

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY COACHES AND/OR LITERACY INTERVENTIONISTS

BETWEEN THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE

SCHOOL DISTRICT (DISTRICT) FOR THE 2024–25 SCHOOL YEAR.

I. BACKGROUND

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides training for Read to Succeed (R2S) state-funded, school-based reading/literacy coaches employed by the district to serve primary and elementary schools and monitors the district's utilization of literacy coaches to ensure state funding is applied in a manner consistent with the requirements set forth in the Read to Succeed Act and the 2024–25 Appropriations Act.

The district agrees to employ an appropriately qualified and endorsed school-based reading/literacy coach who works directly with teachers to bring about improvements in the classrooms that impact student achievement in literacy. The work of the literacy coach is shaped by evidence-based research, content knowledge, and knowledge of appropriate reading strategies to enhance learning.

For the 2024–25 school year, select schools may apply for a waiver to use their allocation towards a literacy interventionist (see Section VI).

This Memorandum of Agreement is due to the SCDE by September 9, 2024.

II. DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDING AND USE OF FUNDS

For each primary and elementary school, the school district shall be eligible to receive up to \$62,730 or the actual cost of salary and benefits for a full-time school-based reading/literacy coach (Proviso 1.50 for FY 2024–25). For the 2024–25 school year, the Office of Finance expects the final allocation to be \$53,540.29 per coach. School districts may use existing local funds currently used for reading assistance as the local support.

A district may only utilize these funds to employ school-based reading/literacy coaches that may serve in a primary, elementary, or middle school or a combination of these schools depending on the area of highest need in the district. The school district must align the placement of coaches to the district reading plan that is approved by the SCDE. To receive and/or maintain funding in accordance with this program, the district agrees to and assures the SCDE of the following:

Pursuant to S.C. Code § 59-155-180(C),

- (1) “To ensure that practicing professionals possess the knowledge and skills necessary to assist all children and adolescents in becoming proficient readers, multiple pathways are needed for developing this capacity.”
- (2) “A reading/literacy coach shall be employed in each elementary school [or primary or middle school as amended by Proviso 1.50 for FY 2024–25]. Reading coaches shall serve as job-embedded, stable resources for professional development throughout schools in order to generate improvement in reading and literacy instruction and student achievement. Reading coaches shall support and provide initial and ongoing professional development to teachers based on an analysis of student assessment and the provision of differentiated instruction and intensive intervention. The reading coach shall:
 - (a) model effective instructional strategies for teachers by working weekly with students in whole, and small groups, or individually;
 - (b) facilitate study groups;
 - (c) train teachers in data analysis and using data to differentiate instruction;
 - (d) coaching and mentoring colleagues;
 - (e) work with teachers to ensure that research-based reading programs are implemented with fidelity;
 - (f) work with all teachers (including content area and elective areas) at the school they serve, and help prioritize time for those teachers, activities, and roles that will have the greatest impact on student achievement, namely coaching and mentoring in the classrooms; and
 - (g) help lead and support reading leadership teams.
- (3) “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.” Schools and districts accepting funding to support a coaching position agree that the literacy coach must not serve as a full- or part-time administrator.

Additionally,

- The district accounts for the specific amounts and uses of all funds provided pursuant to this agreement and agrees not to use these funds for any purpose except in accordance with this agreement.
- The district requires the attendance of principals and other appropriate administrative staff at schools participating in the Palmetto Literacy Projects at the initial SCDE meeting related to the roles and responsibilities of the literacy coach as well as any other scheduled meetings or professional learning opportunities (PLOs) for principals and administrators.
- ****NEW* The district provides information on the names, certification numbers, qualifications/endorsements, and email addresses of reading coaches funded by the state appropriations to the SCDE.***
- By accepting the funds, a school district agrees the funds will not be used to supplant existing school district expenditures, except for districts that either are currently, or in the prior fiscal year, were paying for literacy coaches with local funds.

- Funds appropriated for reading/literacy coaches must be used to provide primary, elementary, and/or middle schools with school-based reading/literacy coaches who shall serve according to the provisions in R2S Act. The district agrees to cooperate with any compliance and technical assistance visits from the SCDE during the 2024–25 school year.
- If the SCDE finds the district is using these funds for a coach to perform administrative functions contrary to the statute, the SCDE shall withhold the remaining balance of funds and seek recoupment of the funds spent in an unauthorized manner.

