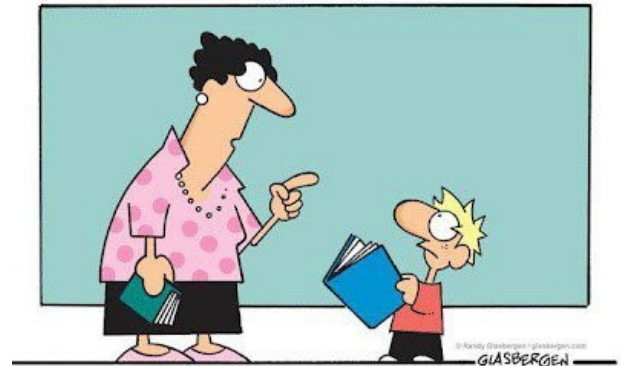


K-12 Reading Endorsement Questions and Answers (updated December, 2019)

Who needs it?

Q. What is the Reading Endorsement Add-on Certification Program?

A. The Florida Reading Endorsement Program consists of five courses. The guiding principle of the program is that teachers will understand and teach reading as an ongoing strategic process resulting in students comprehending diverse text. Teachers will understand how writing, listening, and speaking support the teaching of reading, and how family involvement supports student achievement in reading. Teachers will understand that all students have instructional needs and apply the systematic problem solving process: use data to accurately identify a problem, analyze the problem to determine why it is occurring, design and implement instruction, interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction/interventions. Teachers will understand that the problem solving process is recursive and ongoing, utilized for effective instructional decision-making.



"It's called 'reading'. It's how people install new software into their brains"

Florida's Department of Education requires that certain teachers be reading endorsed or certified in order to teach reading. Teachers who teach any grade 7-12 state-coded reading course must be reading endorsed or certified. There are also two state statutes that require other teachers to be endorsed or certified. State statute (s.1011.62(9)(c)7.(d)1 F.S.) requires any K-12 teacher, including ESE and ESOL, who is providing intensive reading intervention (i.e., MTSS Tier 3 students as defined by the district's K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan) be reading endorsed or certified. This statute takes effect at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Another state statute (s. 1008.25(7)(b)3 F.S.) requires that any teacher, including ESE and ESOL, who is teaching reading to retained third graders, including summer camp students, must be reading endorsed or certified. This state statute takes effect on July 1, 2020.

Q. What is the difference between Reading Endorsement and Reading Certification?

A. An endorsement is a "rider" on top of a valid Florida teaching certificate with another subject coverage and denotes a particular expertise in an instructional level or methodology. An endorsement cannot stand alone on a certificate. Certification stands on its own. The criteria for

each is determined by the state of Florida. The Reading Endorsement does not require a Subject Area Exam; whereas, Reading Certification does.

Q. Does a teacher with a master’s degree in reading need to earn the Reading Endorsement?

A. No, a teacher does not need both. A teacher either needs to be reading endorsed or reading certified. A master’s degree in reading meets all of the state’s requirements to teach reading. In order to be in compliance with state mandates, Reading Endorsement or Reading Certification must be added to the teacher’s Florida teaching certificate.

Reading Endorsement Courses

Q. What is required to get the Reading Endorsement?

A. There are five courses required for the Reading Endorsement. Each of these courses is grounded in research that addresses the six components of reading as a process: comprehension, oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. The courses also include the application of research-based reading instruction, reading assessments, and the application and foundations of differentiation. The five courses, which must be taken one at a time in numerical order, are:

Competency 1 – Foundations of Reading Instruction

Competency 2 – Application of Research-Based Instructional Practices

Competency 3 – Foundations of Assessment

Competency 4 – Foundations and Applications of Differentiated Instruction

Competency 5 – Demonstrating Accomplishment (culminating practicum)

Q. Is it true that I may not need to take every course?

A. Teachers who hold an elementary education degree or an ESE K-12 degree may be exempted from one or more courses by the Florida DOE based upon their college work. In order to find out, the teacher needs to go to the DOE website and apply to add on Reading Endorsement to his/her teaching certificate. The \$75 add-on fee is required up front. The DOE will evaluate the teacher’s college transcript(s) and send a Status of Eligibility letter to the teacher. The letter, which indicates what the teacher needs to take in order to add on the endorsement, must be sent to Kitty Robinson (kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us) for processing. It may take several months to receive the letter from the DOE.

