
3B

Information

Educator Preparation Committee

Update of the Reading and Literacy Added Authorization and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist Credential Authorization Statements

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides the Commission with the first update on the work to update the program standards and develop teaching performance expectations for the Reading and Literacy Added Authorization (RLAA) and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist (RLLS) Credential, as required by Assembly Bill 1454 (Chap. 471, Stats. 2025). The item describes the current authorization continuum, summarizes staff’s preliminary review, outlines engagement with Commission-approved programs and local education agencies, and identifies anticipated next steps.

Recommended Action: For information only

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Strategic Plan Goal

Educator Preparation and Advancement

- **Goal 1.** Educator preparation programs hold candidates to high standards and adequately prepare them to support all students by using culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining practices in equitable, inclusive, and safe environments.
 - A. Set and uphold rigorous standards for educator preparation programs
 - C. Enact a rigorous accreditation process that ensures programs meet standards and are effective in preparing educators for public schools

Update of the Reading and Literacy Added Authorization and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist Credential Authorization Statements

Introduction

[Education Code section 44265.1](#), added by Assembly Bill (AB) 1454 (Chap. 471, Stats. 2025), directs the Commission to, no later than January 1, 2028, ensure that the standards of program quality and effectiveness and the teaching performance expectations for both the Reading and Literacy Added Authorization (RLAA) and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist (RLLS) credential include preparation on how to deliver instruction and support teachers to deliver instruction through effective means for teaching literacy, as specified. Commission staff have initiated a focused policy review of the two authorization levels.

This item is the Commission's first update on that work. It summarizes the existing authorization structure, the statutory direction for the work, the work completed during the initial part of the inquiry phase, the planned collection of information and feedback from Commission-approved programs and local education agencies, and the anticipated sequence for developing and reviewing proposed updates.

Background

The RLAA and RLLS credential constitute a two-level continuum of advanced preparation for educators who provide specialized reading and literacy services in California schools. The RLAA prepares educators to provide specialized reading and literacy services primarily at the preschool through adult site level, while the RLLS Credential extends that preparation to broader literacy leadership responsibilities at the school, district, and county levels.

Candidates for either the RLAA or RLLS Credential must hold a valid qualifying California teaching credential. Qualifying credentials include a teaching credential that required a bachelor's degree and professional preparation, including student teaching, or a clear full-time Designated Subjects Teaching Credential when the holder meets the applicable degree and basic skills requirements. Candidates must also hold an English learner authorization and verify at least three years of successful, full-time teaching experience. That experience may be in any grade or subject, preschool through adult, but does not include student teaching, intern teaching or teaching completed while serving on an emergency credential or permit.

The current RLAA and RLLS program standards originated in the Commission's 2010–11 reading and literacy standards work and were subsequently updated in connection with regulatory amendments that became operative in 2016.

The two credentials differ primarily in the scope of services they authorize. The RLAA authorizes the holder to provide specialized reading and literacy services. The RLLS extends the holder's authorization to broader leadership responsibilities at the school, district, and county levels, from preschool through grade twelve and in classes organized primarily for adults. These

responsibilities include coordinating literacy curriculum implementation, designing and evaluating literacy plans, coaching and supporting educators, and evaluating literacy programs and practices.

The table below summarizes the current authorization structure; it is not a substitute for the complete authorization statements or regulations.

Level	Principal service setting	Current authorization, summarized	Regulation
RLAA	One or more school sites; grade levels authorized by the prerequisite teaching credential	Provides direct reading intervention; uses assessment to guide instruction; develops and adapts literacy materials and strategies; supports curriculum implementation; and assists classroom teachers.	5 CCR §§80014 and 80014.1
RLLS	School site, district, and county levels; preschool through grade 12 and adult classes	Includes direct intervention and adds broader leadership responsibilities such as coordinating curriculum, designing and evaluating literacy plans, coaching and training educators, and evaluating programs and practices.	5 CCR §80066

Sources: [RLAA credential leaflet \(CL-812\)](#); [RLLS credential leaflet \(CL-537\)](#).

Statutory Direction

Education Code section 44265.1 establishes a content floor for the update to these two credentials. It requires preparation for candidates for either credential to deliver literacy instruction and to support teachers in delivering that instruction, aligned with the following:

- 1. ELA/ELD Framework alignment.** Preparation must address the current English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework, including the varied language-development needs of English learners.
- 2. Evidence-based literacy instruction.** Preparation must include explicit and systematic foundational reading instruction, oral and written language development, vocabulary and background knowledge, comprehension, and tiered supports for pupils with reading difficulties, English learners, and pupils with exceptional needs.
- 3. Dyslexia guidance.** Preparation must align with the California Dyslexia Guidelines developed pursuant to Education Code section 56335.