III. JOB QUALIFICATIONS

The SCDE must publish guidelines that define the minimum qualifications for a reading/literacy coach. These guidelines must deem any appropriately certified teacher qualified if, at a minimum, he or she:

- (1) holds a bachelor's degree or higher and the R2S Literacy Coach or R2S Literacy Specialist endorsement; or
- (2) holds a bachelor's degree or higher and is actively pursuing the R2S Literacy Coach or R2S Literacy Specialist endorsement; or
- (3) holds a master's degree or higher in reading or a closely related field and is actively pursuing the R2S Literacy Coach or R2S Literacy Specialist endorsement.

Within these guidelines, the SCDE must assist districts in identifying a reading/literacy coach in the event that the school is not successful in identifying and directly employing a qualified candidate. The provisions of subsection (A), including the local support requirements, shall also apply to any allocations made pursuant to this paragraph.

IV. ALTERNATIVE COACH PROGRAM

If a district is deemed to have the personnel and financial capacity to provide the support and training for school-based reading/literacy coaches, a district may elect to have state-funded coaches obtain the endorsements and receive support through a means other than the SCDE R2S Coach Institute. This alternative training must be rigorous and focused on using data and evidence-based practices. If a district elects to have coaches participate in an alternative training, it must be at the district's expense. All courses provided to coaches to fulfill the R2S Teacher and Coach endorsements must be approved through the R2S approval process in the Office of Early Learning and Literacy.

Districts that wish to provide alternative training for coaches must have courses approved prior to offering courses and must submit both a written request and a detailed plan for providing courses as well as support that will be provided to the coaches.

A written request to provide alternative training must be received by September 6, 2024. Plans for providing alternative training must be received by September 30, 2024.

The SCDE has the final approval for the alternative training.

V. ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS

The SCDE and the district agree to minimum additional qualifications and responsibilities for a school-based reading/literacy coach. The additional qualifications are as follows:

- Has knowledge of and the ability to apply adult learning theory within professional learning experiences;
- Works effectively with adults and motivates them to change practices;
- Has experience as a successful classroom teacher;
- Has experience in increasing student achievement in reading;
- Has knowledge of evidence-based reading research, quality reading instruction, and a depth of content knowledge;
- Has an ability to integrate reading strategies into other content areas;
- Is experienced in data analysis to inform instruction; and
- Has excellent communication, presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

The additional responsibilities include:

- Assist with the development of the school's annual Reading Plan submission;
- Must participate in the SCDE R2S Coach Institute or in an alternate coach program 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;
- Continue to participate in job-embedded professional development. This professional development will be based on the needs of coaches; and
- Complete documentation and surveys related to job functions.
- ****NEW* Must attend quarterly SCDE Regional Coach Support Meetings (virtual during school hours).***

VI. LITERACY INTERVENTIONIST WAIVER

In prior years, districts have requested flexibility for reading coaches to serve students. The current provisos allow select schools to request a waiver to expend their reading/literacy coach funds on interventionists who spend fifty percent or more of their time providing direct support to struggling readers in grades kindergarten through grade five. Schools in which fewer than a third of third grade students scored at the lowest achievement level in SC READY English language arts (ELA) may request a waiver. Districts requesting a waiver will complete information in the survey linked in the next section.

Districts seeking a waiver for this allocation certify that their schools meet the necessary criteria for this funding flexibility.

VII. SPECIFIC PARTIES AGREEMENT DOCUMENT

This link should be provided to each participating school and the survey completed by the appropriate parties by the same date the original Memorandum of Agreement is signed and submitted. [Click here to access the survey](#). Districts with a large number of coaches/state funded interventionists may also choose to input the necessary data into this [spreadsheet](#) and email the completed form to mgibbons@ed.sc.gov.

VIII. TERMS AND TERMINATION

The SCDE reserves the right to withdraw funding issued pursuant to this agreement if the SCDE determines that the school or district is not utilizing such funding in a manner consistent with legislative requirements for funding, qualifications, and the roles and responsibilities as outlined herein.

IX. SIGNATURES

Name of District

Print Name of District Superintendent

Signature of District Superintendent

Date

District Superintendent Email Address

Return the **completed signature page** of the Memorandum of Agreement by September 9, 2024 to:

Marie Gibbons
R2S Team Lead, Office of Early Learning and Literacy
mgibbons@ed.sc.gov