

# Technical Support Q&A for Practitioner Preparation Programs

This document will be updated as necessary.  
Send additional questions to [idoedprep@iowa.gov](mailto:idoedprep@iowa.gov)

## **House File 2545 - Review of Graduation Requirements, Standards, and Curriculum; Statewide Literacy Plan; Practitioner Preparation Programs; Social Studies Standards - Effective July 1, 2024**

**Q: When will the Science of Reading requirements from [HF 2545 section g](#) be added to Chapter 79 standards?**

**A:** The bill was effective July 1, 2024. Revisions to Chapter 79 rules 79.13(5)b(2) and 79.15(3)a-b are effective as of April 16, 2025.

**Q: Will Chapter 79 reflect changes related to the recent legislation prohibiting “the instructional model commonly known as the three-cueing system”?**

**A:** Iowa Code supersedes the administrative rules, which take time to promulgate, and this bill was effective starting July 1, 2024. Effective April 16, 2025, 79.15(3) includes this text “Literacy curriculum shall include evidence-based reading instruction, determined by research, including those practice identified within the statewide literacy plan, and institutions ensuring the preparation shall not include instruction or practical application on teaching foundational reading that incorporates the three-cueing system.”

## **Senate File 2411 - Divisions I, II, IV, V - Work-based Learning, Career and Technical Education, Student Teacher Requirements, Last Dollar Scholarship Program - Varied Effective Dates**

**Q: How does a candidate “bear the primary responsibility for planning, instruction, and assessment within the classroom during the student teaching experience”?**

**A:** If a candidate has previously served as a paraeducator or a substitute that meets the appropriate conditions (i.e., co-teaching, teaching feedback, grade level and content) and secured approvals (i.e., program approval, administrator/supervisor approval from previous experiences), “a student shall be credited a minimum of one week, but not more than ten weeks” toward the 14 week student teaching requirement and will be expected to “bear primary responsibility for planning, instruction, and assessment” for either four weeks or the remaining weeks of student teaching.

**Q: What is required when documenting alignment of paraeducator work, student teaching and endorsements?**

**A:** Programs must collect evidence of prior experience in either Pathway A or Pathway B.

- Pathway A: work experience as a substitute teacher or paraeducator and paraeducators registered apprenticeship grant. See 256.16(1)c(2)a(i-iii)
- Pathway B: work experience as a paraeducator. See 256.16(1)c(2)b(ii-iv)

Evidence must show that the experience was completed under the supervision of an appropriately licensed teacher in the appropriate content area and grade level.

**Q: Can work as a paraeducator, that meets the appropriate conditions, be eligible for student teaching credit if the candidate does not hold a paraeducator certificate issued by the BoEE?**

**A:** Yes. HF 787 (2025 session) Division II, Section 4, strikes the requirement of the paraeducator certificate in both 256.16(1)c(2)a(i) and 256.16(1)c(2)b(i). This bill was effective July 1, 2025.

Both pathways still allow paraeducators to participate, only the requirement of certification for those utilizing prior experience as a paraeducator is removed.

**Q: How can substitute teaching meet the requirement of student teaching?**

**A:** Substitute teaching will meet the criteria ONLY if it meets the specific requirements outlined in the bill. There are situations where substitute teaching experiences include appropriately licensed teachers, content area and grade level that a program may accept (i.e., substitute teaching in a co-teaching environment).

**Q: What counts as time in the classroom for paraeducators if the candidate is one-on-one with a student? Can candidates count both of the following: (1) time in general education classrooms with the student and (2) time in a special education classroom with the special education teacher?**

**A:** Any qualifying experience that meets the specific requirements listed in the bill would be acceptable for student teaching. As a reminder, the experience must have been in a classroom of an appropriately licensed teacher in an area and grade level that the candidate is being endorsed.

**Q: Can time in special education classrooms with the special education teacher be counted towards student teaching?**

**A:** Yes, time in a special education small group instructional setting or one-on-one classroom may be counted as long as it is at an appropriate grade level and meets the other criteria listed under the appropriate pathway.

**Q: What if the candidate meets the requirements in the bill, but the building administrator or the cooperating teachers do not believe the candidate is well prepared and needs additional experiences?**

**A:** To ensure appropriate alignment and to inform decisions, programs should collect evidence (i.e., cooperating teacher, teacher of record or administrator assessment or feedback) and local education agency signatures on forms regarding the setting where candidates served as a paraeducator or substitute. Program completion checkpoints are an institutional decision, and the program may ask for evaluation or other forms that provide evidence of preparation to move to the next checkpoint as described in Iowa Administrative Code (79.13(3)).

