

## Read to Succeed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### What is Read to Succeed?

Read to Succeed is South Carolina's (SC) comprehensive reading reform policy enacted into law in June 2014 by Governor Nikki R. Haley. The intent of the legislation is to ensure

- classroom teachers use evidence-based reading instruction in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve;
- valid and reliable assessments are administered and data is analyzed to inform reading instruction;
- evidence-based interventions are provided as needed so that all students develop proficiency with literacy skills and comprehension;
- students not yet comprehending grade-level text are identified and served as early as possible and at all stages of his or her educational process;
- students receive targeted, effective, comprehension support from the classroom teacher and, if needed, supplemental support from a reading interventionist so that ultimately all students can read and comprehend grade-level texts;
- students and parents are continuously informed of the student's reading proficiency and progress including actions the classroom teacher, parents, and others can take in support of the student reaching grade-level proficiency;
- instructional personnel receive in-service coursework which better prepares them to support all students' literacy needs;
- pre-service teacher preparation candidates receive coursework which better prepares them to support student needs; and
- students develop the necessary reading and writing proficiency so that they graduate college or career ready.

### How is progress toward the goals of Read to Succeed communicated?

An annual report regarding the implementation of Read to Succeed and the state and district progress toward ensuring at least ninety-five (95) percent of all students are reading on grade level is provided to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education (SBE).

### Does Read to Succeed only impact elementary school students, specifically those in third grade?

No. Read to Succeed has implications for all students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.

## State, District and School Reading Plans

### Is there a state reading plan?

Yes. South Carolina's initial state reading proficiency plan was approved by the SBE in June 2015 and is updated annually. [http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/instruction/read-to-succeed/SC\\_State\\_Reading\\_Plan\\_2015-06-10\\_Final.pdf](http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/instruction/read-to-succeed/SC_State_Reading_Plan_2015-06-10_Final.pdf)

### What does the state reading plan address?

The state plan is based on reading research and effective instructional practices. The document provides special emphasis on addressing instructional and institutional deficiencies that can be remedied through faithful implementation of evidence-based practices.

**Do districts develop district reading plans?**

Yes. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, each district must prepare a comprehensive annual reading proficiency plan for pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. Each district's reading plan must present the rationale and details of its blueprint for action and support at the district, school, and classroom levels regarding the progress of students as readers and writers.

**What is included in the district reading plan?**

The Office of Early Learning and Literacy provides the format and components which must be included in each district's annual reading plan.

**When are the district plans due and how are they submitted?**

District reading plans are due no later than April 30 of each school year. They are submitted as a component of the district strategic plan.

**Will districts receive feedback regarding their plans?**

All district plans must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Early Learning and Literacy. Written comments shall be provided to each district.

**Do schools develop reading plans?**

Yes. School plans should align with the district plan and be included in the school renewal plan required by the Education Accountability Act.

**Pre-kindergarten (4K) and Kindergarten (5K) Readiness Assessments****What is the purpose of administering a readiness assessment?**

Readiness assessments provide parents or guardians and teachers with information to assess the readiness needs of each student, specifically language and cognitive strengths and weaknesses. This information assists in making instructional decisions.

**What happens when a student is not demonstrating the necessary readiness skills?**

Section 59-155-150(A) of Act 284 states "Any student enrolled in prekindergarten, kindergarten, first, second, or third grade who is substantially not demonstrating proficiency in reading, based upon formal diagnostic assessments or through teacher observations, must be provided intensive in-class and supplemental intervention immediately upon determination. The parent or guardian must be notified of the results of the readiness assessment and the developmental intervention strategies recommended to address the student's identified needs." In addition, summer reading camp must be made available for some students.

**When are readiness assessments administered?**

Readiness assessments must be administered to every student in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten within the first forty-five days of the school year and again during the last forty-five days of the school year, at a minimum.

**What assessments are administered?**

For school year 2016–17, local school districts must choose one assessment for pre-kindergarten students from the following approved list:

- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS);
- Individual Growth and Development Indicators (myIGDIs); or
- Teaching Strategies GOLD®.

