
Memorandum to Presidents

Date: January 29, 2026

To: Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges
Statutory College Contacts

From: Ram Ramasubramanian, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

Subject: Guidance: State University of New York Science of Reading Framework

Copy: President, University Faculty Senate; President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges;
President, Student Assembly; Chief Academic Officers; Deans and Directors of Education

This memorandum provides guidance on the State University of New York Board of Trustees Resolution 2026-01, [State University of New York Science of Reading Framework](#). For questions about this memorandum, please contact the Office of the Provost at provost@suny.edu.

Implementation Guidance of State University of New York Science of Reading Framework

I. Introduction

The State University of New York is the leading preparer of educators for P-12 schools throughout New York State and is committed to preparing teachers and leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to educate students in all grades in comprehensive literacy practices, including practices derived from the body of research referred to as the science of reading. The Fiscal Year 2025 Enacted New York State Budget included Governor Hochul’s Back to Basics reading plan, which ensures that instructional best practices—grounded in the science of reading—are implemented statewide to ensure that students in every school district are taught the foundational skills they need to become proficient readers. School districts throughout New York State need to certify with the State Education Department that their curriculum, instructional strategies, and teacher professional development align with all elements of evidence-based reading instruction. Additionally, the New York State Education Department has developed a Framework for Integrating the Science of Reading in Educator Preparation Programs.

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, SUNY convened a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of SUNY faculty charged with: (1) providing an analysis of the current reading science literature; (2) identifying what teacher candidates should know and be able to do as it relates to the teaching of reading to all students and aligned with the science of reading; (3) conducting a landscape analysis to determine how current pedagogical practices across SUNY educator preparation programs relate to reading science principles; and (4) identifying translational research gaps, especially as related to teaching reading to diverse groups of students, for potential focus of study by faculty at SUNY campuses.

Grounded in the work of the TAG, which is based on research, standards, and best practices, the TAG co-chairs, in consultation with the other TAG members, developed recommendations to the SUNY Provost to establish the State University of New York Science of Reading Framework. These recommendations informed a discussion draft distributed in October 2025 for system-wide comment, and feedback was received and then analyzed in consultation with the TAG co-chairs to develop the final framework and the guidance provided in this memorandum to presidents.

The State University of New York Science of Reading Framework is applicable to teacher preparation programs that lead to a recommendation for the issuance of an initial and/or professional teacher certificate and to educational leadership programs that lead to a recommendation for an administrator certificate and/or the superintendent extension. Additionally, this framework is applicable to courses in associate degree programs that are intended to transfer to baccalaureate degree programs for the purpose of meeting pedagogical core requirements for language acquisition and literacy development.

All educator preparation programs shall incorporate the science of reading into their required curriculum, as applicable to the certificate title and type, which includes knowledge and skills in the following ten areas: Phonemic Awareness; Phonics; Fluency; Vocabulary and Background Knowledge; Oral Language; Reading Comprehension; Motivation and Engagement; Writing; Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Reading; Multilingual Learners and Reading.

Within their educator preparation program, all candidates shall have an opportunity to practice science of reading knowledge and skills as part of their clinical experiences in partnership with P-12 schools, as applicable to the certificate title and type.

II. SUNY Science of Reading Knowledge and Skills Framework

The SUNY science of reading knowledge and skills framework identifies what teacher candidates are expected to know and be able to do as it relates to the teaching of reading (and writing) to all students based on the science of reading. Based on an analysis of the reading science literature concentrated on identifying effective instructional practices, the competencies within the ten areas of the framework identify the baseline content and pedagogical knowledge teacher candidates are expected to develop in coursework and through clinical experiences to learn and apply the science of reading.

It is important to note that each teacher certificate title in New York State has variable responsibilities for reading and writing instruction within a response to intervention (RTI) or multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework. For example, classroom teachers are expected to know and be able to implement core instruction that includes differentiation (Tier 1), while specialists (e.g., literacy specialists, special educators) are expected to know and be able to implement targeted small group instruction (Tier 2) and intensive, and often individualized, interventions and special education (Tier 3).

School leaders are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills to develop and support evidence-based reading instruction through intellectually rigorous, culturally relevant, and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote the academic success and well-being of all students.

The SUNY science of reading knowledge and skills framework includes ten areas, listed below. These areas are aligned with the five essential components of effective reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension – as well as oral language and writing, consistent with the New York State Literacy Initiative. Additionally included are areas to address considerations for the teaching of special populations of learners to best support the diversity of students in today’s classrooms.