The statute also states legislative intent that candidates be prepared to deliver instruction and support teachers in programs in which English learner pupils are instructed in their primary languages.

Purpose and Scope of the Current Review

AB 1454 expressly requires work on standards of program quality and effectiveness and teaching performance expectations. Because authorization language defines the service each credential holder may perform, staff first reviewed the existing authorization statements for clarity and appropriateness, including:

- The current RLAA and RLLS authorization statements, preconditions, program standards, and related regulations.
- The progression from RLAA advanced practice to RLLS system-level literacy leadership.
- Alignment with Education Code section 44265.1, the current ELA/ELD Framework, and the California Dyslexia Guidelines.
- Candidate performance expectations, supervised field experience, and the evidence programs use to demonstrate candidate competence.
- Potential transition, access, delivery-model, and implementation considerations for approved programs and candidates.

Work Completed to Date

- Reviewed relevant Commission history and current state literacy initiatives to distinguish requirements that apply to advanced specialist preparation from adjacent initiatives.
- Engaged with California Department of Education, Sacramento County Office of Education, and Napa County Office of Education literacy staff to discuss current statewide literacy priorities, implementation of literacy coaches grant funding, and considerations relevant to the RLAA and RLLS update.
- Developed preliminary working language in collaboration with the California Department of Education for the RLAA and RLLS authorization statements to test clarity, scope, and differentiation between the two credentials.
- Administered targeted survey of Commission-approved program sponsors and local education agencies to gather feedback on the proposed authorization language.

Updating the Language of the Authorization Statements

Commission staff's preliminary review included discussions with the California Department of Education, Sacramento County Office of Education, and Napa County Office of Education staff to explore whether professional learning provided through the state's literacy coaching grant initiatives might align with, or potentially be recognized toward, RLAA or RLLS preparation requirements. These discussions indicated that the grants are structured and administered at the local education agency level and do not consistently track the professional development of individual educators in a manner that would support direct alignment with RLAA or RLLS certification requirements.

Commission staff continued the review using the statutory direction for the work, the existing RLAA and RLLS standards and authorization structure, and the reading and literacy expertise of Commission staff. Based on that review, staff developed preliminary updates to the authorization statements intended to clarify the scope of each credential and the distinction between the RLAA and RLLS.

The preliminary authorization language is also being reviewed with the Commission’s Assignments Unit to ensure that the proposed language is clear and can be appropriately interpreted for credential authorization and assignment purposes.

Program Sponsor and Local Education Agency Engagement

The initial field-engagement phase focused on Commission-approved RLAA and RLLS program sponsors and local education agencies. Program sponsors can provide direct evidence about how the current standards operate, what should be preserved, what may be outdated or duplicative, and what implementation or access issues should inform future updates. Local education agencies such as school districts and county offices of education can provide employer perspectives on the proposed RLAA and RLLS authorization statements. Input from program sponsors and local education agencies was solicited via a survey that was available from September 11 to October 5, 2026.

Survey Design and Dissemination

The survey was designed to collect information regarding the clarity and appropriateness of the proposed language of the RLAA and RLLS authorization statements. An authorization statement provides the specifics for the authorization, which describes the authority of an individual to serve in a particular subject, setting, or grade level. Survey respondents could also provide general comments and feedback regarding additional concepts that should be included in the authorization statements. A copy of the survey is included in [Appendix A](#).

The survey was disseminated widely to the field via the EQ Weekly Update email list. Staff sent the survey directly to all 17 Commission-approved program sponsors, all 57 county offices of education, and 39 local education agencies that had posted recent job openings in reading and/or literacy (such as reading coach or literacy specialist).

Survey Results and Analysis

Table 1 below provides the number and percentage of respondents by institution type. Institutions could have had more than one individual respond to the survey as all faculty/staff who have expertise in reading and literacy were invited to respond to the survey. Of the 17 Commission-approved program sponsors of RLAA and/or RLLS programs, 11 institutions were represented among the survey respondents.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Respondents by Institution Type

Institution Type	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
IHE – Program Sponsor	18	51.4%
IHE – Non Program Sponsor	4	11.4%
LEA – School District	5	14.3%
LEA – County Office of Education	8	22.9%
Total Number of Respondents	35	100%

Table 2 below provides the number and percentage of respondents by professional role.

Table 2. Number and Percentage of Respondents by Professional Role

Professional Role	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Higher Education Faculty/Staff	22	62.9%
County Office of Education Staff	8	22.9%
School or District-Based Administrator	4	11.4%
School or District-Based Reading Specialist	1	2.8%
Total Number of Respondents	35	100%

Table 3 below provides respondent feedback on the proposed language of the RLAA and RLLS authorization statements. Of the 35 total respondents, 24 provided feedback on both the RLAA and RLLS, eight provided feedback on the RLAA only, and three provided feedback on the RLLS only.