Reading Endorsement Courses

Q. What if I take one or two courses before receiving my Status of Eligibility letter and it says I didn't need to take those courses?

A. The teacher will still receive the points for the course(s) and, more importantly, a valuable review of all of the information from those particular courses. When the DOE exempts a teacher from courses, the assumption is that the teacher knows all of the information that was taught in the exempted courses and will be able to apply that knowledge in Competency 5, the Practicum. Most teachers have to take more than just Competency 5. If the Status letter does require the teacher to take one or more of the beginning courses, s/he will be closer to meeting state statute deadlines.

Q. When are the courses offered?

A. Fall courses start shortly after the school year starts in August, spring courses start shortly after the second semester starts in January, and summer classes are offered in June. Competencies 1-4 are offered during all three time periods. However, Competency 5 is typically only offered in the fall and spring schedules.

Courses during the school year are a blended model: six face-to-face sessions from 5:30 to 8:30 PM once every other week and independent work through the Moodle platform, due before the next face-to-face session, during the school year months.

Summer courses require the same number of face-to-face sessions and the exact same assignments as the school year courses. The face-to-face sessions meet twice a week in the morning (8:30 to 11:30 AM) or in the afternoon (12:30 to 3:30 PM). Teachers have a much shorter time period to complete the assignments in between face-to-face sessions.

Q. Are Hillsborough County District Reading Endorsement courses offered as self-paced online courses?

A. Currently, all of Hillsborough County's Endorsement courses are a blended model, alternating face-to-face classes with an online Moodle component. The district is waiting for approval from the DOE to offer online courses from an outside vendor as part of our state-approved program. If

approval is received in January, 2020, the courses will be offered starting in February, 2020. **THE DISTRICT WILL NOT ACCEPT ONLINE COURSES FROM NEFEC AFTER DECEMBER, 2019.**

Reading Endorsement Courses

Q. Can a Reading Endorsement course be cancelled?

A. Yes, if the enrollment is extremely low, the course may be cancelled. However, the course will be offered the following term. Teachers are encouraged to plan ahead and register for courses early.

- For classes starting in August, registration opens on July 1 prior to the start of classes.
- For classes starting in January, registration opens on November 1 prior to the start of classes.
- For classes starting and ending in June, registration opens on April 1 prior to the start of classes.

Q. If a teacher has to take ESOL classes, as well as earn the Reading Endorsement, which takes precedence?

A. ESOL questions should be directed to Educator Certification at 813-840-7180.

Q. Does a teacher have to take a subject area test, as well as the courses, to earn the Reading Endorsement?

A. No, there is no Subject Area Exam for Reading Endorsement. However, Reading Certification does require a Subject Area Exam.

Q. Can a teacher take the Reading Subject Area Exam with no coursework and satisfy the requirements for Reading Endorsement?

A. **The DOE passed a rule change on November 15, 2019. A teacher who takes the Reading Subject Area Exam and passes it can now add on Reading Endorsement to his/her FL teaching certificate without taking any coursework. Teachers should contact the Florida DOE for further information.**

Q. Is there a deadline for completing the Reading Endorsement courses?

A. There are several aspects to consider when answering this question:

1. If a teacher is impacted by the state statute requiring teachers of retained third graders to be endorsed or certified (s. 1008.25(7)(b)3 F.S.), s/he must meet the requirement by July 1,

2020. If the teacher has not completed the required courses by the due date, s/he will sign an Agreement to Earn.

2. If a teacher is impacted by the state statute requiring teachers who provide intensive reading intervention to MTSS Tier 3 students (s.1011.62(9)(c)7.(d)1 F.S.), s/he must meet the requirement by the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. If the teacher has not completed the required courses by the due date, s/he will sign an Agreement to Earn.

3. If a teacher who is not required to take all five courses signs an Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement based upon either of the situations above, s/he must complete the required courses in time to finish the add-on process before the expiration date on the Status of Eligibility letter. Any questions specific to a teacher's situation should be directed to Educator Certification at 813-840-7180.

