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Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Options to Support Teachers and Candidates During the Transition from the RICA to the Literacy Performance Assessment

Executive Summary: This agenda item discusses the transition from Reading Competence Instruction Assessment (RICA) to the Literacy Performance Assessment that will occur over the course of the 2024-25 academic year and presents an updated passing standard for the RICA for the remainder of this academic year. The item also presents for discussion and potential adoption a national reading instruction examination that could replace the RICA after it is retired on June 30, 2025, for candidates who may require an exam going forward.

Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Commission consider the options presented in this agenda item and adopt any option(s) the Commission deems appropriate to assist candidates and programs during the transition from the RICA to the Literacy Performance Assessment.

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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.
 - B. Develop educator performance assessments that are embedded in clinical preparation to ensure readiness to begin professional practice

Continuous Improvement

- **Goal 7:** The Commission's work is grounded in research, informed by the voices of practitioners and communities of interests, and supports continuous improvement in educator preparation and licensure.
 - O. Strengthen the Commission's capacity to collect and analyze survey and assessment data related to quality in preparation of the education workforce

Options to Support Teachers and Candidates During the Transition from the RICA to the Literacy Performance Assessment

Introduction

This agenda item discusses the transition from the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) to the Literacy Performance Assessment (LPA) that will occur in the 2024-25 academic year and presents a proposed secondary passing standard for the RICA. The item also presents for discussion and potential adoption a national reading instruction examination that could replace the RICA after it is retired on June 30, 2025, for specific candidates.

Background

At its June 2023 meeting, the Commission adopted a [transition plan](#) from the Reading Competence Instruction Assessment (RICA) to the Literacy Performance Assessment (LPA) that is being field tested this academic year. These two measures represent different methodologies for meeting the reading instruction competency requirement. The RICA is a written multiple choice and short constructed answer examination of a candidate's ability to teach reading and literacy; the LPA is a performance assessment of a candidate's ability to demonstrate with students in a classroom that they can effectively teach reading and literacy. As part of the transition plan from the RICA to the LPA, staff provided [notice](#) to program sponsors and candidates that the RICA would be retired as of June 30, 2025.

This agenda item provides options for assisting those candidates who may not have successfully completed the RICA prior to its ending date of June 30, 2025, as well as certain candidates who may not be able to access the LPA once the RICA is no longer available because they are either not in any classroom setting or not in an appropriate classroom setting for the credential sought.

Candidate groups affected by the transition time frame: The two candidate groups who will be particularly affected by the time frame for transitioning to the new LPA as of June 30, 2025, which is now less than one year away, are:

- Teachers who earned a Preliminary Multiple Subject or Education Specialist credential during the pandemic who were given a deferral for the RICA requirement because testing centers were closed or had limited capacity. Staff estimate that there may be up to 7,000 current teachers who hold a preliminary credential with a RICA renewal code who may not have yet cleared their credential by meeting the RICA requirement.
- Currently enrolled Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates who will have completed all other credential requirements except for the RICA by June 30, 2025. The Commission does not have data on the number of current candidates enrolled in teacher preparation programs in the current academic year who are required to pass RICA this year.

These two groups of candidates need a way to meet the reading instruction competency requirement prior to the ending date of the RICA. In addition, several thousand individuals have registered by June 30, 2024 to take one or more RICA subtests while there was a fee waiver in place. These candidates have up to one year to take the examination for which they registered and take advantage of the fee waiver as payment. Although it is impossible to identify how many individuals need to pass RICA before it is retired, staff estimate that there are at least 10,000 registrations across the 3 subtests to take the RICA.

Potential Options to Assist Candidates and Programs for Meeting the Reading Competence Instruction Requirement

Option 1: Adopt a Secondary Passing Standard for the RICA

One option to support these two identified candidate groups could be for the Commission to consider adoption of a secondary passing standard for the RICA similar to the process the Commission adopted in [December 2023](#) for teaching performance assessments. Staff notes that as of August 15, 2024, 214 candidates have been recommended for their preliminary credential and/or clear credential based on the TPA secondary passing standard.

The precedent for the proposed use of the secondary passing standard for the RICA is the Commission's prior action to adopt a secondary passing standard for the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). For the TPA secondary passing standard, the Commission decided that candidates who scored within -1.0 standard error of measurement (SEM) could supplement their performance assessment process by demonstrating proficiency across the seven TPE domains through program-level assessment and other program level approaches and would therefore be deemed classroom ready.