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Fluency
4. Vocabulary and Background Knowledge
5. Oral Language
6. Reading Comprehension
7. Motivation and Engagement
8. Writing
9. Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Reading
10. Multilingual Learners and Reading

For each area, competencies are further delineated below:

1. Phonemic Awareness
 - Assess and provide explicit instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness.
 - Demonstrate understanding that phonemic awareness is a strong predictor of individual differences in reading development.
 - Demonstrate understanding that phonemic awareness instruction can be effective at varying ages with the strongest effects in kindergarten and first grade.

- Identify phonological units produced orally at the word, syllable, and phoneme levels of language, and implement evidence-based instructional practices on phonemic awareness skills (e.g., segmenting, blending, addition, deletion, and substitution).
- Provide explicit instruction in segmenting, blending, and deleting individual sounds and assisting students in mapping phonemes to graphemes.

2. Phonics

- Implement evidence-based approaches to phonics instruction (e.g., synthetic, analytic) that are explicit and systematic (i.e., follow a clear scope and sequence).
- Demonstrate understanding of the phases of word reading and an appropriate developmental progression of phonics skills.
- Explicitly teach students to decode single-syllable words using the relationship between letters (and letter combinations) and sounds (i.e., grapheme-phoneme correspondences).
- Explicitly teach students to decode multisyllabic words through syllabic and morphemic analysis (e.g., word roots, prefixes, suffixes).
- Explicitly teach students to spell words in conjunction with phonemic awareness and phonics skills, syllables, and larger morpheme units (e.g., word roots, prefixes, suffixes).
- Implement evidence-based instructional practices to promote orthographic mapping of words, including high-frequency words and partially decodable or irregular words.
- Identify and implement appropriate practice opportunities for students to read phonetically aligned (i.e., decodable) texts with an appropriate lesson-to-text-match.
- Demonstrate understanding that multilingual learners benefit from explicit and systematic phoneme and phonics instruction.

3. Fluency

- Define and assess oral reading fluency, including accuracy, automaticity, prosody, and stamina, and use the results of screening assessments as a basis for making instructional decisions.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between word recognition, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension.
- Develop students' oral reading fluency through repeated reading with teacher modeling and feedback.
- Develop students' oral reading fluency through non-repetitive approaches such as choral and echo reading, partner reading, wide reading, and reader's theater.

4. Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

- Provide both incidental and explicit (intentional) vocabulary instruction, including modeling the use of rich vocabulary and complex syntax through conceptually rich instruction.
- Integrate literacy and content area instruction (e.g., social studies and science) to promote vocabulary development.
- Build conceptual knowledge that promotes the development of word knowledge through frequent and repeated exposure to academic vocabulary in reading and writing.
- Assist students with acquiring vocabulary and advanced language structures through reading widely.
- Provide mnemonics, morphemic analysis, direct instruction, and multimedia resources for vocabulary instruction, particularly with students with learning difficulties.
- Continue to promote knowledge development through conceptually rich instruction.

5. Oral Language

- Incorporate rich and diverse language across instructional settings and encourage students to use language to demonstrate understanding.
- Utilize an academic register that includes academic vocabulary, complex syntax, and conceptually rich, content-area talk along with a bridging register that includes scaffolding and eliciting talk that is consistent with the instructional setting and students' needs.
- Further develop listening comprehension (receptive oral language) to promote the growth of vocabulary, morphology, background knowledge, and academic language.
- Develop students' expressive oral language skills through structured speaking tasks that encourage the use of advanced vocabulary, sentence structure, and discourse patterns.
- Emphasize language-focused instruction for promoting vocabulary and language growth in linguistically diverse populations.

6. Reading Comprehension

- Determine knowledge needed to support comprehension and learning by activating prior knowledge or building background knowledge.
- Demonstrate understanding of cognitive load and its impact on comprehension and learning of new content.
- Implement integrated content-area instruction and literacy instruction.
- Implement evidence-based practices for prior knowledge activation (e.g., discussion, perspective taking, concept maps, demonstrations, student think-alouds).
- Demonstrate understanding of the factors that contribute to text complexity (i.e., text, reader, and task).
- Explicitly teach students to identify and use expository text structures (e.g., cause/effect, problem/solution, description, sequence, compare/contrast) to support comprehension.
- Implement evidence-based practices to help students determine main ideas and summarize informational text.
- Explicitly teach students to recognize and use the structure of narratives with basic story maps for young children and more complex story maps for older students.
- Explicitly teach students to determine themes within literary text.
- Implement evidence-based practices to help students make various types of inferences while reading informational and literary texts.
- Engage students in small- and whole-group discussions to promote comprehension.
- Introduce and explicitly teach multiple comprehension strategies guided by the text, the reader, and the context, including (a) activating prior knowledge; (b) determining main idea, retelling, and summarizing; (c) identifying the text structure and retelling; (d) incorporating graphic organizers; (e) self-monitoring, clarifying, using fix-up strategies, or metacognitive approaches; and (f) making inferences.

