



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Literacy, K-5 Endorsement

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Background Information on Literacy Endorsement for Grades K-5

Senate Bill (SB) 1572, which was signed into law in 2021, amends A.R.S. 15-501.01(C) and requires the State Board to establish a literacy endorsement as a requirement for all certificated teachers who provide literacy instruction in kindergarten through grade five.

The endorsement must demonstrate that the teacher is capable of:

Knowledge and Skills

- 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.

Who will be required to obtain the Literacy, K-5 Endorsement?

The endorsement will be required for an individual who receives a teaching certificate in:

- Early childhood education
- Elementary education
- Middle grades education
- Special education

and who provides **literacy instruction** in kindergarten programs or in any of grades one through five.

The Arizona Reading Specialist Endorsement (K-8 or K-12) or Reading Endorsement (K-8 or K-12) also satisfy the requirement to teach literacy.



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When will the endorsement requirement take effect?

Educators who are issued a teaching certificate in early childhood education, elementary education, middle grades education, or special education certificate on or before August 1, 2025, must obtain the endorsement by August 1, 2028.

Educators who are issued a teaching certificate in early childhood education, elementary education, middle grades education, or special education after August 1, 2025, must obtain the endorsement within **three years** from the date of certificate issuance.

What are the requirements?

Option A: Coursework and [Foundations of Reading Exam](#)

1. Completion of 6 semester hours of reading coursework, or the equivalent ADE-approved training, to include 3 semester hours in the science of reading and 3 semester hours of reading instruction and intervention, including for students with dyslexia; and
2. A passing score on the Foundations of Reading exam (NT 890).

Is there a pathway to waive the requirements?

Yes, 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 was charged with determining the process for educators to qualify for this exemption. On December 13, 2021, the State Board of Education approved the criteria for the **Exceptional Teacher Pathway**, which provides a process for this exemption.

The Arizona Department of Education has taken the Exceptional Teacher Pathway routes developed by State Board of Education and revised the endorsement requirements to include options B and C.

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



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Option B: Verification for Coursework Waiver and Foundations of Reading Exam

1. LEA Verification that the teacher has provided literacy instruction in K-5 for three consecutive years and has demonstrated they have the knowledge and skills to effectively teach reading; and
2. A passing score on the Foundations of Reading exam (NT 890).

Option C: Verification for Coursework Waiver and Exam Waiver

1. LEA Verification that the teacher has provided literacy instruction in K-5 for three consecutive years and has demonstrated they have the knowledge and skills to effectively teach reading; and
2. LEA Verification that 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.

What data sources are allowable for K-2 teachers?

For educators in **grades K-2** who 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 assessment can be found [here](#).

What is the definition of Full Academic Year?

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.

Where can I get the coursework or training?

If you are currently in an Arizona Board-approved preparation program for Elementary or Early Childhood, the training is already in your program.



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[Approved trainings](#) are listed in the *Approved Trainings* tab of the K-12 Academic Standards, [K-5 Literacy Endorsement](#) information website page. Trainings completed may be used to both qualify for the Literacy, K-5 Endorsement and for renewal professional development hours.

I think I have the coursework already. What should I look for on my transcript?

The course titles listed on the transcript must reflect 3 semester hours in the science of reading/phonics and 3 semester hours in reading diagnosis and interventions. A course description may be submitted if the course title does not clearly indicate or verify a focus in these areas.

You may email the course information, including the prefix, to the ADE Certification Unit at Certification@azed.gov for feedback on whether your coursework may be accepted.

Where can I take the Foundations of Reading exam?

Exam information can be found at the [Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessments \(AEPA\)](#) site.

Candidates who are Arizona residents and currently enrolled in an educator preparation program, and incumbent teachers residing in Arizona who are seeking a Literacy, K-5 Endorsement, will be eligible to receive a one-time fee waiver to take the Foundations of Reading assessment for free. You must have a valid Arizona mailing address (AZ P.O. Boxes are eligible) to qualify for this state-funded assessment fee waiver. The fee waiver will be automatically applied toward your assessment fee during the online registration process.

Will there be a deficiency on my certificate if I do not hold the Literacy, K-5 Endorsement?

No. The Literacy, K-5 Endorsement is a credential that the District or School will require if you will be providing English language arts instruction. The endorsement is not an allowable deficiency that will “inactivate” a certificate.



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What if I hold a Reading or Reading Specialist endorsement?

You will not need to add the Literacy K-5 Endorsement if you hold a Reading (K-8 or K-12) endorsement or Reading Specialist (K-8 or K-12) endorsement.

What happens if I do not obtain the Literacy, K-5 Endorsement or the appropriate Reading Endorsement within the specified timeframe?

Under the Arizona Board of Education rules, you will not be considered appropriately certified for an assignment in which you are providing instruction in English language arts, and you will be in violation of Arizona Revised Statute 15-501.01(C).