

## Teaching and Learning

# Teacher Preparation Programs: Literacy Coursework and Exam Guidance

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## Overview and Background

Since 2021, the legislature has passed many laws concerning literacy education. [Act 108](#) of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session requires early literacy training for K-3 teachers of reading, math, science, and/or social studies, including special education teachers, and principals and assistant principals of schools that include grades K-3. [Act 438](#) of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session requires coursework in teacher preparation programs specific to the teaching of reading and literacy. [Act 448](#) of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session requires kindergarten through third-grade teachers seeking initial licensure to pass an examination of the teaching of reading that is scientifically researched and evidence-based. [Act 607](#) of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session requires that teacher preparation programs require 3 credit hours, or 45 contact hours, of coursework engaged in content specific to teaching students with dyslexia.

The above laws are reflected in [Bulletin 996](#) - *Standards for Approval of Teacher and/or Educational Leader Preparation Programs* and [Bulletin 746](#) - *Louisiana Standards for State Certification of School Personnel*.

## Literacy Coursework

Beginning September 1, 2024, completers in teacher preparation programs must have the required number of semester hours or contact hour equivalent in the teaching of reading and literacy in alignment with the science of reading competencies as listed below:

- 9 semester hours for certification in Birth-K, PK-3, 1-5
- 6 semester hours for certification in middle grades 4-8
- 3 semester hours for certification in secondary 6-12 content areas, all-level K-12 areas
- 9 semester hours for certification in special education areas (early interventionist, hearing impaired, significant disabilities, visually impaired mild/moderate special education 1-5, mild/moderate special education 4-8, or mild/moderate special education 6-12)

Students who enter a teacher preparation program during the 2024-2025 school year and thereafter must have the required dyslexia coursework. The three hours or contact-hour equivalent may be included in the science of reading courses if applicable.

# Teaching of Reading (TOR) Exam

Beginning January 1, 2024, as required per [R.S. 17:7.1\(A\)\(8\)](#), an applicant applying for initial certification to teach kindergarten through third grade shall pass the BESE-approved Teaching of Reading: Elementary or Teaching of Reading: Elementary Subtest exam. Candidates already enrolled in the year-long residency and holding either the Practitioner License (PL) or Resident Teacher License (R) prior to January 1, 2025, are not subject to this provision. These candidates are not subject to any Teaching of Reading exam requirement.

Currently, some BESE-approved teacher preparation programs are using the Teaching of Reading exam in lieu of semester hours to meet general literacy requirements. However, beginning September 1, 2024, policy requires all literacy requirements to be met with contact or semester hours in alignment with the Science of Reading competencies.

To ensure an additional assessment is not required of teacher candidates, LDOE worked with ETS and has replaced the existing Reading Language Arts exam, which is a part of the Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects Praxis® exam, with the Louisiana-specific Teaching of Reading Exam. This exam underwent a standard-setting study, and the cut score was adopted by BESE in January 2024.

- Current adopted Exam: Teaching of Reading: Elementary (5205), a passing score of 159
- Louisiana-specific Elementary Multiple Subjects Exam (7001) available summer of 2024
- Louisiana-specific Teaching of Reading Exam (7002) available summer of 2024
- Stand-alone 5205 exam can be used for any educator who has already passed the Elementary Multiple Subjects exam (5001) and needs Teaching of Reading
- Adopted passing scores of the Teaching Reading Language Arts Subtest (7002) will increase over time:
  - Elementary Teaching Reading Language Arts Subtest (7002), effective 6/1/24 to 12/31/26, score 138;
  - Elementary Teaching Reading Language Arts Subtest (7002), effective 1/1/27 to 12/31/28, score 147;
  - Elementary Teaching Reading Language Arts Subtest (7002), effective 1/1/29, score 153,
- The Teaching of Reading: Elementary (5205) will not expire, nor will its passing score change

The Elementary Multiple Subjects Exam (5001) will also not expire, nor will the passing scores change.

## Initial certifications

Initial certifications in Birth-K, PK-3, 1-5, and special education areas are subject to this exam. The Teaching of Reading Exam does NOT replace reading coursework in these certification areas. Teacher preparation completers not holding an R or PL prior to January 1, 2025, will be required to meet the TOR exam requirement. This requirement can be met in multiple ways:

- Passing the TOR 5205 in combination with an adopted Elementary Content Exam
- Passing the 7001 Elementary Multiple Subjects Exam (includes TOR in 7002)
- Passing the 7002 and any **combination** of 5001 or 7001 Math, Science and Social Studies

## Add-On Certifications

For add-on certifications in Birth-K, PK-3, 1-5, and special education, educators must fulfill the Teaching of Reading Exam requirement in addition to the required semester or contact hour coursework

requirement. The Teaching of Reading Exam does NOT replace reading coursework in these certification areas.

