

State K-3 Policies

What are the requirements for pre-service qualifications and for professional development for in-service educators in literacy for grades K-3?

September 2020

At least 20 states have literacy requirements for pre-service and in-service educators. An additional 20 states have literacy requirements for teacher candidates, with three states having solely requirements for in-service professional development related to literacy. At least five states have grant funding that is used to provide in-service educators with professional development, subject to availability. Seven states plus Washington, D.C., do not specify requirements in statute or regulation; however, many states do outline professional development plans and resources online.

The following information was gathered from state statutes and regulations only.

To view other data points, click [here](#).

STATE ▲	WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PRE-SERVICE QUALIFICATIONS AND FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR IN-SERVICE EDUCATORS IN LITERACY FOR GRADES K-3?	CITATION
Alabama	<p>Teacher Preparation: candidates must demonstrate a high level of competence in the use of English language arts as well as understand and use theories from reading, language, and child development.</p> <p>Professional Development: the Alabama Reading Initiative requires in-service elementary teachers to participate in the following professional learning activities: mentoring and job shadowing with master teachers; job-embedded, classroom-based coaching in the teaching of reading; curricula and resources and more.</p>	Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-3-06 Ala. Code § 16-6G-4
Alaska	Not specified in statute or regulation.	

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Arizona	<p>Teacher Preparation: elementary education candidates must complete at three semester hours or 45 clock hours in research-based systematic phonics, including language and literacy development.</p> <p>Professional Development: all school districts and charter schools that offer instruction in grades K-3 shall provide ongoing teacher training based on evidence-based reading research.</p>	Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 15-704; (Source)
Arkansas	<p>Teacher Preparation: candidates for elementary education or special education licensure must pass the Foundations of Reading assessment, with a focus on the components of beginning reading instruction based on the science of reading.</p> <p>Professional Development: as part of the statewide program to improve reading skills, in-service training programs are provided by reading specialists for elementary teachers who require special assistance in improving their skills in teaching reading, in-service training for elementary principals to improve their skills in the support of reading programs. Training includes: classroom observation, the use of student inventories, planning instruction, tailored reading activities, and parental involvement ideas, among other strategies; required professional development in scientific reading instruction for teachers in grades K-6: requires districts to include a literacy plan in the annual school-level improvement plan that is aligned with the literacy needs of the district and based on the science of reading.</p>	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-701 Code Ark. R. 005.28.12-3.00
California	<p>Teacher Preparation: first time credential applicants who will be responsible for reading instruction must take the reading instruction competence assessment. All teacher preparation programs must offer instruction in the knowledge, skills and abilities required by the assessment.</p>	Cal. Educ. Code § 44283
Colorado	<p>Professional Development: by 2021-2022 school year, K-3 teachers must complete evidence-based training in teaching reading. There is an early literacy grant program to provide money to local education providers to implement literacy support and intervention instruction programs, including but not limited to related professional development programs, to assist students in kindergarten and first, second, and third grades to achieve reading competency.</p>	Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-7-1211 1A Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-7-1208 6A

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Connecticut	<p>Professional Development and Teacher Preparation: Statewide reading plans for K-3 must include teacher training and reading performance tests aligned with teacher preparation courses and professional development activities and teachers' use of data on the progress of all students to adjust and differentiate instructional practices to improve student reading success.</p> <p>Teacher Preparation: On and after July 1, 2019, in order to be eligible to obtain an initial educator certificate, each person shall be required to complete: (a) a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than thirty-six hours, which shall include (i) instruction on the growth and development of exceptional children, including children with a disability, gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and (ii) methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom, and (b) a course or courses of study in special education relating to instruction on classroom techniques in reading.</p>	Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-14v Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-145b Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-148b
Delaware	<p>Teacher Preparation: all approved educator preparation programs for prospective elementary school teachers must provide instruction and evidence-based best practices and strategies for teaching childhood literacy. Instructional concepts include: foundational concepts of oral and written learning, structure of language, learning disabilities, phonemic awareness, phonics and language acquisition.</p>	Code Del. Regs. 290
District of Columbia	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Florida	<p>Teacher Preparation: scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies appropriate to the candidate's teacher preparation program area as follows: the standards contained in the Educator Accomplished Practices; the state's content standards and content literacy practices.</p>	Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-5.066
Georgia	<p>Teacher Preparation: candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical, conceptual and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language development and the ways in which they interrelate as indicated by the following: centrality of language to literacy learning and evidence-based instructional approaches that support the development of listening, speaking, viewing and visually representing and the evidence-based frameworks that describe the interrelated components of literacy and interdisciplinary learning.</p>	Ga Comp. R. & Regs. 505-3-.96
Hawaii	<p>Teacher Preparation: educator preparation programs must provide evidence that their candidates are prepared to incorporate teaching of reading and working with students with reading difficulties, students with disabilities, students who are limited English proficient, gifted and talented students and integrating technology effectively into their practice.</p>	Haw. Code R. 8-54-19