7. Motivation and Engagement

- Build intrinsic motivation for reading through evidence-based practices such as relevance, choice, collaboration, interest, self-efficacy support, and thematic units to positively influence reading motivation, engagement, and comprehension.

8. Writing

- Assess students' writing (e.g., rubrics) and provide feedback to inform instruction.
- Dedicate daily time for students to write with various forms of writing over time.
- Explicitly teach students how to produce written summaries of text.

- Explicitly teach writing strategies (e.g., planning, drafting, revising, and/or editing) using a gradual release of responsibility (e.g., modeling, explaining, and providing guided assistance when teaching writing) with and without self-regulation (e.g., self-regulated strategy development model of instruction).
 - Explicitly teach students how to use a process approach to writing (i.e., extended opportunities for writing in cycles of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).
 - Explicitly teach students to set product goals for writing.
 - Explicitly teach students how to identify and use text structure in writing, including narrative, persuasive/argumentative, and expository text structures.
 - Explicitly teach students how to emulate models of writing (e.g., mentor texts).
 - Explicitly teach students to use word processing, computer-assisted instruction, and/or digital writing tools.
 - Implement pre-writing activities (e.g., brainstorming).
 - Implement collaborative approaches to writing or peer assistance when writing.
 - Provide students with opportunities to write over extended periods of time and for authentic audiences and purposes.
 - Explicitly teach transcription skills (i.e., transcribing ideas into written phrases and sentences through handwriting, spelling, and keyboarding or typing).
 - Implementing evidence-based approaches to sentence-level writing instruction (e.g., grammar instruction, sentence combining, sentence expanding).
 - Provide adaptations or accommodations for students with learning disabilities (e.g., dictation to a recording device or a scribe).
9. Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Reading
- Collaborate with colleagues, including classroom teachers, literacy specialists, special education teachers, and school leaders to develop a well-implemented multi-tiered system of support that includes universal screening, evidence-based Tier 1 instruction, targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) interventions, and ongoing progress monitoring for students with reading difficulties.
 - In grades PK-3, provide Tier 1 explicit, systematic, and differentiated instruction in alphabets (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling), oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and oral and written language comprehension.
 - In grades PK-3, provide Tier 2 targeted interventions to small groups of students in foundational skills (e.g., phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition) through decoding and encoding instruction; reading fluency; oral language and vocabulary; writing, and reading comprehension.
 - For literacy specialists and special educators, provide Tier 3 intensive interventions one-on-one or in small groups for PK-3 students with reading difficulties or disabilities in (1) phonological awareness (e.g., syllable segmentation, phoneme identification and manipulation), (2) phonics and word recognition (e.g., letter-name and letter-sound correspondences, blending and segmenting the sounds in words, reading decodable words and high-frequency words), and (3) fluency (e.g., reading, rereading, and shared reading of a variety of texts).
 - In grades 4-12, provide Tier 1 instruction in reading comprehension and vocabulary, (including morphology, syntax, knowledge of text structures and genre with instruction in phonics/word recognition and fluency as appropriate).

- In grades 4-12, Tier 2 interventions that target multiple components of reading, including foundational skills (i.e., phonics [multisyllabic decoding], spelling, fluency), reading comprehension strategies (e.g., main idea, summarization), writing, and vocabulary.
- For literacy specialists and special educators, provide Tier 3 interventions for students in grades 4-12 with reading disabilities in (1) advanced word study (e.g., multisyllabic decoding and morphology instruction), (2) fluency (e.g., repeated and wide reading), (3) vocabulary (e.g., direct instruction and academic and discipline-specific vocabulary, context clues, root words and affixes), (4) comprehension (e.g., activating prior knowledge, graphic organizers, comprehension-monitoring strategies, summarizing), (5) writing, and (6) motivation (e.g., providing interesting content goals for reading, supporting student autonomy, providing interesting texts, and increasing social interactions among students).

10. Multilingual Learners and Reading

- Demonstrate understanding of foundations and instruction for multilingual learners (MLLs) across foundational skills (e.g., phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency), vocabulary and oral language development, comprehension, writing, and assessment.
- Demonstrate understanding that it is not necessary to wait until oral proficiency in English is reached before providing reading interventions for MLLs.
- Demonstrate awareness of multiple reading interventions for MLLs of any age or grade level who may need increased support with reading.
- Demonstrate understanding that MLLs’ home languages play a crucial role in their successful learning of English, and that some languages such as Spanish can positively transfer to learning a new language.
- Implement evidence-based practices for teaching foundational reading skills (e.g., phonics instruction), vocabulary and oral language (e.g., read-alouds), and comprehension (e.g., text structures), as these are also effective for instruction of MLLs.
- Integrate components of literacy (e.g., vocabulary and comprehension) with content (e.g., science, social studies) instruction to support MLLs’ language and literacy learning.
- Incorporate approaches that draw from students’ own funds of knowledge about language in planning and implementing literacy instruction including promoting bilingual approaches that value multiple languages in the classroom.