All other certification areas do not require the Teaching of Reading Exam. However, general literacy hour requirements may be met with the appropriate number of semester hours, equivalent contact hours, or the Teaching of Reading exam. Successful completion of the [BESE-approved literacy foundations](#) training may also be accepted for the number of hours approved per program to fulfill general literacy hour requirements.

## Literacy Foundations Training Credit Hours Equivalent

Teachers who are seeking additional endorsement areas (add-ons) may use the literacy training received in the school system under [Act 108](#) to count towards literacy coursework for their add-on certification. LDOE-approved Literacy Foundations Training courses will be assigned [credit hour equivalents](#) based on the guidelines set forth by LDOE. A team at the LDOE will meet to review each course and document the rubric score.

The credit hour equivalents are determined if the training is Louisiana-approved, if it is International Dyslexia Association (IDA) accredited, and/or 100+ hours or 2+ years of coursework.

| Credit Hours Equivalent | Criteria   |
|-------------------------|--|
| 9 Credit Hours          | Louisiana-approved, IDA-accredited, 100+ hours or 2+ years of coursework |
| 6 Credit Hours.         | Louisiana-approved, IDA-accredited                                       |
| 3 Credit Hours          | Louisiana-approved   |

## FAQs

**If my candidate is getting certified in Elementary Grades 1-5 and plans to teach 4th or 5th grade, do they still have to take the new exam?**

Yes, they must take the exam because their certification area authorizes them to teach up to grade 3.

**Do residents have to take the new exam if they have already taken the current exam and will begin their residency in the fall of 2023 or spring of 2024?**

Any candidate holding an R or PL prior to January 1, 2025, will not be required to take the exam.

**Do K-12 certifications, such as art, music, and physical education, have to take the exam for initial licensure?**

No, these candidates will not have to take the exam.

**Can a post-baccalaureate candidate in a school system-based teacher preparation program who completed the Act 108 literacy training use the training to fulfill the literacy semester/contact hour requirement?**

Although school system-based programs are allowed to outsource their courses when necessary, the Act 108 literacy training can be used to fulfill the literacy hours only if the equivalent hours can be indicated on an official college or university transcript. This process is done through the vendor of the training.

The school systems may use the approved literacy training for initial certification as a supplement to their literacy curriculum/modules for their certification program.

**Can a post-baccalaureate candidate (not in a school system-based program) who completed the Act 108 literacy training use it to fulfill the literacy semester/contact hour requirement?**

No, the candidate must complete the literacy hours or equivalent through their BESE-approved program.

**Does the Literacy Foundations training count towards the Dyslexia course requirement, even if it meets the IDA accreditation?**

No. Literacy Foundations training cannot be used for initial certification requirements. While literacy foundations training could be a component, additional information on characteristics of dyslexia, screening and identification and effective multi-sensory instructional strategies to support students would also be important for educators.

**When can candidates take the 5205 exam and have it count? I understand they can take 5001 if they start residency in 2024, but can they start taking 5205 now and have it count?**

Yes, the 5205 is currently adopted as a standalone exam and will count as long as it is taken and passed during a BESE-adopted period. The 5205 will not be phased out and can always be taken to fulfill the TOR exam requirement. However, it does not fulfill the regular ELA subtest requirement alone; this exam would be in addition to an ELA content exam (5002). Any candidate holding an R or PL prior to January 1, 2025, will not be required to take any Teaching of Reading exam (5205 or 7002).

**Do my current K-3 teachers have to add anything to their certificate if they have gone through the Act 108 training?**

Current K-3 and special education educators who have taken the Louisiana-approved training through their school system do NOT need to add anything to their certificate.

**If my candidate has met the literacy requirements by taking the current TOR exam and they graduate in December, will they meet the literacy requirements at the time?**

No, beginning September 1, 2024, the candidates will not be able to use the exam to count towards the literacy hour requirements.

**Can the dyslexia course be offered as part of the literacy course requirements?**

Providers may decide how the course is included in their programs. As long as the dyslexia and literacy courses meet the competencies in Bulletin 746, the course can be offered either within the required literacy hours or in addition to the required literacy hours of that certification area. Providers could replace a course, revise an existing course, or add a new course to meet the law and policy requirements.

**When can the 5206 be used?**

The Teaching of Reading (TOR) K-12 (5206) can be used for those BESE-approved programs allowed to use the TOR exam in lieu of semester or contact hours until September 1, 2024. After September 1, 2024, the 5206 TOR exam can only be used for add-on purposes in middle school or highschool in lieu of the required contact or semester hours required for the add-on.