


TO: Local Education Agency Superintendents

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools 

DATE: September 19, 2024

SUBJECT: Licensure Renewal: Demonstration of Proficiency Teaching Reading

Purpose

On April 1, 2024, the regulations that govern educator licensure (previously “certification”) were repealed and replaced. Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) [13A.12.02.06D](#) requires certain teachers to demonstrate proficiency in teaching reading beginning July 1, 2025. This demonstration of proficiency must be submitted upon renewal of their educator license. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the regulation and discuss the options currently approved to demonstrate proficiency in teaching reading.

Demonstration of Proficiency in Teaching Reading

COMAR [13A.12.02.06D](#) states that beginning July 1, 2025, all professionally licensed teachers employed in a Maryland public school, Maryland-operated school, or Maryland nonpublic special education facility and assigned to teach early childhood education, elementary education, special education (all grades), or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are required to demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction at the renewal of their Maryland educator license.

Teachers who are required to demonstrate proficiency may do so by submitting one of the following at the renewal of their Maryland educator license:

1. A passing score on an approved assessment:
 - a. Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary (5205) with a passing score of at least 159
 - b. Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary Education (5203) with a passing score of at least 162
2. Completion of an approved professional learning experience:
 - a. [State University of New York \(SUNY\) micro-credential](#)
 - b. [AIM Institute for Learning and Research Pathways to Proficient Reading: Secondary](#)
 - c. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) 3rd Edition Volumes 1 and II with a minimum score of 80% on both Volume 1 and Volume 2 end of volume post-tests

Teachers who choose to demonstrate proficiency by completing an approved professional learning experience may renew their license before completing the professional learning as long as they submit documentation demonstrating enrollment at the time of renewal. Completion of the professional learning must be submitted at the subsequent renewal.

Teachers who were required to submit a passing score on the Praxis Teaching Reading assessment at the issuance of their initial license have already met the requirement, and their license will be updated upon renewal to reflect their proficiency in the knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction.

Professional Learning Opportunities

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with the nonprofit Ibis Group, is funding the rollout of high-quality professional development aligned with the Science of Reading for Maryland educators and administrators. This initiative began on Monday, July 1, 2024, and will continue through June 30, 2028.

As part of this effort, local education agency (LEA) educators will receive free access to professional learning courses from the State University of New York (SUNY) New Paltz and the AIM Institute for Learning and Research. Educators can use the SUNY micro-credential and the AIM Secondary course as recognized pathways to demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction.

Additionally, LEA teachers who have completed LETRS (3rd Edition) Volumes 1 and 2 with a minimum score of 80% on both end-of-volume post-tests may submit their LETRS transcripts to demonstrate proficiency.

Transition Policy

To ease the transition to new regulatory requirements, MSDE allows historic certificate holders a full validity period before completing the new renewal requirements (see enclosed January 24, 2024 memorandum). Individuals with an active Standard Professional or Advanced Professional *certificate* may meet the renewal requirements established when the certificate was issued rather than meet the requirements established in the new regulations. Those who choose to renew under the old regulations will not be required to demonstrate proficiency in teaching reading until the following renewal of their first *license*. Those who choose to renew their certificate based on the new regulations will be expected to submit documentation demonstrating proficiency in teaching reading.

Local Education Agency Requirements

LEA licensure partners trained by MSDE to process licensure applications will need to know the assignment of LEA teachers when reviewing renewal applications to determine if a demonstration of proficiency in teaching reading is required. Each fall, LEAs are required to submit a staff data file to MSDE. LEAs may use this data to determine if an individual is assigned to teach early childhood education, elementary education, special education, or ESOL. Alternatively, LEAs may develop an internal process for providing LEA licensure partners with the assignment information required to process licensure renewal applications. Educator licenses expire on January 1st and July 1st. It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that LEA licensure partners have the necessary assignment information to process renewal applications on time.

If you have any questions regarding the reading requirements discussed in this memorandum, please contact Sophia Fitzpatrick, Director of Licensure, at sophia.fitzpatrick@maryland.gov or 410-767-0396. Questions about the MSDE/Ibis Group partnership may be directed to the literacy office at literacy.msde@maryland.gov or 410-767-1405.

Enclosure: January 24, 2024, Memorandum