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Idaho	<p>Teacher Preparation: all applicants for initial Idaho certification (K-12) from a state board-approved educator preparation program must demonstrate competency in comprehensive literacy through an assessment administered by the public higher education institution. The assessment must measure teaching skills and knowledge congruent with current research on best literacy practices for elementary students or secondary students dependent upon level of certification and English Language Learners.</p>	Idaho Admin Code r. 08.02.02.017
Illinois	<p>Teacher Preparation: literacy standards for elementary teachers address the language and literacy curriculum, foundational knowledge, alphabetic code, text, using materials, text and technology, monitoring student learning through assessment, meeting the needs of diverse learners, constructing a supportive language and literacy environment and using research-based instructional practices including decoding and fluency, comprehension, writing, speaking and listening and vocabulary.</p>	Ill. Admin. Code tit. 23, § 20.110 Ill. Admin. Code tit. 23, §26.125
Indiana	<p>Teacher Preparation: any individual seeking to be licensed as an elementary school teacher must demonstrate proficiency in comprehensive scientifically-based reading instruction skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). For a program participant who seeks a license to teach in prekindergarten through grade 3, 24 credit hours of study (or the equivalent) that must include at least six credit hours in teaching scientifically based reading instruction and that prepares a program participant to meet Indiana standards for teaching, unless the program participant demonstrates that the program participant requires fewer credit hours of study to meet Indiana standards for teaching.</p>	Ind. Code Ann. § 20-28-5-12 Ind. Code Ann. § 20-28-4-4 511 Ind. Admin. Code 6.2-4-3
Iowa	<p>Teacher Preparation: each teacher candidate demonstrates competency in literacy, to include reading theory, knowledge, strategies and approaches; and integrating literacy instruction into content areas. The teacher candidate demonstrates competency in making appropriate accommodations for students who struggle with literacy, including those with dyslexia. Demonstrated competency shall address the needs of all students, including but not limited to, students with disabilities; students who are at risk of academic failure; students who have been identified as gifted and talented or limited English proficient; and students with dyslexia, whether or not such students have been identified as children requiring special education under Iowa Code chapter 256B. Literacy instruction shall include evidence-based best practices, determined by research, including that identified by the Iowa reading research center.</p> <p>Professional Development: each school district, subject to an appropriation of funds by the general assembly, shall provide professional development services to enhance the skills of elementary teachers in responding to children's unique reading issues and needs and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies.</p>	Iowa Admin. Code r. 281-79.15(256) Iowa Code Ann. § 279.68