Adopting a secondary passing standard for the RICA would similarly allow preparation programs to use additional program-level measures and/or other evidence-based verification of candidate performance in teaching reading to determine proficiency of those whose RICA scores are just below the adopted passing standard, i.e., within a -1 SEM. This process would allow the two target candidate groups identified above to move forward in completing their reading competency instruction requirement.

Potential extension of the RICA secondary passing standard: The Commission could also consider extending the secondary passing standard option to apply to (a) candidates who may still have other program or credential requirements to meet but who will be taking the current 3 subtest version of the RICA this year, and (b) any candidates who may have taken any version of the RICA in the past 10 years (the period of validity of examination scores) and not passed but whose scores were within the -1 SEM range.

For all candidate groups eligible to take advantage of the RICA secondary passing score, if the Commission so approves, the Commission's examinations contractor, Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, would identify eligible RICA candidates and inform them of the secondary passing score option for which they might be eligible.

In addition to verifying that these candidates scored within -1.0 SEM on any version of the RICA, a Commission approved program would need to have sufficient additional evidence (e.g., coursework assignments, other embedded assessments, course exams, observations of teaching, information from supervising teachers, or other appropriate evidence) to document that the candidate is proficient in the areas assessed by the applicable domains of the RICA, as follows:

- Domain 1: Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment
- Domain 2: Word Analysis
- Domain 3: Fluency
- Domain 4: Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge
- Domain 5: Comprehension

[Appendix A](#) provides information about the individuals who took either the original one subtest version of the RICA or the current 3 subtest version of the RICA who may be eligible to use the secondary passing standard if adopted by the Commission. Staff notes that due to the low number of candidates who have opted to take the RICA Video Performance Assessment, these data are not included in Appendix A.

Option 2: Adopt a Reading Instruction Examination Used in Other States for Meeting the Reading Instruction Competency Requirement

Another option to support candidates identified above could be for the Commission to adopt a different standardized reading instruction examination that could be used after the RICA is retired as of June 30, 2025. [Education Code 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 RICA renewal code if the RICA is no longer available.

Staff researched reading instruction exams used by other states and found that the [Foundations of Reading](#) examination, which is currently required in thirteen states, meets the requirements in [Education Code section 44259\(b\)\(4\)\(A\)](#) except for item v below, Guided clinical practice in a clinical setting, which cannot be directly measured by a written examination ([Appendix B](#)).

- i. The study of organized, systematic, explicit skills including phonemic awareness, direct, systematic, explicit phonics, and decoding skills,
- ii. A strong literature, language, and comprehension component with a balance of oral and written language,
- iii. Ongoing diagnostic techniques that inform teaching and assessment,
- iv. Early intervention techniques, and
- v. Guided practice in a clinical setting.

In addition, this examination meets the definition of “direct, systematic, explicit phonics” in paragraph B of California [Education Code Section 44259\(b\)\(4\)](#) and assesses integrated methods of teaching language arts as required in paragraph C of the Education Code.

One benefit of adopting the “Foundations of Reading” exam, which is offered by the Commission’s current vendor, the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, is that teachers and candidates would be able to use the same platform and user credentials to register for and take this examination as they do for other Commission exams. In addition, preparation programs would be able to use the same data and information system (Results Analyzer) to review their candidates’ results as they currently use for other Commission exams.

Option 3: Adopt the “Foundations of Reading” Examination for Additional Candidate-Related Purposes

The Commission could also consider adopting the “Foundations of Reading” examination for use with a different group of candidates who will also need to demonstrate competency in reading instruction after June 30, 2025, but who may not be able to complete the Literacy Performance Assessment because they are not in the classroom and/or may not have access to an appropriate classroom setting. These candidates include:

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

To help address potential transition year issues that might arise for candidates, the Commission could also consider adopting the “Foundations of Reading” exam for current Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates who will have completed all other credential requirements except for the RICA, including passing a TPA, by June 30, 2025. These candidates could be given a choice of the “Foundations of Reading” exam or have the option to take and pass the Literacy Performance Assessment to demonstrate competence in reading instruction once the LPA and the “Foundations of Reading” examination become available on July 1, 2025.

