



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ELLEN E. WEAVER
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
District Instructional Leaders
District Personnel Administrators

FROM: Matthew Ferguson
Deputy Superintendent
Division of College, Career, and Military Readiness

DATE: March 12, 2024

RE: Summary of Changes in S. 418 – Read to Succeed Amendments

This memorandum seeks to provide districts with a summary of recent amendments to the Read to Succeed Act, included in S. 418. For a detailed breakdown of these amendments, please refer to the complete text of [S. 418](#). Additional guidance will be forthcoming, but please find below a concise overview of the key changes:

1. **Focus on K-5 Literacy:** The amendments focus Read to Succeed's policies and practices on K-5 education rather than all of K-12, recommitting our efforts in the education system to a third-grade reading guarantee for all students. We know early literacy stands as the cornerstone of lifelong academic and personal achievement.
2. **Scientifically-Backed Reading Instruction:** Reading instruction, interventions, programs, and other reading services provided to students must align with the science of reading. Instructional approaches and methods must be grounded in systematic and objective research conforming to established scientific principles. The amendments explicitly move away from the three-cueing method of literacy instruction.
3. **Commitment to Grade-Level Reading Proficiency by Third Grade:** The third-grade reading guarantee is strengthened to require any student scoring Does Not Meet (DNM) Expectations in SY 24-25 be retained unless a good cause exemption is met. The reading portfolio is removed as a good cause exemption, and successful completion of Summer Reading camp is defined more narrowly to include formative assessment benchmarks or reassessment of SCREADY.

4. **Introduction of Additional Reading Interventions:** Retained students must be provided intensive instructional services and support, including a minimum of 90 minutes of daily reading. Students not meeting reading proficiency in grades K-2 are also directed to receive additional reading support. Summer Reading Camp requirements are extended to students in Grade 1 and Grade 2 in SY 25-26 and SY 26-27, respectively.
5. **Teacher Professional Development:** The SCDE will deliver professional development that has demonstrated success in establishing deep knowledge of foundational literacy skills grounded in the science of reading and promoting student reading achievement. Each district will participate in implementing this foundational literacy skills training with the goal of statewide implementation to include all kindergarten through third-grade teachers certified in early childhood, elementary, or special education, and elementary administrators.
6. **Formative Assessments/Universal Screeners:** Nationally normed formative assessments approved by the Board will be administered three times a year. There is an additional directive to limit the approved list of formative assessments to no more than five and for the Department to periodically review those assessments approved. The current list of approved formative assessments can be found [here](#). The amendments combine formative assessments and universal screeners, allowing for the eventual reduction of state-mandated testing requirements for our youngest learners.
7. **Reading/Literacy Coach Requirements:** At a minimum, educators serving as a reading/literacy coach should be certified to teach reading to the students being served in the school of placement and hold a literacy endorsement. Additionally, districts should document the educator's proven effectiveness in reading instruction aligned with the science of reading.
8. **Read to Succeed Endorsements:** Many Read to Succeed requirements related to middle and high school, and some PK-12 certification fields for educators (e.g., art and physical education) are eliminated by the S. 418 amendments. Read to Succeed requirements for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education are updated to focus on the science of reading. Specific guidance will be forthcoming.

These reforms are a testament to our dedication to the comprehensive body of scientific research known as the Science of Reading, which guarantees that our students benefit from the highest quality of reading instruction. This approach equips educators with the necessary tools to enhance student literacy outcomes and reflects our broader commitment to evidence-based educational practices.

We encourage educators, parents, and community members to engage with us in this transformative journey. Your insights, feedback, and active participation are invaluable as we work together to enhance the educational landscape in South Carolina, ensuring every child has the foundation for success in school and beyond. Please visit SCDE's dedicated Science of Reading website at www.ed.sc.gov/literacy.

For any further guidance or assistance in this process of aligning policies and practices with these amendments, please contact Abbey Duggins, Director of Office of Early Learning and

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