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Kansas	<p>Teacher Preparation: the kindergarten through sixth grade teacher demonstrates a high level of competence in use of the English language arts and knows, understands and uses concepts from emerging literacy, reading, language and child development to teach reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening and thinking skills, and to help all students successfully apply their developing literacy skills to many different situations, materials and ideas.</p>	Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators (Source) (p. 61)
Kentucky	<p>Teacher Preparation: literacy program requirements for educator preparation programs include instruction in reading standards and assessments for P-12 candidates, but only on the International Reading Association Standards 2010: Middle and High School Content Classroom Teacher.</p> <p>Professional Development: the Kentucky Department of Education shall provide assistance to schools and teachers, including publicizing professional development opportunities, methods of measuring effective professional development, the availability of high quality instructional materials and developmentally appropriate screening and diagnostic assessments of student competency in reading.</p>	Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 158.840
Louisiana	<p>Teacher Preparation: for birth-kindergarten, preschool-third grade, grades 1-5 and special education grades 1-5, a portion of the total hours must include a minimum of nine credit hours in the teaching of reading and literacy.</p>	28 La. Admin. Code Pt XLV, 743
Maine	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Maryland	<p>Teacher Preparation: early childhood teacher certifications require coursework or CPDs on processes and acquisition of reading skills, best practices in reading instruction, use of reading assessment data to improve instruction, and materials for teaching reading to gain literary experience, to perform a task, and to read for information</p>	Md. Code Regs. 13A.12.02.03
Massachusetts	Not specified in statute or regulations.	
Michigan	<p>Teacher Preparation: candidates must complete a course of study in reading instruction, including diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities.</p> <p>Professional Development: districts can apply for funds to support a literacy coach to assist in designing instruction and interventions; up to 5% of grant funds awarded to districts to improve literacy may be used for research-based professional development programs approved by the SEA, and an additional 5% may be used for training in administering diagnostic screenings and interpreting assessment data</p>	Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1531 Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 388.1635a Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1280f

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Minnesota	<p>Teacher Preparation: requires the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board to adopt rules requiring teaching candidates to demonstrate a passing score in reading and writing.</p> <p>Professional Development: based on the reading assessments administered to students, districts must identify staff development needs so that teachers have training in instruction, assessment, intervention, and remediation.</p>	<p>Minn. Stat. Ann. § 122A.185 Minn. Stat. Ann. § 120B.12</p>
Mississippi	<p>Teacher Preparation: for initial elementary education licensure, a teacher candidate must earn a passing score on a rigorous test of scientifically research-based reading instruction and intervention and data-based decision-making principles as approved by the State Board of Education.</p> <p>Professional Development: in-service training shall include an emphasis on intensive, comprehensive and researched-based reading methods for all licensed teachers teaching Grades K through 3 in a public school district. The education may be accomplished through self-review of suitable intensive, comprehensive and researched-based reading materials. Subject to appropriations, low performing schools or districts may use data coaches to determine the effectiveness of data-focused professional development, to help teachers and district leaders build skills in using data to inform instruction.</p>	<p>Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-3-2 Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-3-105 Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-177-7 Miss. Code. Ann. § 37-3-105</p>
Missouri	<p>Teacher Preparation: reading Instruction Act requires all new teachers who teach reading in kindergarten through third grade to receive training in the essential components of reading. The state board of education is required to develop guidelines for training teachers and administrators in how to assist students reading below grade level. Teacher candidates seeking an Elementary Education endorsement must demonstrate an understanding of early childhood principles in language arts, including early literacy.</p>	<p>Mo. Ann. Stat. § 170.014 5 Mo. Code Regs. Ann. 20-400.510</p>
Montana	<p>Teacher Preparation: early childhood education programs require that successful candidates demonstrate knowledge of reading and writing processes.</p>	<p>MT ADC 10.58.531</p>
Nebraska	<p>Teacher Preparation: course work for both the ECE and EC inclusive endorsements must include the identification of deficiencies and effective instructional and intervention strategies related to mathematics and reading.</p>	<p>92 Neb. Admin. Code Ch. 24, 006</p>
Nevada	<p>Teacher Preparation: nine semester hours of credit in the teaching of literacy or language arts.</p> <p>Professional Development: must have access to professional development in academic standards and curriculum in English language development and literacy as well as in instruction of English language development and literacy.</p>	<p>Nev. Admin. Code 391.095 Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 391A.370</p>

