

Reading Specialist PK-12 Program Framework Guidelines

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**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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Introduction

The fundamental purpose of a teacher preparation program approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education is to admit, prepare, and support candidates for the teaching profession who, upon graduation, have the knowledge and skills to enable PreK-12 students in Pennsylvania to achieve academic success. Approved Pennsylvania education program providers (EPP) design and deliver **Reading Specialist preparation programs for the PK-12 certificate** to prepare candidates to teach in a Reading Specialist setting as specified in [CSPG 57](#) for Reading Specialist PK-12. Furthermore, the preparation program for Reading Specialist teachers will provide candidates with the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to meet the needs of students working collaboratively with other professionals and provide instruction/interventions to students in the following areas:

- Foundational Skills,
- Reading Informational Text,
- Reading Literature,
- Writing, and
- Speaking and listening.

Teachers in the PK-12 level are expected to have knowledge of the subject matter they teach in the Reading Specialist setting. Candidates interested in teaching at the PK-12 level must, in one sense, be prepared to “unpack” complex issues and procedures to their foundational elements, yet in another sense, be able to motivate and challenge students with a variety of evolving applications of the subject matter. This expertise may result from a teacher education program that requires subject matter coursework, or it may be a result of an undergraduate major in the subject area that is accompanied or followed by a teacher preparation program.

The Reading Specialist PK-12 Preparation Program is a compilation of coursework, competencies, and field experiences to allow the candidate to gain expertise in teaching and identifying the needs of different disability populations. Note, the Reading Specialist PK-12 Preparation Program does not include training for specialized therapists/teachers such as Speech Pathologist teachers, teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or teachers of the Blind or Visually Impaired.

This document has been created to provide the **Reading Specialist PK-12 Candidate Competencies**. To develop a Reading Specialist (PK-12) Preparation Program, EPPs must utilize the material contained in this document and use the content in these existing guidelines to address the technical pieces of an educator preparation program:

- [K-12 guidelines](#),
- [Accommodations and Adaptations and ELL Program Framework Guidelines](#),
- [Structured Literacy \(SL\) Program Framework Guidelines](#),
- [Common Ground Framework Guidelines](#), and
- [Professional Ethics \(PE\) Program Framework Guidelines](#).

Candidate Competencies

This section outlines the competencies required for certification by Chapter 354: “The preparing institution shall ensure that candidates complete a well-planned sequence of professional educator courses and field experiences to develop an understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, facts, methods of inquiry and application of technology related to each academic discipline the candidates plan to teach” (22 Pa. Code §354.25(b) (3)).

The following words and terms, when used in these guidelines, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Common Terminology

Candidate: individuals enrolled in reading specialist programs

Decodable texts: books that are written with a focus on a particular phonetic pattern or word family.

Diagnostic measures: identify a student’s specific strengths and weaknesses that are used to guide intervention/instruction; usually administered when a screening measure indicates the need for intervention.

Digital texts: any text intended to be consumed by their audience in digital form. Therefore, the means of delivering the message in the text must be digital.

Disciplinary literacy: is an emphasis on the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the disciplines.

Diverse learners: include students of all abilities from racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse communities and backgrounds.

Diverse perspectives: refer to various viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds that people have.

Formative measures: low stakes assessments used to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback that instructors use to improve their teaching, and students use to improve their learning; help identify student strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work.

Highly qualified literacy professional: certified reading specialist and higher education literacy professors.

Leveled texts: characterized and categorized by the text's difficulty level. Based on several criteria, leveled books range from guided reading levels A-Z or Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

Metacognition: awareness and knowledge of one's mental processes such that one can monitor, regulate, and then direct them to a desired end.

Multi-modal literacies: systems of representation that use different ways of expressing oneself and different forms of media, such as print, drawing, photography, and audio and video recording.

Multimodal texts: a text design that incorporates various modes (language, images, sounds) and media to communicate or teach information.

Multisensory instruction: students use visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile senses to learn and reinforce skills.

Students: prekindergarten through 12th grade learners.

Screening measures: brief assessments of a particular skill or ability that is highly predictive of a later outcome; designed to sort students into one of two groups: 1) those who require intervention and 2) those who do not.

Summative measures: comprehensive assessments that evaluate student performance at the end of an instructional period or school year; summative assessments measure a student's overall reading performance; aggregate data from summative assessments can inform school leaders about the effectiveness of the school's reading program.

Supervised: face to face and/or virtual synchronous and/or asynchronous observations of candidates working directly with students

Traditional texts: print books with pages to be turned; this includes wordless picture books, picture books, chapter books, and graphic novels.

Word Boundaries: a phonological awareness skill where learners identify where one word in a sentence ends and another begins.