For school year 2016–17, all kindergarten students in SC are administered the Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd Edition PLUS (DRA2+) during the first forty-five days and during the last forty-five days of the school year, at a minimum.

More detailed information can be found on the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) website at <http://ed.sc.gov/tests/elementary/pre-k-and-kindergarten-readiness-assessments/>.

### **What do the readiness assessments measure?**

Readiness assessments generally assess each child’s early language and literacy development. Beginning with the 2017–18 school year, readiness assessments will also measure mathematical thinking, physical well-being, and social-emotional development.

## **Third Grade Retention**

### **What is mandatory retention?**

Beginning with the 2017–18 school year, a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade as indicated by scoring the lowest achievement level on the state summative reading assessment (SC READY) and does not meet one of several statutory exemptions.

### **Who determines whether a student is exempt from the mandatory retention requirement?**

The superintendent of the local school district must determine if a student in the district may be exempt from the mandatory retention requirement by ensuring all of the following occurs:

- The teacher of a student eligible for retention must submit documentation on the proposed exemption and evidence that promotion is appropriate based on the student’s academic record. Evidence must be limited to student’s individual education plan (IEP), alternative assessments, or student reading portfolio;
- The principal must review the documentation and determine whether the student should be promoted. If the principal determines the student should be promoted, the principal must submit, in writing, a recommendation for promotion to the district superintendent;
- The district superintendent’s acceptance or rejection of the recommendation must be in writing and a copy must be provided to the parent or guardian of the student; and
- A parent or guardian may appeal the decision to retain a student to the district superintendent if there is a compelling reason why the student should not be retained. A parent or guardian must appeal, in writing, within two weeks after the notification of retention. The district superintendent shall render a decision and provide copies to the parent or legal guardian and the principal.

### **Are any third grade students exempt from mandatory retention?**

Students who qualify for a good cause exemption may be promoted to fourth grade.

### **What is a good cause exemption?**

Read to Succeed legislation provides seven considerations for students who may be exempt from mandatory retention and promoted to fourth grade. Good cause exemptions include students:

- with limited English proficiency and less than two years of instruction in English as a Second Language (ESOL) program;

- with disabilities whose IEP indicates the use of alternative assessments or alternative reading interventions;
- with disabilities whose IEP or Section 504 Plan reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years but still does not substantially demonstrate reading proficiency;
- who demonstrate third grade reading proficiency on an alternative assessment approved by the SBE and which teachers may administer following the administration of the state assessment of reading;
- who have received two years of reading intervention and were previously retained;
- who through reading portfolio documentation demonstrate mastery of the state standards in reading equal to at least one level above the lowest achievement level on the state reading assessment; and
- who successfully participate in a Read to Succeed summer reading camp at the conclusion of the third grade year and demonstrate through either a reading portfolio or through a norm-referenced alternative assessment, that their mastery of the state standards in reading is equal to at least one level above the lowest level on the state reading assessment.

**What if a student meets one of the good cause exemptions and is still not reading on grade level?**

Regardless of whether a student is promoted or retained, the student shall continue to receive instructional support and services and reading intervention appropriate for their age and reading level.

**One of the good cause exemptions mentions reading portfolio documentation. What should be included in a portfolio?**

Act 284 states that a student portfolio must meet the following minimum criteria:

- is an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
- includes evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the grade three state reading assessment have been met;
- is an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the English language arts state standards that are assessed by the grade three state reading assessment;
- indicates summer reading camp participation and records student progress in addition to SRC teacher's signature; and
- is signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

**Must every third grade student have reading portfolio documentation?**

Although it is best practice for all students to have reading portfolio documentation, only those third grade students not demonstrating grade-level reading proficiency must have reading portfolio documentation to be considered for a good cause exemption and promotion to fourth grade.

**Can homework or any other student work completed outside of the school day be used as part of portfolio documentation?**

No. Homework cannot be used as documentation. Legislation states documentation must be an accurate picture of the student’s ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom.