Table 3. Respondent Feedback on the Proposed Language of the RLAA and RLLS Authorization Statements

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The proposed language of the RLAA authorization statement is clear.	11	19	2	0
The proposed language of the RLAA authorization statement is appropriate for the added authorization area.	12	15	4	1
The proposed language of the RLLS authorization statement is clear.	8	11	2	0
The proposed language of the RLLS authorization statement is appropriate for the credential area.	9	10	2	0

The results of the survey show that 30, or 93.8%, of 32 RLAA respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed language of the RLAA authorization statement is clear and 27, or 84.4%, of 32 RLAA respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed language of the RLAA statement is appropriate for the added authorization area. The survey results also show that 19, or 90.5%, of 21 RLLS respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed language of the RLLS authorization statement is clear and 19, or 90.5%, of 21 RLLS respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed language of the RLLS authorization statement is appropriate for the credential area.

Respondents could also provide open-ended feedback to four questions regarding clear language, appropriate language, additional concepts, and general comments. There were 34 total comments for the RLAA and 20 total comments for the RLLS. However, qualitative analyses of the comments did not show any consistent patterns across responses that could inform modifications of the language of the proposed authorization statements.

Areas for Continued Analysis

The following areas have emerged from the statutory and program baseline as questions for continued analysis; they are not findings or staff recommendations.

Area	Question for the update process
Authorization clarity	Do the current statements clearly describe the services and settings authorized at each level?
RLAA–RLLS progression	What should every RLAA candidate demonstrate, and what additional competence should distinguish RLLS leadership?
Statutory alignment	How should the required content be integrated without unnecessary repetition or loss of role-specific depth?
Candidate evidence	What evidence best demonstrates advanced practice and leadership competence, and where can existing evidence be used?

Proposed Work Plan

The schedule below is a working sequence and may be adjusted as staff verifies program data, coordinates engagement, and determines whether related regulatory changes are needed.

Anticipated period	Activity	Status
Summer–Fall 2026	Complete baseline research, program inventory, and preliminary review of authorization statements.	Underway
September 2026	Administer and analyze the Commission-approved program sponsor and local education agency survey.	Completed
Late 2026–2027	Analyze the current RLAA and RLLS standards and candidate competencies and determine the updates needed to meet the statutory requirements, including development of appropriate candidate performance expectations.	Planned
2027	Conduct field review of proposed updates to the RLAA and RLLS standards, candidate performance expectations, and authorization statements, and gather feedback from approved programs and other stakeholders.	Planned
By Jan. 1, 2028	Ensure the RLAA and RLLS standards and TPEs meet Education Code section 44265.1.	Statutory deadline
Following Commission action	Implement an approved transition plan for programs and candidates.	To be determined

Staff Recommendation

Staff request that the Commission review the proposed updated authorization statements and proposed workplan and provide feedback to guide staff's next steps.

Next Steps

Based on Commission discussion, staff will continue developing proposed updates to the RLAA and RLLS authorization statements, program standards, and candidate performance expectations. Staff will conduct field review of the proposed updates and use feedback from the field to inform the final recommendations. Staff will return to the Commission with an action item requesting consideration and possible adoption of the updated authorization statements, standards, and candidate performance expectations.

Appendix A

RLAA and RLLS Authorization Statement Updates Survey

The Commission seeks input from program sponsors and employers regarding proposed updates to the Reading and Literacy Added Authorization (RLAA) and Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist (RLLS) authorization statements. The survey will remain open until October 5, 2026.

Section 1: Professional Information

Q1-4. First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Institution/Organization

Q5. Please select the option that best applies to you. Mark all that apply: *Higher education faculty/staff, County office of education staff, Employer/Human Resources staff, School- or district-based administrator, School- or district-based curriculum coordinator, School- or district-based reading specialist, Other*

Section 2: Background and Purpose

Education Code section 44265.1, added by Assembly Bill (AB) 1454, directs the Commission to, no later than January 1, 2028, “ensure that its standards of program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of candidates for the reading and literacy leadership specialist credential and the reading and literacy added authorization ... are aligned to” the ELA/ELD Framework to meet the varied language development needs of English learners, evidence-based literacy instruction, including foundational reading skills, and program guidelines for dyslexia. The purpose of this survey is to gather input from program sponsors and employers regarding proposed updates to the authorization statements for the RLAA and RLLS to better align with educator preparation standards for effective literacy instruction for all students. An authorization statement provides the specifics for the authorization, which describes the authority of an individual to serve in a particular subject, setting, or grade level. The RLAA authorizes holders to assess and provide direct reading intervention and support, develop and implement reading curriculum, and assist classroom teachers in these areas. The RLLS authorizes holders to perform broader leadership responsibilities, such as designing literacy plans, coaching and training educators, and evaluating programs and literacy practices.

