
2B

Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Transition Plan for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents a transition plan for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) for the Commission's review and potential adoption.

Recommended Action: That the Commission adopt the proposed transition plan.

Presenter: David DeGuire, Director, Professional Services Division

Proposed Transition Plan for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment

Introduction

This agenda item presents for the Commission’s review and potential adoption a transition plan for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) pursuant to the Commission’s work to implement [Senate Bill 488 \(Chap. 678, Stats. 2021\)](#), commonly referred to as SB 488. The transition plan addresses the timeline for phasing out the RICA in its current form and the impact of this transition on candidates in different phases of preparation.

Background

Education Code (EC) sections 44283 and 44283.2 require that Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates pass an assessment of competence in reading instruction before receiving a preliminary credential. The assessment developed by the Commission for this purpose is the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment, commonly known as the RICA. Candidates can currently choose between two forms of the RICA – a written examination composed of three separate subtests or a video performance assessment.

[As summarized in Item 2A](#) in this agenda, SB 488 requires the Commission to develop a new literacy performance assessment that will replace the RICA in 2025. The statute reads:

“(a) By July 1, 2025, the commission shall ensure that an approved teaching performance assessment for a preliminary multiple subject credential, as required by Section 44320.2, and for a preliminary education specialist credential assesses all candidates for competence in instruction in literacy, including, but not limited to, evidence-based methods of teaching foundational reading skills, as described in paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of Section 44259.”

This agenda item looks forward to July 1, 2025, when the assessment of teacher candidates’ competency in literacy instruction will transition from the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) to a Commission-approved literacy performance assessment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an Executive Order and subsequent legislation allowed approved Multiple Subject and Education Specialist preparation programs to recommend candidates for a preliminary credential who were not able to take the RICA because of testing center closures related to COVID. These candidates were given a renewal code requiring that they pass the RICA before being recommended by their Induction program for a clear teaching credential.

The transition from the current RICA assessment to the Literacy Performance Assessment in 2025 will affect all Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates in preparation programs at that time and will affect candidates in PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential preparation programs once this credential is established in regulation. For most candidates,

Careful planning of their trajectory to completing their teacher preparation and credential requirements will lead to a successful transition. However, through planning discussions and preparation for the required literacy performance assessment in 2025, staff identified three major groups of teacher candidates and teachers who will be more significantly affected by the transition from the RICA to a performance assessment: These groups are:

- a. Candidates who complete teacher preparation coursework before July 1, 2025, but have not yet earned a preliminary credential – some of these candidates may have started taking the RICA but may not have passed the assessment before the July 1, 2025 date. These candidates will need to transition to the new Literacy Performance Assessment and will not be able to use their prior RICA examination score(s) towards meeting the statutory requirement,
- b. Candidates who will complete coursework and/or clinical practice after July 1, 2025 (including candidates in integrated undergraduate teacher preparation programs and those who will start their preparation programs close to the July 1, 2025 transition date). These candidates will need to plan to take the new Literacy Performance Assessment rather than starting to take the RICA examination because the Literacy Performance Assessment will already be embedded in the statutory TPA which all candidates need to pass.
- c. Teachers who hold a preliminary credential with a RICA renewal code.

Table 1 below identifies the statutory requirements regarding passing an assessment of competence in reading/literacy instruction for each group.

Table 1. Statutory Requirements for Passing an Assessment of Competence for Reading/Literacy

Group	Assessment Requirement in Education Code	
	By June 30, 2025	Starting July 1, 2025
Candidates who complete teacher preparation coursework and clinical practice before July 1, 2025 and haven't earned a preliminary credential because they have: a. not passed TPA and/or b. not passed RICA	These candidates should be counseled to wait and take the new Commission approved Performance Assessment that includes literacy instruction (SB 488)	Pass a Commission approved teaching performance assessment that includes literacy instruction (SB 488)
Multiple Subject and Education Specialist Teachers who hold a preliminary credential with a RICA renewal code	Pass either the written or video performance assessment version of the RICA	Options: (a) Pass a Commission-approved teaching performance assessment that includes literacy instruction

Group	Assessment Requirement in Education Code	
	By June 30, 2025	Starting July 1, 2025
		(b) Successfully complete an assessment required by another state that meets the requirements of EC section 44283
Candidates who will complete coursework and/or clinical practice after July 1, 2025	N/A	Pass an approved teaching performance assessment that includes literacy instruction