**Are districts required to use the sample literacy assessment portfolio included in the third grade retention guidance document?**

No. Districts may use any portfolio system as long as it meets the requirements of Act 284.

**Are districts required to use the *Plan for Intensive Instruction and Intervention* to document students’ progress?**

Districts and schools must have a system of documentation in place for students that receive additional intensive instruction and intervention. Districts and schools may adapt samples provided in the guidance document or use documentation already in place.

**What services and support are provided to students who are retained due to failing to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of third grade?**

Section 59-155-150 (D) of Act 284 states, “Retained students must be provided intensive instructional services and support, including a minimum of ninety minutes of daily reading and writing instruction, supplemental text-based instruction, and other strategies prescribed by the school district. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, instruction directly focused on improving the student’s individual reading proficiency skills through small group instruction, reduced teacher-student ratios, more frequent student progress monitoring, tutoring or mentoring, transition classes containing students in multiple grade spans, and extended school day, week, or year reading support.”

**Summer Reading Camps (SRC)**

**Another good cause exemption mentions SRC. What is this?**

SRCs are educational programs offered in the summer by each local school district or consortia of school districts for students who are unable to comprehend grade-level texts and who qualify for mandatory retention.

**What is the purpose of a SRC?**

The purpose of a SRC is to provide students who are significantly below third-grade reading proficiency with the opportunity to receive additional quality, intensive instructional services, and support.

**Who attends SRC?**

Any student in third grade who substantially fails to demonstrate grade-level reading proficiency by the end of the school year must be offered the opportunity to attend a SRC at no cost to the parent or guardian. School transportation shall be provided.

**Can students in other grade levels attend SRC?**

Yes. A district may also include students in other grades who are not exhibiting reading proficiency.

**Can a student opt-out of attending SRC?**

The parent or guardian of identified students makes the final decision regarding the student's participation in SRC. If a parent opts their student out, the mandatory retention requirement applies.

**How long is SRC?**

SRC must include the equivalent of at least ninety-six instructional hours. Most camps last for six weeks and meet four hours each day, four days per week.

**Who teaches SRC?**

The camps must be taught by compensated teachers who have a literacy endorsement or who have documented and demonstrated substantial success in helping students comprehend grade-level texts.

**What happens if a district is unable to find qualified teachers for SRC?**

The Office of Early Learning and Literacy shall assist districts that cannot find qualified teachers. Districts also may choose to collaborate with other districts.

**Pre-service and In-service Requirements****I am currently teaching in South Carolina. What courses do I have to take to receive my literacy teacher endorsement?**

Please refer to the following link which provides the required courses for each certification area: <http://ed.sc.gov/educators/certification/certification-resources/read-to-succeed-requirements/#R2SCoursework>

**Do I have to take a Reading and Writing in the Content Area course customized for my role and responsibilities?**

No. Any Reading and Writing in the Content Area course that has been approved by the SCDE, will satisfy this requirement.

**How long do I have to take the courses?**

You have five years from your most recent recertification cycle to take the courses. For example, if your certificate renews in 2017, you have from 2017 until 2022 to complete the requirements. If you are in a category which requires four courses, you have two certification cycles to complete the coursework but you must take at least two of the four courses within the first five year period. Please refer to this link for more detailed information: <http://ed.sc.gov/educators/certification/certification-resources/read-to-succeed-requirements/#R2SCoursework>

**What do I need to do to make sure my coursework is reflected on my teaching certificate?**

When you have successfully completed all of the endorsement requirements, you must submit a "Change Action" form to the Office of Educator Services.

**If I have a master's degree in reading or in a similar field, am I required to take the additional coursework to qualify for a literacy endorsement?**

Educators who have earned a graduate degree in reading or a related area are exempt from the Read to Succeed endorsement requirements. They should request a review of their transcript by

the Office of Educator Services to ensure the appropriate endorsement(s) is added to their certificates.