Q6. Please indicate which authorization statement(s) you would like to provide feedback on: *RLAA only, RLLS only, Both RLAA and RLLS*

Section 3: Reading and Literacy Added Authorization (RLAA)

Please click on [this link](#) to view the current language of the RLAA (CL-812) authorization statement.

Proposed RLAA Authorization Statement

The Reading and Literacy Added Authorization (RLAA) authorizes the holder to assess student reading and provide evidence-based reading and literacy instruction in response to those assessments. RLAA holders are also authorized to develop, implement, and adapt the reading content curriculum and assist classroom teachers in these areas. Holders of the RLAA are authorized to perform the following supports and interventions at the school site level (could

be at one or more school sites) at the grade levels authorized by their prerequisite teaching credential:

- Monitor and adjust instructional practices to provide direct intensive reading and literacy intervention and to deliver direct specialized reading instruction and supports to students with reading difficulties, including multilingual and English learner students, students with exceptional needs, and students with dyslexia while monitoring and adjusting intervention instruction;
- Participate in the adoption of literacy curricula, facilitate and monitor implementation of adopted curricula, and support and assist teachers in the use of literacy curricula;
- Select and administer ongoing formal and informal diagnostic assessments of students' progress, report results, assist teachers in modifying instructional practices, and use the results for student placement in and exit from reading intervention programs;
- Interpret results of school-wide screening, reading and literacy assessment data to monitor student progress and identify modification of instructional practices and strategies to assist teachers;
- Develop, implement, and adapt reading and literacy instructional materials, technologies, and strategies in alignment with students' screened and assessed reading and literacy needs including the prevention and intervention of reading difficulties;
- Assist classroom teachers to ensure that the full range of students develop proficiency in reading and literacy; and,
- Assist students' and teachers' use of information and communication technologies and the development of digital literacy skills.

Q7. The proposed language of the RLAA authorization statement is clear: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

Q8. What, if any, language is not clear?

Q9. The proposed language of the RLAA authorization statement is appropriate for the added authorization area: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

Q10. What, if any, language is not appropriate?

Q11. Are there any additional concepts that should be included in the RLAA authorization statement?

Q12. Do you have any additional comments regarding the RLAA authorization statement?

Q13. Do you wish to provide input on the RLLS authorization statement? *Yes, No*

Section 4: Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist (RLLS)

Please click on [this link](#) to view the current language of the RLLS (CL-537) authorization statement.

Proposed RLLS Authorization Statement

The Reading and Literacy Leadership Specialist (RLLS) Credential authorizes the holder to perform the following evidence-based reading and literacy supports and interventions at the

school site, district, and county levels in grades twelve and below, including preschool, and in classes organized primarily for adults:

- Deliver direct, explicit, systematic, and specialized evidence-based reading and literacy instruction to students with reading difficulties, including multilingual and English learner students, students with exceptional needs, and students with dyslexia while monitoring and adjusting intervention instruction;
- Coordinate adoption and facilitate implementation of adopted literacy curricula, including providing professional development to teachers and staff;
- Select and administer reading and literacy screening and assessments, interpret results to determine student growth and identification of students with reading difficulties including multilingual and English learner students, students with exceptional needs, and students with dyslexia, select interventions, communicate results, and provide guidance and coaching to teachers;
- Design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive literacy plan aligned with the California State Board of Education adopted Frameworks, Standards, and policies for Pre-K through 12th grade students;
- Support students' reading and literacy development and inform and support teachers' evidence-based reading and literacy instruction through tiered supports to all students, including students with reading difficulties, multilingual and English learner students, students with exceptional needs, and students with dyslexia using information and communication technologies; and,
- Evaluate reading and literacy practices and report findings, guide teachers and administrators in collaborative efforts to design, implement, and evaluate local, state, and/or federal programs, and plan and conduct staff development.

Q14. The proposed language of the RLLS authorization statement is clear: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

Q15. What, if any, language is not clear?

Q16. The proposed language of the RLLS authorization statement is appropriate for the added authorization area: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

Q17. What, if any, language is not appropriate?

Q18. Are there any additional concepts that should be included in the RLLS authorization statement?

Q19. Do you have any additional comments regarding the RLLS authorization statement?

Section 5: Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and providing your input to the Commission regarding the proposed updates to the RLAA and RLLS authorization statements. Please send any questions regarding this work to: Literacy_Standards@ctc.ca.gov