Considerations for Teacher Preparation Programs

Programs will have to take into consideration their program design to determine how to best advise candidates. For example, candidates in undergraduate integrated teacher preparation programs who would typically be advised to take the RICA in their junior year (in this example, spring 2025), may be advised to not take RICA. These candidates would more likely be in student teaching during summer or fall 2025. By July 2025 the new Literacy Performance Assessment will be available, allowing undergraduate integrated program candidates to meet both the reading instruction competence requirement and the TPA requirement. Staff will work with programs to ensure accurate and timely advisement.

Instances Where an Approved External Reading Instruction Examination May Still be Needed After July 1, 2025

In planning for the RICA transition, staff identified three instances in which an approved external examination on literacy instruction may still be needed. These include:

- Single Subject credential holders who want to add a Multiple Subject credential (Title 5 California Code of Regulations section 80499)
- Private school teachers seeking Multiple Subject, PK-3 ECE Specialist, or Education Specialist credentials (EC sections 44259.2 (a) and (b))
- Teachers who are prepared in another country (EC section 44275.4(d)(2))

Although it could be possible to require these candidates to complete a teaching performance assessment (TPA) that includes literacy instruction aligned to the requirements of SB 488, it may not be practical or feasible. One requirement for completing a TPA is to be in a classroom with students over an extended period of time (4 to 6 weeks) in order to complete the embedded performance assessment. This may pose some challenges as a teacher who holds a Single Subject credential may not have access to an elementary classroom for an extended period of time needed to complete the literacy performance assessment and a teacher prepared in another country may not have access to a classroom that meets the requirements for the assessment. In addition, TPAs are designed to be completed in the context of a teacher preparation program, which provides guidance and support to candidates as they complete their TPA responses. Teachers in all three groups are unlikely to be affiliated with a preparation

program, so they would not have the same opportunity for support during the completion of a TPA as would other candidates. This situation could create a potential equity issue.

Since EC section 44283.3 gives the Commission authority to review and adopt reading/literacy instruction assessments required by other states as an option for teachers who received a preliminary credential with a renewal code requiring the passage of RICA, staff has begun to research available options.

The two most common examinations are the [Foundations of Reading Test](#), which is currently required in twelve states¹ and the Praxis Teaching Reading: [Elementary Education Series](#), which is required in seven states.

One of the requirements in EC section 44283.3 is that any assessment approved by the Commission must meet the same requirements as the RICA, which are outlined in EC section 44283. Staff intends to review the Foundations of Reading Test, Praxis Teaching Reading: Elementary, and state specific assessments for coverage of the requirements in EC section 44283 and bring a future item to the Commission recommending the use of one or more of these exams if warranted, for teachers with the RICA deferral and for teachers in the three groups above who may still need an examination because they do not have an appropriate group of students to work with and/or support from a Commission approved teacher preparation program in order to complete a literacy performance assessment.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission direct staff to provide official written notice to preparation programs and to ensure publication of the content of the notice on the RICA examinations website regarding transitioning to the new literacy performance assessment on July 1, 2025, the new requirements for teachers who hold a preliminary credential with a RICA renewal code, and for candidates who complete their preparation programs on or after July 1, 2025. Teacher preparation programs as well as candidates would have two years notice to plan for and make this transition.

Staff also recommends that the Commission direct staff to research external examinations of reading/literacy instruction currently in use by other states as described above and to bring back a future item that recommends one or more of these reading instruction examinations for California adoption if warranted.

Next Steps

If the Commission approves the transition plan for RICA, staff will issue a Coded Correspondence and Program Sponsor Alert regarding the transition to the new literacy performance assessment and other requirements that become effective July 1, 2025. Staff will also work with the Commission's testing contractor, the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, to post a notice to candidates on the RICA website to inform all candidates, including those

¹ *What is the Foundations of Reading test?* (2023, May 15) <https://www.240tutoring.com/foundations-of-reading/>.

currently registered for RICA subtests, of the dates for the retirement of the current RICA examination and provide information regarding alternative options. Staff will also research existing external reading/literacy instruction assessments for compliance with EC section 44283.