### **When do colleges and universities have to offer the Read to Succeed courses to pre-service candidates in teacher preparation programs?**

Colleges and universities must include the following courses in all teacher preparation or MAT programs beginning with the 2016–17 school year:

- Foundations in Reading
- Assessment of Reading
- Instructional Strategies
- Content Area Reading and Writing

## **School-Based Reading/Literacy Coaches**

### **What are school-based reading/literacy coaches?**

School-based reading/literacy coaches are employed in each elementary school. They serve as job-embedded, stable resources for professional learning opportunities (PLOs) in schools to generate improvement in reading and literacy instruction. They support classroom teachers with increasing student reading achievement by analyzing assessment data to determine appropriate instruction and when needed, intensive intervention.

### **What are the roles and responsibilities of a school-based reading/literacy coach?**

School-based reading coaches shall support and provide initial and ongoing PLOs to ensure all teachers are teachers of reading and that effective literacy strategies are implemented.

The school-based reading/literacy coach shall:

- Participate in the SCDE Read to Succeed Coach Institute or in an alternate coach program that has been approved by the SCDE;
- Attend all monthly sessions;
- Attend all virtual meeting/training sessions;
- Meet monthly with administration to discuss progress (review data) issues, and concerns based on goals;
- Serve as job-embedded, stable resources for PLOs that adhere to professional learning standards;
- Provide initial and ongoing PLOs to teachers based on an analysis of data;
- Model effective instructional strategies for teachers;
- Facilitate PLOs for teachers and leadership teams through demonstration lessons;
- Train teachers in data analysis in order to use data to differentiate instruction;
- Coach and mentor colleagues;
- Work with teachers to ensure that evidence-based reading strategies are implemented with fidelity;
- Coordinate literacy and instructional strategies across the school that will have the greatest impact on student achievement at both the school and district level; and
- Lead and support literacy leadership teams.

**Are there assignments a school-based reading/literacy coach should not have?**

The reading coach must not be assigned a regular classroom teaching assignment, must not perform administrative functions that deter from the flow of improving reading instruction and reading performance of students, and must not devote a significant portion of his or her time to administering or coordinating assessments.

**What are the qualifications for school-based reading/literacy coaches?**

There are three ways one can be hired as a school-based reading/literacy coach:

- hold a bachelor’s degree or higher *and* an add-on endorsement for literacy coach or literacy specialist, **or**
- hold a bachelor’s degree or higher *and* be enrolled and actively pursuing the literacy coach or literacy specialist endorsement, **or**
- hold a master’s degree or higher in reading or a closely related field.

**Are there other requirements of school-based reading/literacy coaches?**

Beginning with the 2014–15 school year, school-based reading/literacy coaches are required to earn the add-on endorsement within six years by completing the necessary courses or professional development required.

**Is there ongoing professional development for school-based reading/literacy coaches?**

School-based reading/literacy coaches participate in the SCDE Reading Coach Institute or an SCDE approved alternative coach program. Participants attend all monthly sessions, attend all virtual meetings/training sessions, and meet monthly with administration to discuss progress, issues, and concerns.

**Are there school-based reading coaches assigned to middle or high schools?**

Currently, there is no state funding to support school-based reading/literacy coaches at the middle and high school levels.

**Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELL)**

**Can SWD and ELL receive intervening services pertaining to their special needs during the ninety minute literacy block?**

SWD and ELL students are to receive a minimum of ninety minutes of instruction within the literacy block from the general education teacher. These students are general education students first. A special education teacher and/or an ESOL teacher may co-teach or “push-in” to provide services during the ninety minute block as long as the student receives instruction from the general education teacher as well as the specialist. For students with disabilities, how these services are delivered is determined by the student’s individualized education program (IEP) team.

**Are schools responsible for providing thirty minutes of intervention for SWD and ELL beyond the ninety minute literacy block?**

The need for additional instruction beyond the ninety-minute block would be determined by the IEP team for students with disabilities. The IEP team would determine the amount and type of specially designed instruction and services. The team would make decisions based on the

student's individual educational needs. If the IEP team determined instruction and services beyond the ninety-minute block are needed, the school would be responsible for providing these.