4. If a teacher who is required to take all five courses signs an Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement, s/he must complete the program within three years – two courses the first year, two classes the second year, and the last class during the third year. It may be possible for teachers to shorten the time window by attending June offerings. The due dates for completion of courses are based upon the anniversary of the date the Agreement was signed. Any questions specific to a teacher's situation should be directed to Educator Certification at 813-840-7180.

5. If a teacher is not required to earn the Reading Endorsement, but is completing it for her/his own professional growth, s/he must complete the required courses within five years of starting the program.

6. Regardless of the teacher's personal situation and requirements, the Reading Endorsement Program must be completed within five years of starting the courses.

What Counts towards Reading Endorsement?

Q. Is taking the Hillsborough County District courses the only way to complete the Reading Endorsement?

A. No, the district accepts the following:

- SDHC's Alternative Certification Program's (ACP) "Reading to Learn" course in place of SDHC's Reading Endorsement Competency 2
- Any state approved university Reading Endorsement Program - University credit cannot be mixed with Hillsborough County School District credit. The teacher must submit

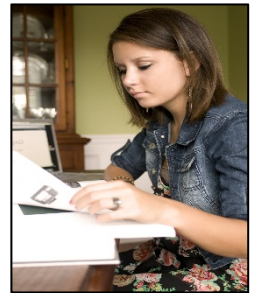


documentation of successful completion to Kitty Robinson at kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

- Hillsborough Community College’s EPI Reading 2 course in place of SDHC’s Reading Endorsement Competency 2 – The teacher must submit documentation of successful completion to Kitty Robinson at kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us.
- Professional Development Alternatives (PDA) “Differentiating Reading Instruction for Students: Making It Explicit” in place of Reading Endorsement Competency 4 - This course is a 60-hour facilitated module, which is currently offered twice per year, in the fall and in the early spring. The courses are listed in PDS and advertised to the sites via ESE Specialists/Contacts. **In order to count for the Reading Endorsement Program, the teacher must have completed Competencies 1, 2, and 3 (or have DOE exemptions) before taking the course.**

Q. Do any district trainings, other than the five state-approved district Reading Endorsement courses, count towards the Reading Endorsement?

A. At this time, no district trainings other than the five Reading Endorsement courses count towards earning the Reading Endorsement.



Q. Does Hillsborough County School District accept any outside online courses as credit towards the Reading Endorsement?

A. The district is submitting courses from an outside vendor as part of our district Reading Endorsement program to the DOE in December, 2019. If these courses are approved, the district will start offering them in 2020. **The district will NOT accept courses from NEFEC after December, 2019.**

Q. Do any of the Alternate Certification Program classes counts towards the Reading Endorsement?

A. Yes, ACP’s “Reading to Learn” counts for Reading Endorsement Competency 2.

Q. Do any of the ESOL Endorsement classes count towards the Reading Endorsement?

A. No

Q. If a teacher started working on a Reading Endorsement in another Florida district, will Hillsborough County accept those courses towards SDHC’s program?

A. Reading Endorsement courses must have been taken within the previous five years in a former district and appear on the in-service record from that district to be counted in Hillsborough County School District. Hillsborough County will NOT accept courses from a college or university, even if considered part of another district’s approved program. A teacher should contact Erin Barnhart in Professional Development to have the other district’s classes credited in Hillsborough County School District.

Q. Can college reading courses count towards completion of the Reading Endorsement?

A. College credit from an accredited institution of higher education may be used to satisfy component (course) requirements if the DOE can align the course content to the Reading Endorsement Competency Indicators. The only way to determine if a teacher is exempt from certain Reading Endorsement Program courses is to apply online for the Reading Endorsement. The DOE will evaluate the teacher’s college coursework and send an Official Statement of Status of Eligibility, which states what the teacher must complete to earn the Reading Endorsement. The directive in the Status of Eligibility letter is valid for three years. The Status of Eligibility letter must be sent to Kitty Robinson at kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us for processing before registering for Hillsborough County School District courses.

Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement



Q. What does signing an Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement involve?

A. An Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement, a legally binding document between Educator Certification and a teacher, stipulates a teacher who has to complete all five courses has one year from the date of signing to take the first two courses toward the fulfillment of his/her Reading Endorsement in order to remain employed in a reading position. During the second year of the agreement, the teacher must take the next two courses, followed by the last class in the third year.