Framing Statement

- Each of these competencies is meant to address learners in PK-12.
- When implementing these competencies, one should always consider the needs of diverse learners and adapt instruction as needed.

*On occasion language is used to clarify the structured literacy competencies. This information will be noted separately from the Structured Literacy citation.

1. Assessment and Intervention	
1.1	Know and apply in practice considerations for meeting the needs of diverse learners based on their stage of literacy development.
1.2	Understand rationale for assessment: select, implement, interpret, and communicate results from a variety of assessments in each component of literacy including norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests, formal and informal inventories, constructed response measures, portfolio-based assessments, student self-evaluations, work /performance samples, observations, anecdotal records, journals, curriculum-based measures, and other indicators of student progress. (SL-RS 1.D) *Reading specialists should be able to understand, identify and explain the various kinds of assessments.
1.3	Know and apply in practice considerations for selecting, implementing, and interpreting results from screening measures to identify students with literacy delays.
1.4	Know and apply in practice considerations for selecting, implementing, interpreting, and communicating results from diagnostic measures to identify specific needs of literacy learners to guide instruction.
1.5	Know and apply in practice considerations for selecting, implementing, interpreting, and communicating results from formative measures used to identify ongoing progress of literacy learners.
1.6	Know and apply in practice considerations for selecting, implementing, interpreting, and communicating results from summative measures used to analyze overall literacy performance.
1.7	Know, use, and critically analyze assessment information to plan, deliver, and monitor research-based responsive instruction to small groups and individual students.
2. Phonemic Awareness	
2.1	Understand and support classroom teachers in understanding the rationale for identifying, pronouncing, classifying, and comparing all the consonant phonemes and vowel phonemes of English; and understand the overarching concept of phonology and the subskills of phonological working memory, rapid automatic naming, phonological awareness, phonological perception, and phoneme articulation. (SL-RS 2.A)
2.2	Understand, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for levels of phonological sensitivity (word boundaries, compound words, syllables, and onset rime). (SL-RS 2.B) *This includes larger language structures vs individual phonemes.
2.3	Understand, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for phonemic-awareness difficulties; and understand and apply in practice considerations for levels of phonological sensitivity and how to leverage phonological skills for spelling.

	(SL-RS 2.C)
2.4	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing consideration for the progression of phonemic-awareness skill development across age and grade. (SL-RS 2.D)
2.5	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the principles of phonemic-awareness instruction: brief, multisensory, conceptual, articulatory, and auditory-verbal. (SL-RS 2.E)
2.6	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the appropriate uses of assistive technology in phonological and phonemic awareness. (SL-RS 2.F)
2.7	Know and apply in practice considerations for providing extensive opportunities for students to apply newly learned phonemic awareness skills using oral language activities.
3. Phonics and Word Recognition	
3.1	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the structure of English orthography and the patterns and rules that inform the teaching of single and multisyllabic regular word reading. (SL-RS 2.F)
3.2	<p>Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for systematically, cumulatively, and explicitly teaching basic decoding and spelling; and know and apply in practice considerations for systematically, cumulatively, and explicitly teaching and reviewing basic decoding and spelling skills. (SL-RS 3.B)</p> <p>*Spelling is also referred to as encoding. *We define systematically, cumulatively, and explicitly as comprehensive (research) based (on) scope and sequence.</p>
3.3	<p>Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for organizing word recognition and spelling lessons by following a structured phonics lesson plan as appropriate; and know and apply in practice and support classroom teachers in organizing word-recognition and spelling lessons by following a structured morpheme lesson plan. In consideration of class wide intervention or class wide phonics skill review, apply practical considerations for spelling and word-recognition skills; and in consideration of class wide intervention or class wide phonics skill review, apply practical considerations for spelling and word-recognition skills. (SL-RS 3.C)</p> <p>*Spelling is also referred to as encoding.</p>
3.4	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in considerations for using multisensory routines to enhance student engagement and memory; explain how to leverage word building skills with word chunks (morphemes and syllables); and use tools (word maps, morpheme matrices, morpheme sums, morpheme cards) to build words and word relationships to support the link between meaning, spelling, and syntax. (SL-RS 3.D)