III. Science of Reading in the SUNY Program Review Process

Beginning in spring 2026, faculty are expected to review each existing educator preparation program to determine if the program meets the expectations for science of reading curriculum and clinical experiences, as applicable to the certificate title and type (refer to the following table) and according to the expectations set forth in the framework.

Certificate Type	Certificate Title	Curriculum	Clinical Experiences
Initial	Early Childhood and Childhood	Yes	Yes
Initial	Adolescence English	Yes	Yes
Initial	Adolescence Titles other than English	Yes	Yes
Initial	Students with Disabilities, All Grades and Birth – Grade 2	Yes	Yes
Initial	Literacy	Yes	Yes

Initial	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	Yes	Yes
Initial	All Grades Titles other than SWD, Literacy, or ESOL	Yes	Yes
Professional	Early Childhood and Childhood	Yes	No
Professional	Adolescence English	Yes	No
Professional	Adolescence Titles other than English	No	No
Professional	Students with Disabilities, All Grades and Birth – Grade 2	Yes	Yes
Professional	Literacy	Yes	No
Professional	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	Yes	No
Professional	All Grades, Titles other than SWD, Literacy, or ESOL	No	No
Professional	Administrator	Yes*	Yes

*Programs leading to the Administrator certificate are expected to include curriculum that will enable completers to develop and support evidence-based reading instruction, not to implement instruction themselves.

Attestation Process for Existing Programs

If it is determined the program meets the new requirements for science of reading and no program revisions are necessary, the campus Provost, or their designee, will submit the following attestation and, if applicable, the science of reading coursework alignment table to the SUNY Provost by December 31, 2026.

- I hereby certify that the following educator preparation programs at the institution meet the new requirements for science of reading curriculum and clinical experiences, and no program revisions are necessary. Additionally, I have included a brief narrative description of the process utilized to determine this alignment.

Program SED Code	Program Title	Program Award	Certificate Title(s)	Certificate Type(s)

If it is determined the program does not meet the new requirements for science of reading and program revision is necessary but not the to the extent that requires NYSED registration of the revision, the campus Provost, or their designee, will submit the following attestation and, as applicable, the science of reading coursework alignment table to the SUNY Provost by December 31, 2026 once such revision has been completed.

- I hereby certify that the following educator preparation programs at the institution were revised to meet the new requirements for science of reading curriculum and clinical experiences, and that the revision was not to the extent that required NYSED registration of the revision. Additionally, I have included a brief narrative description of the changes made to align the curriculum to the new requirements.

Program SED Code	Program Title	Program Award	Certificate Title(s)	Certificate Type(s)

If it is determined the program does not meet the new requirements for science of reading and program revision is necessary, and that such revision requires NYSED registration, the campus Provost, or their designee, will submit a program revision proposal, which will include a science of reading coursework alignment table, to the SUNY Provost by December 31, 2026.

- I hereby certify that the following educator preparation programs at the institution are proposed to be revised to meet the new requirements for science of reading curriculum and clinical experiences, and that the revision requires NYSED registration, the proposal for which is included with this attestation. Additionally, I have included a brief narrative description of the changes made to align the curriculum to the new requirements.

Program SED Code	Program Title	Program Award	Certificate Title(s)	Certificate Type(s)

Science of Reading Coursework Alignment Table

The science of reading coursework alignment table will be used by campuses to demonstrate courses that contribute to meeting curriculum requirements for the science of reading. This table will be included with attestations for existing programs, as applicable, and will be incorporated into the forms to propose new educator preparation programs and to revise existing educator preparation programs.

Science of Reading Coursework Alignment Table

Area	Course Title(s)	Course Description(s)
1. Phonemic Awareness		
2. Phonics		
3. Fluency		
4. Vocabulary and Background Knowledge		
5. Oral Language		
6. Reading Comprehension		
7. Motivation and Engagement		
8. Writing		
9. Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Reading		
10. Multilingual Learners and Reading		

IV. Science of Reading Community of Practice

To support implementation and advancement of the framework, and to advise the SUNY Provost on campus outcomes, the SUNY Provost will establish a systemwide science of reading community of practice, which will provide a forum to connect faculty and staff across SUNY to share ideas and materials, and to address challenges related to science of reading instruction and research.