The timeline for an Agreement to Earn for a teacher who does not have to take all five courses will depend upon how many classes s/he needs to take, but s/he must complete any required courses in time to complete the add-on process before the expiration date on the Status of Eligibility letter. Teachers should not delay in fulfilling the requirements since course offerings are always subject to cancellation due to extremely low enrollment numbers or life events that may prevent completion of a course. Further questions about Agreement to Earn should be directed to Educator Certification at 813-840-7180.

Requirements for Elementary Teachers

Q. Do all elementary teachers have to earn the Reading Endorsement?

A. There are two state statutes that impact whether or not an elementary teacher must be reading endorsed. The two reasons for the requirement are:

1. A teacher who is teaching retained third-grade students, including summer camp students
2. A teacher who is providing intensive reading intervention to any grade level student (i.e., MTSS Tier 3 students as defined by the district's K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan)

Q. If a teacher impacted by one of the two referenced state statutes does not complete the Reading Endorsement Program by the deadline, what happens?

A. The teacher will have to sign an Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement and complete the program.

Q. If a school has a teacher opening that falls under the requirements of one or both of the above-referenced state statutes, will a teacher who picks the position during the pool have to be reading endorsed?

A. Starting with the 2020-2021 school year, if the reading position serves retained third graders and/or MTSS Tier 3 students of any grade level, the teacher will have to sign an Agreement to Earn Reading Endorsement if s/he is not already endorsed or certified in reading.

Q. Will a retained 3rd grade student or a MTSS Tier 3 student of any grade level, who transfers in after the start of the school year, need to be placed in a reading endorsed teacher's class?

A. Yes, starting in the 2020-2021 school year, retained 3rd grade students and/or MTSS Tier 3 students will need to be provided a teacher who is either certified in reading or K-12 endorsed in reading. The teacher of retained 3rd grade students must also be rated highly effective.



Applying for the Reading Endorsement

Q. What is the process to determine if a teacher is exempt from any of the five courses?

A. First, a teacher must open up an account with the Florida Department of Education. After opening an account, the teacher will pay \$75 to apply to “add on” a Reading Endorsement. Teachers can find step-by-step directions for how to apply on the Reading Endorsement conference site. The conference site can be found by clicking on the “Departments” icon on the IDEAS desktop, then locating Reading Endorsement under Office of Teaching and Learning. After a DOE representative has evaluated the teacher’s college transcript(s), the teacher will receive an Official Statement of Status of Eligibility. The teacher needs to forward the DOE letter to Kitty Robinson (kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us) to determine where to start in the Reading Endorsement Program and to receive district in-service credit for any exempted courses.

Q. Where can a teacher find directions on how to request a transcript evaluation?

A. Step-by-step directions can be located on the Reading Endorsement conference site.

Q. After applying, how long does it take to receive a Status of Eligibility letter from the DOE?

A. The process of applying for Reading Endorsement and receiving the Status of Eligibility letter can be lengthy. Teachers can go back into their DOE account and check the status of the application. (<http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/on-line-application-status-lookup-site.html>)

Q. Why does a teacher have to pay \$75 up front when applying for a Reading Endorsement?

A. The teacher is actually paying an add-on fee, which is required for any addition to a teacher’s teaching certificate. A DOE employee will research the teacher’s college transcript(s) and determine if any of the teacher’s college coursework counts towards Reading Endorsement. The teacher will not have to pay a fee again as long as any required courses are taken and the add-on process is completed before the expiration date on the Status of Eligibility letter. After completing all required

courses, a teacher needs to contact her/his representative in the district's Certification office to complete the add-on process.

Q. When a teacher applies for a Reading Endorsement and pays \$75 up front to have his/her college transcript(s) evaluated, what happens if the teacher needs to take courses?

A. The DOE credits the \$75 to a teacher's account for three years. If a teacher completes the coursework during that three-year window, s/he will not have to pay again to have the endorsement added onto the teacher's Florida certificate.

Q. What happens if a teacher cannot pay the \$75 up front?

A. If a teacher cannot pay \$75 up front, s/he will have to take all five Competency courses and pay the fee after finishing all five courses and applying for the Endorsement.