	*Spelling is also referred to as encoding.
3.5	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for adapting instruction for students with weaknesses in working memory, attention, executive function, or processing speed; demonstrate skills (such as increasing opportunities to respond, perky pace, cueing, choral response, pre-teaching, decoding pre-reading) to support all learners; understand the development of executive skills and the relationship to age when asking to participate in multi-layered tasks; and demonstrate the importance of explicit instruction to support all learners. (SL-RS 3.E)
3.6	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for teaching irregular words in small increments using special techniques. (SL-RS 3.F) *Examples include orthographic mapping and multi-sensory.
3.7	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for systematically teaching written syllable types in a logical sequence (e.g., closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, vowel team, and consonant-le, r-controlled); and demonstrate how to flex a vowel sound to support decoding and link to language processing systems through phonological features. (SL-RS 3.G)
3.8	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for clearly distinguishing morphemes from syllables while identifying word parts; and apply a multisyllabic word reading strategy that leverages both morpheme and syllable knowledge. (SL-RS 3.G)
3.9	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for systematically teaching the difference between syllable division in natural speech. (SL-RS 3.G)
3.10	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for systematically teaching the decoding of multisyllabic words. (SL-RS 3.G)
3.11	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for explaining how to determine the accented syllable in a word and how that will influence spelling. (SL-RS 3.G)
3.12	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the different types and purposes of texts, with emphasis on the role of decodable texts in teaching beginning readers as a scaffold leading to reading of authentic text; know, apply, and support classroom teachers' syllable, morpheme, and multisyllabic word reading skills in all content areas; know, apply, and support classroom teachers in the need for application of learned morphemes to text; and incorporate syllable and morpheme instruction in learning new words across content area. (SL-RS 3.H)
3.13	Know and apply in practice considerations for word knowledge stages (decoding and encoding).
3.14	Know and apply in practice considerations for providing extensive opportunities for students to apply newly learned phonics skills by reading and writing a variety of texts for a sustained period of time daily.

4. Fluency	
4.1	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the role of fluent word-level skills in automatic word reading, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and motivation to read. (SL-RS 4.A)
4.2	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for varied techniques and methods for building reading fluency, resulting in oral reading with accuracy, rate that facilitates simultaneous comprehension, and prosody. (SL-RS 4.B)
4.3	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for text reading fluency, including conversational pace, attention to punctuation, and phrasing, as an achievement of normal reading development that can be advanced through informed instruction and progress-monitoring practices. (SL-RS 4.C) *Syntax should be addressed as well.
4.4	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for appropriate uses of assistive technology for students with serious limitations in reading fluency. (SL-RS 4.D)
4.5	Know and apply in practice considerations for providing extensive opportunities for students to apply newly learned fluency skills by reading and writing various texts for a sustained period of time daily.
5. Vocabulary	
5.1	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for the role of vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge in oral and written language comprehension as developmentally appropriate within/across content areas. (SL-RS 5.A)
5.2	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for sources of wide differences in students' vocabularies. (SL-RS 5.B) *Listening, writing, speaking, and reading should be considered when teaching vocabulary.
5.3	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the role and characteristics of indirect (contextual) methods of vocabulary instruction. (SL-RS 5.C)
5.4	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the role and characteristics of direct, explicit methods of vocabulary instruction (SL-RS 5.D) *The various stages of vocabulary development should be considered and addressed.
5.5	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing direct, explicit methods of morphology instruction for the development of vocabulary (SL-RS 5.E)

	*The various stages of vocabulary development should be considered and addressed.
5.6	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the appropriate uses of assistive technology in vocabulary instruction. (SL-RS 5.F)
5.7	Know and apply in practice considerations for providing extensive opportunities for students to apply newly learned vocabulary skills/strategies by reading and writing a variety of texts for a sustained period of time daily.
6. Comprehension	
6.1	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for factors that contribute to deep comprehension including text structures, background knowledge, and interpretation of vocabulary. (SL-RS 6.A) *Accurate and automatic word reading, fluent reading of connected texts, identification and analysis of text structures should also be included.
6.2	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for instructional routines appropriate for each major genre: informational text, narrative text, and argumentative. (SL-RS 6.B) *This includes persuasive vs argumentative.
6.3	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for the role of sentence comprehension in listening and reading comprehension. (SL-RS 6.C)
6.4	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practice considerations for the use of explicit comprehension strategy instruction and practices that build student background knowledge as supported by research. (SL-RS 6.D)
6.5	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the teacher's role as an active mediator of text-comprehension processes. (SL-RS 6.E)
6.6	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in considerations for oral language and text-based discussion to co-construct meaning. (SL-RS 6.F)
6.7	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction.
6.8	Know and apply in practice considerations for levels of comprehension (literal, inferential, critical).
6.9	Know and apply in practice considerations for understanding the role of metacognition in the reading process including the selection of appropriate fix up strategies.
6.10	Know and apply in practice considerations for providing extensive opportunities for students to apply newly learned comprehension strategies by reading and writing a variety of texts for a sustained period of time daily.