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New Hampshire	<p>Teacher Preparation: public institutions of higher education must provide explicit professional awareness of best practices on recognition of characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders, and dysgraphia and evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia and related disorders and dysgraphia; literacy and language arts across media, genres and content areas through knowledge and application of five components of basic early literacy.</p> <p>Professional Development: ensure all New Hampshire teachers and school administrators have access to materials to support professional awareness of best practices on recognition of the characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders, and dysgraphia and evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia and related disorders and dysgraphia. Teachers are required to develop and carry out individual professional development plans that focus on professional growth in a range of areas, including the development of knowledge with in content areas identified under the certification criteria. Areas of content development knowledge for elementary teachers includes english language arts, among other subjects.</p>	N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 200:61 NH Code Admin. R. Ed 507.11 NH Code Admin. R. Ed 513.03
New Jersey	<p>Professional Development: State Board of Education requires general education teachers in K-3 to complete at least two hours of professional development instruction on screening, intervention, accommodation and use of technology for student with reading disabilities including dyslexia. Further professional development opportunities exist, focusing on the elements of early literacy and assisting students with reading difficulty.</p>	N.J. Stat. Ann. § 18A:6-131 N.J. Admin. Code § 6A:13-3.4
New Mexico	<p>Teacher Preparation: at least 3 hours in the teaching of reading in subject matter content is required, in addition to 24 to 36 semester hours in at least one teaching field including reading.</p> <p>Professional Development: professional development grant for K-3 Plus programs to provide professional development to teachers in early literacy research and its implications for instruction. Professional Development/Grant Program: The K-3 plus grant program provides additional professional development to K-3 plus teachers in how young children learn to read. Professional development to teachers and teacher assistants in early literacy research and its implications for instruction.</p>	N.M. Admin. Code 6.61.5 N.M. Admin. Code 6.30.12 N.M. Stat. Ann. § 22-13-28.1
New York	<p>Teacher Preparation: as part of the required 30 semester hours in professional education Pre-K through grade six teacher candidates are required to complete six semester hours in the teaching of reading.</p>	N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. tit. 8, § 80-2.12

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North Carolina	<p>Teacher Preparation: elementary teacher preparation programs must include adequate coursework in the teaching of reading. Prior to licensure teachers must pass an assessment to evaluate their knowledge of scientifically based reading instruction. Training for elementary and special education must include instruction in early literacy intervention strategies and practices, including evidence-based assessment and diagnosis or reading difficulty.</p> <p>Professional Development: for elementary school teachers, at least three continuing education credits related to literacy. Literacy renewal credits shall include evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and intervention strategies for students not demonstrating reading proficiency. Oral language, phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension shall be addressed in literacy-related activities leading to license renewal for elementary school teachers.</p>	<p>N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 115C-269.20 N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 115C-270.30</p>
North Dakota	<p>Teacher Preparation: elementary teachers must complete at least 12 semester hours of coursework in teaching a range of elementary content, including reading and language arts.</p>	<p>N.D. Admin. Code 67.1-02-03-01</p>
Ohio	<p>Teacher Preparation: teacher candidates must receive instruction in the use of phonics as a technique in the teaching of reading in kindergarten through third grade as part of minimum state standards as prescribed by the state board of education. Teachers seeking an Early Childhood license, pre-kindergarten through third grade, must successfully completed at least six semester hours, or the equivalent, of coursework in the teaching of reading that includes at least one separate course of at least three semester hours, or the equivalent, in the teaching of phonics in the context of reading, writing, and spelling.</p> <p>Professional Development: the state board of education shall provide in-service training programs for teachers on the use of phonics as a technique for teaching reading in kindergarten through third grade.</p>	<p>Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 3319.24 Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 3301.07</p>