Registering for Reading Endorsement Courses

Q. How does a teacher register for a course?

A. Registration for courses is done through PDS in IDEAS. Registration opens two months prior to the start of classes. For the fall classes, registration always opens on July 1; for the spring classes, registration always opens on November 1; and for the summer classes, registration always opens on April 1. If a class in PDS is full, the teacher can click on "register" and will be asked if s/he would like to be added to the wait list. If there are openings on a wait list, a teacher should add her/his name and check email frequently, up to the night before the course is going to start, to see if her/his name moved off of the wait list and onto the class roster.

Q. Is there a registration fee or tuition charge to take the Hillsborough Reading Endorsement Program courses?

A. The district's blended model courses are provided free of charge to currently employed, state-certified teachers in our district schools. Teachers may have to pay for online courses once an outside vendor has been approved by the DOE. Teachers should NOT register with outside vendors without first checking with Kitty Robinson at kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

Q. How many courses can I take at one time?

A. Teachers can only be enrolled in one course at a time since they are 60-hour classes.

Q. Is it okay to register for a course before receiving a Status of Eligibility letter from the DOE?

A. At this time, it is best for a teacher to wait for the results of the add-on application before registering for a district course. The Status of Eligibility letter will tell the teacher which specific courses she or he is required to take.

Q. What happens if a course becomes full during registration?

A. A teacher can put his or her name on the wait list. Should the teacher do so, s/he should check back often to see if her/his name has moved off the wait list and onto the class roster. This could happen up to one day before the start of the class. **A teacher should not register for a class if:**

- s/he cannot attend all face-to-face dates of the class
- s/he has not taken all of the required previous courses or received DOE credit for prior courses
- s/he is not committed to completing the class, regardless of Status of Eligibility requirements

Credit for Reading Endorsement Courses

Q. What credit does a teacher receive for taking the Reading Endorsement courses?

A. Each of the Reading Endorsement courses is worth 60 in-service points for a total of 300 points for the Program. If a teacher is exempted by the DOE from taking any course(s) in the program, the exemption(s) will be credited the 60 district in-service points once the teacher forwards the Status of Eligibility letter to Kitty Robinson (kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us), Coordinator of Literacy K-12. Ms. Robinson will contact PD to have the teacher's district in-service record updated.

Q. Do the Reading Endorsement classes count towards the state-required ESE 20 hours needed for recertification?

A. No

Q. Why isn't Reading Endorsement showing on my Florida teaching certificate since I completed all of the courses?

A. When a teacher completes all of her or his required courses, s/he must contact the district's Certification office to have the Reading Endorsement added onto her/his Florida teaching certificate. The teacher will NOT be in compliance with the previously referenced state statutes if Reading Endorsement or Reading Certification does not appear on the teaching certificate.

Q. Is there a financial bonus for earning the Reading Endorsement?

A. Hillsborough County School District has chosen to offer the Reading Endorsement Program free-of-charge to its currently employed teachers. Therefore, teachers are not required, although they have the option, to pay for a university program (15 hours college credit) or online courses to meet the state criteria for their positions.

Funding for the district program comes from the K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan. In the spring of each year, a determination is made if there are funds still available to pay a bonus to district teachers who have completed the program. **THIS FINANCIAL INCENTIVE IS CONSIDERED ON A YEAR-TO-YEAR BASIS AND IS NOT GUARANTEED TO BE PAID.**

Should a determination be made to pay an incentive, it is based upon the number of courses the teacher actually completed in the district within the established timeline. The amount allotted for such an incentive is \$200 per course, awarded after the teacher has successfully completed Competency 5. If a teacher was given an exemption for a course by the DOE, that course will not be counted for the bonus. If a teacher graduated from a university program, inside or out of state, and had the Reading Endorsement included, the teacher is not eligible for such a bonus. The bonus is for completing the district's add-on Reading Endorsement program, not for completing a master's degree in reading or a university program for reading certification.

All questions about the Reading Endorsement Program should be directed to Kitty Robinson, Coordinator of Literacy K-12 at kathryn.robinson@sdhc.k12.fl.us or call 813-272-4366.

For questions specifically about certification, contact Educator Certification at 813-840-7180.