**Q: In regards to the following legislation, "*A student shall be credited a minimum of one week, but not more than ten weeks, of prior work experience as a substitute teacher or a paraeducator, including prior experience under the teacher and paraeducator registered apprenticeship program, toward the requirements associated with the fourteen-week student teaching requirement.*" (SF 2411, Division III, Sec. 15, 2a) what body makes these decisions and what is the criteria (i.e., type, recency, how long, full-time)?**

**A:** The program will determine the number of weeks (minimum of one week, but no more than ten weeks) based on candidate assessment of verified prior work that meets the requirements of each pathway and the candidate's endorsement area. If the candidate needs additional experiences in any of the endorsements, collecting appropriate evidence and measures to determine if additional hours would be needed is important. Consider building a decision-making tool or rubric that is clear to candidates, district stakeholders, faculty and advisers. Documentation must be detailed, complete and include school administrator signatures.

**Q: "...shall be credited..." Can one-on-one work in a special education classroom count towards student teaching? Does the program need to verify the prior experience? Does the program need to record what has been credited?**

**A:** "In the classroom" there is a level of one-one support for special education candidates that can be accepted. In short, if the candidate would be engaging in the same experience for their student teaching, that time can count. The program needs to verify cooperating teachers are appropriately licensed in the subject area and grade level endorsement for which the candidate is being prepared. The program completion requirements, within the program's outlined checkpoints, need to be met. When programs grant credit for prior experience, consider checking on HLC or other regional accrediting agency requirements and ensuring the candidate receives appropriate experience/credit.

**Q: *"The student's prior work experience took place in the classroom of a cooperating teacher who is appropriately licensed in the subject area and grade level endorsement for which the student is being prepared."* (SF 2411, Div III, Sec. 15, 2a). How is "in the classroom" interpreted?**

**A:** The requirements are exactly as stated in Chapter 79. A cooperating teacher's mentorship is required similar to student teaching. Programs should award credit toward student teaching based on code. A suggestion for programs includes documenting the unit's policy and procedure in determining prior experience and communicating it broadly with candidates and partnering districts. Programs should keep documentation of the processes and decisions in candidates' records.

**Q: How do cooperating teachers receive credits for mentoring a student teacher under the new law?**

**BoEE A:** Requirements for obtaining renewal credits for serving as a cooperating teacher have not changed.

**Q: Would experience as a Literacy Tutor for United Way of Iowa ReadingCorps Program count for prior work experience as a paraeducator?**

**A:** A paraeducator may not provide instruction unless under supervision and with the permission of the teacher of record in a classroom in an accredited school.

**Q: What are the implications of this bill, if a district hires a student teacher as a substitute teacher, to be mentored for four weeks and then serve as a substitute in an unfilled position?**

**A:** If a district wants to hire a student teacher as a long-term substitute, the educator preparation program must clarify the remaining student teaching requirements that must be completed prior to serving as a long-term substitute. During the period that the candidate completes the needed student teaching requirements, the district will commit to providing an appropriately licensed cooperating teacher who can mentor the candidate in the appropriate content area and grade level. Student teaching requirements must be completed prior to the student teacher's employment as a long-term substitute.

**Q: What if a candidate has multiple endorsement areas resulting in the need to split student teaching into three or more required experiences?**

**A:** If accepted prior experience occurred in one of the endorsement areas, consider placing the candidate in the remaining areas for which that candidate has not obtained approved experience for the remainder of student teaching.

## **House File 255 - Teacher Intern License, Temporary Initial Teaching License - Effective July 1, 2024**

**Q: Can a teacher intern candidate be admitted and complete coursework requirements if the candidate does not have a job offer?**

**A:** A job offer is required before admission to the intern program and being recommended for a teacher intern license. For candidates requiring coursework prior to the intern portion, consider adding a checkpoint to engage those teacher intern candidates in coursework prior to the next checkpoint where the candidate would be admitted to the program requiring a job offer. Programs may choose to have several pathways for teacher intern candidates to manage candidates in endorsement areas requiring coursework first (i.e., special education) or candidates without a job offer. Another option is to develop a pre-admission process.

## **House File 2586 - School Security - Varied Effective Dates**

**Q: The bill authorizes arming teachers. How will programs know what districts included armed teachers?**

**A:** Arming teachers or not is decided locally. When Educator Preparation Programs annually renew contracts with partnering schools, this question may be raised directly with the district.

## **House File 2618 - Elementary Literacy in Teacher Preparation Programs, Personalized Reading Plans, Retention Requests - Effective July 1, 2024**

**Q: What is the name of the assessment required by [HF 2618](#)? Where can programs learn more about the assessment and is this the only assessment allowed?**

**A:** The assessment is available through Pearson to utilize the [Foundations of Reading assessment](#), as required in the legislation. The Department will share additional resources for Educator Preparation Programs, and candidates on the [Department's Practitioner Preparation webpage](#).

**Q: What candidates must take the assessment?**

**A:** The assessment will be required of candidates earning the following endorsements:

- [K-6 Teacher Elementary Classroom, Endorsement 102](#)
- [K-8 Reading, Endorsement 148](#)
- [PK-K Teacher, PreKindergarten-Kindergarten Classroom, Endorsement 103](#)
- [Birth-Grade 3 Inclusive Settings, Endorsement 1001](#)
- [K-8 Instructional Strategist I: Mild/Moderate, Endorsement 260](#)

The following endorsements are expected to be added to the list in the future. The Department will communicate any additions to the endorsement list.