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Oklahoma	<p>Teacher Preparation: teacher candidates must know, understand and use knowledge of the relationship between oral language and literacy as well as know and apply strategies and instructional approaches to support reading comprehension.</p> <p>Professional Development: the State Board of Education must develop, offer, and administer professional development institutes to train elementary school teachers in reading education, subject to the availability of funds. Grant Program: Grants are available for schools that teach K-3, the grant program supports K-3 teachers, instructional leaders, and principals through a five-day professional development institute in the instruction of reading. Programs also provide schools with a three-day follow-up professional development institute in elementary school reading. Schools receiving the grant received continued support for teacher development at their schools, including four days of professional development for principals and literacy resource specialists, and six days of on-site visits by a program consultant.</p>	Okla. Admin. Code 210:20-9-172 Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 6-200
Oregon	<p>Teacher Preparation: the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission must establish standards for teacher preparation programs that require approved educator training programs to demonstrate that candidates receive training in how to provide instruction that enables students to meet or exceed third-grade reading standards and become proficient readers by the end of third grade. Beginning July 1, 2025, programs must provide instruction on dyslexia and other reading difficulties; and the instruction on dyslexia be consistent with the knowledge and practice standards of an international organization on dyslexia.</p> <p>Professional Development: there is an Early Learning Professional Development Grant Program.</p>	Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 342.147 Or. Admin. R. 581-018-0578
Pennsylvania	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Rhode Island	<p>Teacher Preparation: no later than the 2021-2022 school year, requires all elementary education and reading specialist/consultants candidates to receive instruction in awareness of dyslexia and related disorders; evidence-based interventions and accommodations and instruction in the use of specific dyslexia and related disorder-targeted methods of teaching.</p> <p>Professional Development: the department of elementary and secondary education shall disseminate, using web-based technology, research-based best-practice methods by which the state and district school boards and committees shall evaluate and improve the professional development system of teachers in regard to dyslexia.</p>	R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-67.2-1 R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-67.2-4 R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 16-7.1-10

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South Carolina	<p>Teacher Preparation: all candidates seeking certification for the early childhood or elementary level must complete a 12 credit hour sequence in literacy that focuses on the theory, research and practices that support and guide the teaching of reading, as well as diagnosing reading problems.</p> <p>Professional Development: reading/literacy coaches will be employed in each elementary school and provide job-embedded professional development. Early learning and elementary education certified classroom teachers are required to earn the literacy teacher add-on endorsement within ten years of their most recent certification by taking at least two courses or six credit hours every five years, or the equivalent professional development hours as determined by the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office. The State Reading Proficiency Plan must include professional development to increase teacher reading expertise and reading expertise and literacy leadership of principals and assistant principals.</p>	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-155-180 S.C. Code Ann. § 59-155-110 S.C. Code Ann. § 59-155-130 S.C. Code Ann. § 59-155-140
South Dakota	<p>Teacher Preparation: statute requires teacher candidates for birth to grade three program demonstrate content knowledge in language arts and literacy among other subjects.</p> <p>Professional Development: professional development opportunities may be provided for teachers and other school staff to enable them to deliver scientifically-based literacy instruction.</p>	S.D. Codified Laws § 13-37-55 S.D. Admin. R. 24:53:07:02
Tennessee	Not specified in statute or regulations.	
Texas	<p>Teacher Preparation: subject matter on the instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia is required; candidates seeking initial certification must take courses in reading instruction.</p> <p>Professional Development: professional development is not required. Teacher Literacy Achievement Academies are provided to eligible teachers who provide reading instruction in K-3.</p>	19 Tex. Admin. Code § 228.30 Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 21.044 Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 21.4552
Utah	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Vermont	Teacher Preparation: early childhood teachers must understand content knowledge in academic disciplines including language arts and literacy.	7-1 Vt. Code R. § 13:5440-36
Virginia	Teacher Preparation: each program for reading specialists shall include a program of coursework and other training in the identification of and appropriate interventions, accommodations and teaching techniques for students with dyslexia or a related disorder.	Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-902.1

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Washington	Professional Development: opportunities for development in reading instruction and early literacy for teachers of kindergarten through fourth grade students made available, subject to funds appropriated. The Primary Grade Reading Grant Program provides resources to teachers to build their skills in using teaching methods to assist students in reading.	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 28A.415.400 Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 28A.300.330
West Virginia	Teacher Preparation: each elementary education (K-6) teacher preparation program must contain a minimum of 9 hours of reading which include a focus on the five essential components of reading (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) as well as how to assess students' reading ability and how to identify and correct reading difficulties.	W. Va. Code R. 126-114-6
Wisconsin	Teacher Preparation: license requirements for teachers of language arts or reading in pre-k-6 include instruction in reading and language arts, including phonics and passing an examination identical to the Foundations of Reading test.	Wis. Stat. Ann. § 118.19
Wyoming	Not specified in statute or regulation.	