	34%	21%	6%
Virginia	1992	221	33%	35%	25%	6%
	2005	226	28%	34%	29%	8%
West Virginia	1992	216	39%	35%	21%	5%
	2005	215	39%	36%	21%	5%

[www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/)