- [K-12 Instructional strategist I and II: ALL, Endorsement 259](#)
- [PK-K Early Childhood Special Education, Endorsement 262](#)
- [K-12 Instructional Strategist II: BD/LD, Endorsement 263](#)
- [K-12 Instructional Strategist II: ID, Endorsement 264](#)

**Q: Will Pearson add test centers? There are only 11 that are primarily located in Southeast Iowa.**

**A:** Pearson will be offering additional testing centers and online test taking options. The Department will publish a list of Pearson testing centers in Iowa and border states, and additional resources on the [Department's Foundations of Reading Test webpage](#).

**Q: Who will pay for the Foundations of Reading assessment?**

**A:** The bill requires that Educator Preparation Programs administer the test. Whether the Educator Preparation Program funds the assessment or passes those costs onto the candidate is determined by the program.

**Q: What is the timeline for implementation?**

**A: Timeline**

- **Fall 2024:** Training with Pearson to onboard Educator Preparation Programs. Educator Preparation Programs prepare for implementation and remediation. Pearson will build additional needed capacity.
- **January 2025:** Candidates in the endorsement areas determined by the Department, begin to take the assessment. Educator Preparation Programs determine at what point in the program the assessment needs to be completed (consider adding the requirement within program checkpoints). While programs can decide at what point in the program the assessment is administered, it is recommended to require completion during or after the reading methods courses, and before the candidate student teaches. This time frame allows for candidates to retake the assessment after remediation.
- **March 2025:** Programs will respond to questions in the annual report about the Foundations of Reading assessment such as:
  - Describe ongoing efforts to align your program to standards related to implementation of Science of Reading practices as required by HF 2545. Program syllabi will be requested and reviewed by the Department ensuring alignment to the new code.
  - Describe when in your program students will take the assessment. (This might vary from year 1 to year 2 of implementation. Consider when the best opportunities may be for remediation and retakes.)
  - What is your program policy for remediation for those who might not pass the assessment?
- **Aug. 1, 2025**
  - Programs report scores from Jan. 1 - July 30, 2025 on Aug. 1, 2025.
  - Programs report remediation efforts and opportunities created for the candidates to pass the test.

**Q: Is there a required passing score? What if candidates do not pass the assessment and what is considered remediation?**

**A:** The passing score set by the Department, as legislatively required for data reporting, is 240 (national benchmark). The Educator Preparation Programs shall report to the Department no later than the first of August annually, in the form and manner prescribed by the Department, the percentage of students whose scores on the assessment administered during the prior school year were above, at and below the passing score, and shall report any services or opportunities to retake the assessment the institution may make available to a student who scored below 240 in the assessment. The Department shall compile the reports submitted under this subparagraph and publish on the Department's internet site the compiled reports related to students enrolled in the practitioner preparation program who plan to teach in kindergarten through grade six.

The bill requires that the institution report services (remediation) or opportunities to retake the assessment that the institution may make available to a student who scored below 240 in the assessment.

**Q: What resources are available to help programs develop curriculum that is aligned to the assessment?**

**A:** The [Department's Foundations of Reading Test webpage](#) includes resources for curriculum development and syllabi refinement. Several examples of resources are included below.

- Framework from Pearson related to content on Foundations of Reading assessment
- Educator Preparation Literacy Standards
- Literacy Curriculum Review and Self Analysis Tool
- Syllabi Refinement Resource

**Q: What materials are available to help candidates prepare (i.e., study guide) and for candidates who are struggling?**

**A:** The [Department's Foundations of Reading Test webpage](#) provides resources from Pearson that includes a free practice assessment alongside other preparation materials. In addition, remediation resources will also be linked (i.e., Iowa Reading Research Center modules, Pearson's Annotated Bibliography)

**Q: Will the Educational Testing Service assessment be authorized, or will Pearson be the sole provider for the Foundations of Reading assessment?**

**A:** Only Pearson is authorized to administer this test as Pearson is the sole holder of the specific assessment required in the bill.

**Q: Can candidates take the assessment now?**

**A:** Yes, candidates can take the assessment and use the resources. However, since Pearson has not yet completed the website build, which includes preparation programs, there will not be a reporting option.

**Q: Where can I find Pearson's resources?**

**A:** All testing resources (testing windows, list of locations, etc.) are available on the [Department's Foundations of Reading Test webpage](#). Department consultants, especially Stephanie TeKippe and Lindsay Harrison, will work with programs to provide additional resources as programs update curriculum and need additional resources aligned with PK-12 practices.

Contact Pearson directly by emailing Lauren Zielenski at [lauren.zielenski@pearson.com](mailto:lauren.zielenski@pearson.com).

**Q: Can the program require candidates to pass the test before being recommended for licensure?**

**A:** The Law does not require candidates to pass the test. If the program requires the candidates to pass the test before being recommended for license, consider clear communication regarding the program requirements with the candidates and providing resources and support for the candidates to achieve a passing score.