


TO: Members of the State Board of Education

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

DATE: November 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Teacher Licensure Assessments: Foundations of Reading Assessment

Executive Summary

The purpose of this item is to seek approval from the State Board of Education (SBOE) to adopt the Pearson Evaluation Systems Foundations of Reading assessment as an option for teacher candidates who are required to pass a test demonstrating proficiency in reading instruction to earn initial teacher licensure.

Individuals applying for Maryland licensure in early childhood education, elementary education, special education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are required to pass a reading instruction assessment. In 2018, the SBOE adopted the Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary assessment for this purpose.

Maryland imports a significant number of licensure applicants from out of state on an annual basis. The Foundations of Reading Assessment is currently used in 13 states to assess educators on evidence-based best practices for reading instruction. To allow a greater number of out-of-state licensure applicants to qualify for licensure without having to take an additional assessment, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is requesting that the SBOE adopt the Foundations of Reading Assessment as one option for demonstrating proficiency in teaching reading.

Background and Process

The initial development of the Foundations of Reading assessment in 2002 was accomplished through close collaboration of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Pearson Evaluation Systems, and Massachusetts public school educators and college faculty. The following test development committees were formed to carry out the full scope of development.

Content Advisory Committee: The Content Advisory Committee members review objectives and test items for accuracy and freedom from bias. The committee ensures that items match the test objectives, and are aligned with the appropriate Curriculum Frameworks, relevant to the job of providing quality reading instruction.

Bias Review Committee: The Bias Review Committee (BRC) reviews testing materials for potential bias. Typically, the BRC reviews test materials prior to the review by the Content Advisory Committee. BRC members are asked to review each item for potential bias based on a set of criteria related to content, language, offense, and stereotypes.

Qualifying Score Panel: The Qualifying Score Panel consists of educators licensed and teaching reading in public schools; college faculty who are teaching reading (or have taught) undergraduate or graduate level courses in which educator candidates are enrolled, or who prepare undergraduate or graduate education students for educator licensure; and other educators in the content area who are familiar with issues of bias and special needs.

Using the work of the development committees as the foundation for the assessment, Evaluation Systems prepared the test objectives and assessment specifications for the Foundation of Reading assessment. The Foundations of Reading Assessment was most recently updated in February 2021.

Action Required

Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.12.02.03 *Pathways to Teacher Licensure* requires certain applicants to demonstrate proficiency in teaching reading to earn a teaching license. The regulation states that the SBOE shall approve an assessment for this purpose and that the State Superintendent of Schools shall establish the passing score.

MSDE is requesting that the SBOE adopt the Foundations of Reading Assessment as one option for demonstrating proficiency in teaching reading.