Staff Recommendations

To better meet candidate and program needs and contexts during the transition period between the RICA and the Literacy Performance Assessment, staff recommends that the Commission expand the options available to the identified candidates in the following ways:

1. Adopt a secondary passing standard for the RICA which is comprised of scoring within -1.0 SEM of the current passing standard on one or more RICA subtests of the current 3 subtest version of the RICA, or on the original one subtest version of the RICA, or on the RICA Video Performance Assessment, plus additional evidence provided by candidates to their programs to document their proficiency in the required RICA domains, in order to be recommended by the program for the applicable credential. This recommendation would become effective immediately upon Commission action.
2. Extend the secondary passing standard option for the RICA as described in recommendation 1 above to all candidates within the past ten years who have attempted any version of the RICA and have not passed but whose scores were within the -1 SEM as described in recommendation 1 above.
3. Adopt the “Foundations of Reading” examination effective July 1, 2025, for
 - a. Teachers who hold a Preliminary credential with a RICA renewal code

- b. Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates who complete all other credential requirements except for the RICA by June 30, 2025.
- 4. Adopt the “Foundations of Reading” examination effective July 1, 2025, for the following groups of candidates:
 - a. Single Subject credential holders who want to add a Multiple Subject credential,
 - b. Private school teachers seeking Multiple Subject, PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction, or Education Specialist credentials, and
 - c. Teachers who are prepared in another country.
- 5. Direct staff to convene a standard setting panel to recommend a passing standard for the “Foundations of Reading” examination that is consistent with the TPE 7 expectations for beginning teachers.

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts any or all of the above recommendations, staff will notify the field and provide guidance regarding implementation of these options and will also plan for conducting a standard setting process for the “Foundations of Reading” examination.

Appendix A

Potential Impact of Adopting a Secondary Passing Standard for the RICA

Table 1: RICA Written Prior One Subtest Version Overall Pass Rate and the Number of Examinees Who Would Be Eligible for the Secondary Passing Standard (Data from 8/1/2019 to 7/21/2021)

RICA Version	N Attempted	N Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	% Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	N of Examinees who scored within -1 SEM but who did not pass
2009 Version	15,166	10,847	72%	2,393

Note: This table only shows the number of examinees in the past five years. Since the Education Code allows for examination scores to remain valid for 10 years for use towards the intended credential, additional examinees would fall within the – 1 SEM.

Table 2: Pass Rates by Ethnicity for RICA: Written Prior One Subtest Version and the Number of Examinees Who Would Be Eligible for Secondary Passing Standard (Data from 8/1/2019 to 7/21/2021) *

Ethnicity	N Attempted	N Passing at Current Minimum Passing Standard	% Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	N of Examinees who scored within -1 SEM but who did not pass
Not provided	548	400	73%	91
Black	527	309	59%	111
Asian	778	635	82%	88
Southeast Asian	673	483	72%	99
Pacific Islander	66	43	65%	10
Hispanic	4,884	3,063	63%	944
Native American	89	64	72%	15
White	6,820	5,326	78%	896
Other	781	524	67%	139

Note: This table only shows the number of examinees in the past five years. Since the Education Code allows for examination scores to remain valid for 10 years for use towards the intended credential, additional examinees would fall within the – 1 SEM.

* Note: All ethnicity data are voluntarily self-reported by candidates

Table 3: Pass Rates by Gender for RICA: Written Prior One Subtest Version and the Number of Examinees Who Would Be Eligible for Secondary Passing Standard (Data from 8/1/2019 to 7/21/2021) *

Gender	N Attempted	N Passing at Current Minimum Passing Standard	% Passing at Current Minimum Passing Standard	N of Examinees who scored within -1 SEM but who did not pass
Not provided	117	90	77%	16
Male	2,530	1,607	64%	475
Female	12,511	9,145	73%	1,901
Nonbinary	8	NA*	NA	NA

*Pass rates are not available for groups with fewer than ten examinees. All gender data are voluntarily self-reported by candidates

Table 4: RICA: Written Current Three Subtest Version Overall Pass Rate and the Number of Examinees Who Would Be Eligible for the Secondary Passing Standard (Data from 7/1/2021 through 7/21/2024)

	N Attempted	N Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	% Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	N of Examinees who scored within -1 SEM of the current passing standard but who did not pass
Candidates who took all 3 subtests	32,748	27,287	83%	3,009

Table 5: Pass Rates by Ethnicity for Current RICA Written 3 Subtest Version and the Number of Examinees Who Would Be Eligible for the Secondary Passing Standard (Data from 7/1/2021 through 7/21/2024) *