7. Writing	
7.1	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for research-based principles for teaching letter formation, both manuscript and cursive. (SL-RS 7.B)
7.2	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for research-based principles for teaching written spelling and punctuation. (SL-RS 7.C)
7.3	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the developmental phases of the writing process (planning/brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). (SL-RS 7.D)
7.4	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the appropriate uses of assistive technology in written expression. (SL-RS 7.E)
7.5	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for instruction regarding the traits of writing. (SL-RS 7.F) *Examples of traits of writing include organization, voice, idea, style, content, and focus utilizing mentor texts to highlight and developing author's craft.
7.6	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for the genres (narrative, informative, persuasive, and argumentative). (SL-RS 7.G)
7.7	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in identifying and supporting the developmental stages of writing. (SL-RS 7.A)
7.8	Know, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing considerations for writing texts that use evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction.
7.9	Know and apply in practice considerations for providing extensive opportunities for students to write large volumes of connected texts.
8. Disciplinary Literacy	
8.1	Know the similarities and differences between content area literacy and disciplinary literacy.
8.2	Know and apply in practice considerations for teaching disciplinary specific strategies for navigating a variety of texts from a diverse set of perspectives.
8.3	Know and apply in practice considerations for discipline-specific language patterns.
8.4	Know and apply in practice considerations for teaching discipline specific vocabulary.
8.5	Know and apply in practice considerations for teaching viewing (interpreting) and visually representing information (i.e. cartoons, graphs) from diverse perspectives.
8.6	Know and apply in practice considerations for extensive opportunities across connected

	texts for students to apply specialized ways of thinking, reading, writing, and communicating as disciplinary experts.
9. Engagement and Motivation	
9.1	Know and apply in practice considerations for engaging and motivating readers and writers using choice.
9.2	Know and apply in practice considerations for engaging and motivating readers and writers using social collaboration, discussion, and active learning strategies.
9.3	Know and apply in practice considerations for engaging and motivating readers and writers using students' interests, background knowledge, and experiences.
9.4	Know and apply in practice considerations for conferencing with students about their reading and writing. i.e. student-level goal setting, allowing students to monitor their progress, and making students a part of the assessment-building process.
10. Literacy Rich Environment	
10.1	Know and apply in practice considerations for selecting and using resources and materials, including multi-modal and traditional print texts.
10.2	Know and apply considerations for purposely selecting and using different kinds of texts. (e.g., decodable, leveled text, traditional literature, controlled vocabulary).
10.3	Know and apply in practice considerations for addressing the developmental needs of learners, taking into consideration their physical, social, emotional, cultural, and cognitive factors.
10.4	Know and apply in practice consideration for selecting and using high-quality, diverse texts and create opportunities for students to see themselves and others in texts in a literacy-rich environment.
11. Coaching and Leadership	
11.1	Know and apply in practice considerations for collaborating with school leaders and teachers to develop state- and district-aligned literacy programs that reflect evidence-based practices, the effective integration of technology, and an inclusive, differentiated literacy curriculum.
11.2	Know and apply in practice considerations for assisting school leaders and teachers in administering and interpreting reliable and valid assessment data to inform schoolwide and individual decisions, instruction, and interventions across all tiers of instruction.
11.3	Know and apply in practice considerations for fostering school leaders' and teachers' knowledge of assessment by modeling their ability to articulate, explain, and evaluate factors and contextual influences (e.g., culture, language, bias) that influence student assessment outcomes.

11.4	Know and apply in practice considerations for designing and delivering effective professional learning opportunities to build capacity within the school community.
11.5	Know and apply in practice considerations for supporting classroom teachers in designing and implementing effective literacy instruction at the classroom and school levels.
11.6	Understand, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing the rationale for multisensory and multimodal language-learning techniques. (SL-RS 1.B)
11.7	Understand, apply, and support classroom teachers in practicing the general principles and practices of structured language and literacy teaching, including explicit, systematic, cumulative, teacher-directed instruction. (SL-RS 1.A)
11.8	Understand and support classroom teachers in understanding the rationale for adapting instruction to accommodate individual differences in cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural, and behavioral aspects of learning. (SL-RS 1.C)
11.9	Work collaboratively with other professionals to meet the needs of all students.
12. Clinical Experiences	
12.1	Know and apply in practice considerations for working with diverse learners at various grade levels in clinical or practicum experiences to assess students' literacy strengths and needs, develop literacy-intervention plans, implement instructional plans, and assess the impact on student learning.
12.2	Know and apply in practice considerations when working with individuals and small groups of diverse students with different literacy learning challenges.
12.3	Know and apply in practice considerations for reflection and study of their teaching practices, taking into consideration reading research and theory.
12.4	Candidates participate in a sustained practicum or clinical experience with student(s) who struggle with literacy. Candidates will engage in instruction aligned with reading specialist competencies and will be supervised by highly qualified literacy professionals who directly observe candidate instruction and provide explicit feedback.

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