

1 R7-2-615 Endorsements

2 U. Literacy, K-5 Endorsement

3 1. For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

4 a. “Literacy instruction” means instruction in English language arts provided
5 by a teacher.

6 b. “Science of reading instruction” means instruction which includes a focus
7 on the elements of structured literacy, to include oral language, phonological awareness,
8 phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and foundational writing skills, including
9 spelling and handwriting.

10 c. “Teaching certificate” means an Alternative Teaching certificate,
11 International Teaching certificate, Classroom-Based Standard Teaching certificate, or
12 Standard Professional teaching certificate.

13 2. An individual who receives a teaching certificate in early childhood education,
14 elementary education, middle grades education, or special education issued on or before
15 August 1, 2025 and who provides literacy instruction in kindergarten programs or in any
16 of grades one through five must obtain a Literacy, K-5 endorsement, a Reading Specialist
17 endorsement – grades K through 12, a Reading endorsement for grades K through 12, or
18 a Reading endorsement for grades K through eight by August 1, 2028.

19 3. An individual who receives a teaching certificate in early childhood education,
20 elementary education, middle grades education, or special education issued after August
21 1, 2025 and who provides literacy instruction in kindergarten or in any of grades one
22 through five must obtain a Literacy, K-5 endorsement, a Reading Specialist endorsement
23 – grades K through 12, a Reading endorsement for grades K through 12, or a Reading
24 endorsement for grades K through eight within three years after the teaching certificate is
25 issued.

26 4. Literacy, K-5 Endorsement

27 a. The Literacy, K-5 Endorsement authorizes the holder to provide literacy
28 instruction within the grade range and subject area of the teaching certificate it endorses.
29 The requirements are:

30 i. A valid teaching certificate in early childhood education,
31 elementary education, middle grades education, or special education;

32 ii. Three semester hours in the science of reading instruction,
33 including systematic phonics instruction;

1 iii. Three semester hours in reading instruction, including assessments,
2 instructional practices, and interventions to improve student reading proficiency
3 for struggling readers, including students with the characteristics of dyslexia;

4 iv. A passing score on a literacy instruction assessment approved by
5 the Board for the Literacy, K-5 endorsement.

6 b. Completion of Department-approved training may substitute for the
7 semester hours required in sections (4)(a)(ii) and (4)(a)(iii). Fifteen clock hours
8 of training, or the equivalent competency-based credential, is equivalent to one
9 semester hour.

10 5. Applicants may meet the requirements described in sections (4)(a)(ii), (4)(a)(iii),
11 and (4)(a)(iv) with verification from an Arizona public school superintendent, principal or
12 personnel director that the applicant meets the following requirements:

13 a. The applicant is a teacher who provides literacy instruction in kindergarten
14 through grade five and has demonstrated through classroom observations and student
15 achievement data across subgroups using evidence-based measures for at least three
16 consecutive years, based on criteria established by the Board, that the teacher possesses
17 the instructional knowledge and skills to:

18 i. Effectively teach foundational reading skills, phonological
19 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; and

20 ii. Implement reading instruction using high-quality instructional
21 materials; and

22 iii. Provide effective instruction and interventions for students with
23 reading deficiencies, including students with characteristics of dyslexia.

Background

A.R.S. § 15-501.01 requires all certificated educators who provide literacy instruction in K-5 to receive a literacy endorsement established by the Board. To receive the endorsement, educators must obtain the coursework or training established by the Board and pass an assessment.

The endorsement must demonstrate that the teacher is capable of: 1) effectively teaching foundational reading skills, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; 2) implementing reading instruction using high-quality instructional materials; and 3) providing effective instruction and interventions for students with reading deficiencies, including students with characteristics of dyslexia.

Educators who currently hold a certificate and those who receive a certificate before August 2025 have until 2028 to obtain the endorsement. Educators who receive their certificate on August 2025 and later have 3 years from the date the certificate is issued to obtain the endorsement.

Educators who hold an Arizona reading specialist endorsement or reading endorsement are not required to obtain the new literacy endorsement under the current proposal.

Background – Exceptional Teacher Pathway

Statute exempts educators from the training or coursework and the assessment if they possess the knowledge and skills listed above. Educators must demonstrate they possess the knowledge and skills through student achievement data and classroom observations. The Board is charged with determining the process for educators to qualify for the Exceptional Teacher pathway.

Proposed Criteria

An educator qualifies for the Exceptional Teacher Pathway through one of the following two routes:

1. Proficiency Route¹: The local education agency's (LEA) superintendent, principal or personnel director verifies, on a form provided by the Department, that:
 - a. At least 90% of the educator's full academic year (FAY) students are proficient on the English language arts (ELA) portion of the statewide assessment over the last three consecutive academic years; and
 - b. The educator possesses the instructional knowledge and skills described above demonstrated through classroom observations.
2. Test Out Route²: The LEA's superintendent, principal or personnel director verifies, on a form provided by the Department, that:
 - a. The educator possesses the instructional knowledge and skills described above demonstrated through classroom observations and student achievement data across subgroups; and
 - b. The educator obtains a passing score on the literacy instruction assessment adopted by the Board.

¹ Educators who qualify for the Proficiency Route are exempt from the training/coursework and assessment requirements

² Educators who qualify for the Test Out Route are exempt from the training/coursework requirements

Data Elements

For educators in grades K-2 that do not have statewide assessment data, the LEA shall utilize a benchmark assessment that is approved for MOWR and compliant with statutory dyslexia screening requirements. A list of approved assessments can be found [here](#).

Full Academic Year students are defined as students enrolled within the first 10 days of school, according to the school's calendar, and continuously enrolled until the first weekday in May. Students with breaks in enrollment fewer than 10 calendar days in the same school are still considered FAY. Note that this is the same definition used for accountability.

The Board or the Department may request documentation the LEA uses to verify an educator qualifies for the Exceptional Teacher Pathway.

FAQ

Q. *I have a teacher who meets the criteria but I think they could benefit from the training/coursework and/or passing the assessment. Do I have to verify they qualify for the Exceptional Teacher pathway?*

A. No. Statute allows, but does not require, local education agencies to verify teachers qualify for the Exceptional Teacher pathway. Alternatively, the LEA could verify the teacher qualifies and still ask that they obtain the training or coursework

Q. *I do not have three consecutive years of statewide assessment data because we did not administer the statewide assessment to students in the 2020-2021 school year. Which three years of data do I use?*

A. LEAs should refer to the most recent three consecutive years of available statewide assessment data. Because the state did not administer the statewide assessment in the 2020-2021 school year, LEAs should not include that year in its verification determination.

Q. *I will be a 1st grade teacher for the first time after teaching 3rd grade for many years. What data should the LEA reference?*

A. The LEA must reference the most recent three consecutive years of data.

For other questions regarding the early literacy endorsement, see the other FAQ and Guidance Document.