## **Interventions and Support**

### **How do schools make decisions regarding which students should receive intervention services beyond the ninety minute literacy block?**

The state summative assessment, SC READY, is one data point which can be used but it does not provide evidence for all grade levels. An intervention system begins by using a universal screening tool to assess every student in order to identify students who are not demonstrating grade-level proficiency. Universal screening tools are school-wide assessments conducted at regular intervals (fall, winter, and spring) by trained personnel. Screening tools help identify students in need of closer monitoring and those in need of further intensive instruction and intervention. Different types of assessment (screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, formative, and summative) as well as assessment data from a variety of sources (review of information, interviews, observations, and testing) should be used in making decisions about the need for additional intervention. In the case of a student with a disability, these decisions are made by the IEP team. This includes the amount, type, location, and duration of the services.

The *SC Intervention Guidance Document* and the Response to Intervention (RtI) resources located on SCDE website provide more detailed information.

<http://ed.sc.gov/instruction/office-of-early-learning-and-literacy1/read-to-succeed1/read-to-succeed/>

### **Should those students who received thirty additional minutes of intervention above and beyond the ninety minute literacy block and successfully completed the additional intervention continue to be progress monitored?**

Classroom teachers, as well as interventionists, should continue to monitor students no longer receiving intervention outside the ninety minute instructional block. Progress monitoring may not need to occur as frequently. If the student has an IEP, the IEP will have determined how often progress on goals related to reading are monitored and reported to parents.

### **Who provides the thirty minutes of intervention above the ninety minute instructional block?**

Classroom teachers and other specially training teachers including reading interventionists can provide the additional instruction. More intensive interventions (Tier II and III) should be provided by reading interventionists. Reading interventionists need to be highly effective, specially trained educators who are able to analyze data to provide effective literacy instruction based on individual student needs. Specially designed instruction and supports described in the IEP must be provided by appropriately credentialed personnel.

### **What are the various funding sources that can be used to pay interventionists?**

Title I schools may qualify for funds to support full or part-time reading interventionists. Districts may also use special education funding to pay for reading interventionists. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows for the provision of coordinated early intervention services (CEIS) using up to 15 percent of IDEA funds. CEIS are services provided to students in kindergarten through grade twelve (with a particular emphasis on students in

kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment. The *IDEA* (20 U.S.C. §1413(f)(2)) and its regulations (34 CFR §300.226(b)) identify the activities that may be included as CEIS: (1) professional development for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions, including evidence-based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and (2) providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including evidence-based literacy instruction.

**Which text reading level should be used when progress monitoring those students receiving interventions - instructional or independent?**

The instructional reading levels of students who are receiving interventions should be used. IEPs for students with disabilities will describe the type and frequency of progress monitoring that must occur for all specially designed instruction and support.

**Parent-Family and School-Community Partnerships**

**How will Read to Succeed engage families of students as full participating partners in promoting the reading and writing habits and skills development of their children?**

With support from the Office of Early Learning and Literacy, districts and individual schools shall provide families with information about how children progress as readers and writers and how they can support this progress.

Schools should develop plans for enhancing home libraries and provide assistance for families to access books from county and school libraries. In addition, schools should inform families about their child’s ability to comprehend grade-level texts and how to interpret information about their child’s reading.

The districts and schools shall help families learn about reading and writing strategies they can use at home through open houses, SC Educational Television, video and audio tapes, websites, and school-family collaborative activities that link home and school.

**How can the community be involved with supporting literacy development of children?**

Section 59-155-190 of Act 284 states, “Schools and districts should partner with county libraries, community organizations, local arts organizations, faith-based institutions, pediatric and family practice medical personnel, businesses, and other groups to provide volunteers, mentors, or tutors to assist with the provision of instructional supports, services, and books that enhance reading development and proficiency.”