Ethnicity	N Attempted all 3 Subtests	N Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	% Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	N of Examinees who scored within -1 SEM but who did not pass
Not provided	836	718	86%	75
Black	1,445	1,047	72%	196
Asian	1481	1,288	87%	109
Southeast Asian	1,463	1,211	83%	135
Pacific Islander	136	111	82%	21
Hispanic	13,795	10,955	79%	1,500
Native American	212	176	83%	20
White	11,751	10,444	89%	809
Other	1,632	1,339	82%	145

*Note: All ethnicity data are voluntarily self-reported by candidates

Table 6: Pass Rates by Gender for Current RICA Written 3 Subtest Version and the Number of Examinees Who Would Be Eligible for Secondary Passing Standard (Data from 7/1/2021 through 7/21/2024) *

Gender	N Attempted All 3 Subtests	N Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	% Passed at Current Minimum Passing Standard	N of Examinees who scored within -1 SEM but who did not pass
Not provided	440	379	86%	42
Male	4,890	3,824	78%	569
Female	27,349	23,020	84%	2,395
Nonbinary	72	66	92%	4

*Note: All gender data are voluntarily self-reported by candidates

Appendix B

Objectives Measured by the Foundations of Reading Examination

Subsections of EC 44259(b)(4)	Corresponding Reading and Literacy Instruction Content Covered by Foundations of Reading Exam					
(i) The study of organized, systematic, explicit skills including phonemic awareness, direct, systematic, explicit phonics, and decoding skills.	"Objective 0001: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing language and emergent literacy skills, including phonological and phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and the alphabetic principle."	"Objective 0002: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing beginning reading skills, including phonics, high frequency words, and spelling"	Objective 0003: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing word analysis skills and strategies, including syllabication, structural or morphemic analysis, and orthographic skills.	Objective 0004: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing reading fluency at all stages of reading development.	Objective 0009: Apply knowledge of principles and evidence-based best practices of reading instruction.	Objective 0010: Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to the development of foundational reading skills.
(ii) A strong literature, language, and comprehension component with a balance of oral and written language.	Objective 0005: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for promoting academic language development, including vocabulary development.	Objective 0006: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for promoting comprehension and analysis of literary texts.	Objective 0007: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for promoting comprehension and analysis of informational texts.	Objective 0009: Apply knowledge of principles and evidence-based best practices of reading instruction.	Objective 0011: Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to the development of reading comprehension.	N/A
(iii) Ongoing diagnostic	Objective 0008: Apply knowledge of	Objective 0009: Apply knowledge	Objective 0010: Prepare an	Objective 0011: Prepare an	N/A	N/A

Subsections of EC 44259(b)(4)	Corresponding Reading and Literacy Instruction Content Covered by Foundations of Reading Exam					
techniques that inform teaching and assessment.	principles and evidence-based best practices for assessing reading development.	of principles and evidence-based best practices of reading instruction.	organized, developed analysis on a topic related to the development of foundational reading skills.	organized, developed analysis on a topic related to the development of reading comprehension.		
(iv) Early intervention techniques.	"Objective 0001: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing language and emergent literacy skills, including phonological and phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and the alphabetic principle."	"Objective 0002: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing beginning reading skills, including phonics, high frequency words, and spelling"	Objective 0004: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for developing reading fluency at all stages of reading development.	Objective 0009: Apply knowledge of principles and evidence-based best practices of reading instruction.	N/A	N/A
(v) Guided practice in a clinical setting.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
(B) For purposes of this section, "direct, systematic, explicit phonics" means phonemic	"Objective 0001: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices	"Objective 0002: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional	Objective 0003: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional	Objective 0004: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional	Objective 0009: Apply knowledge of principles and evidence-based best practices of	Objective 0010: Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to

Subsections of EC 44259(b)(4)	Corresponding Reading and Literacy Instruction Content Covered by Foundations of Reading Exam					
<p>awareness, spelling patterns, the direct instruction of sound/symbol codes and practice in connected text, and the relationship of direct, systematic, explicit phonics to the components set forth in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of subparagraph (A).</p>	<p>for developing language and emergent literacy skills, including phonological and phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and the alphabetic principle."</p>	<p>practices for developing beginning reading skills, including phonics, high frequency words, and spelling"</p>	<p>practices for developing word analysis skills and strategies, including syllabication, structural or morphemic analysis, and orthographic skills.</p>	<p>practices for developing reading fluency at all stages of reading development.</p>	<p>reading instruction.</p>	<p>the development of foundational reading skills.</p>
<p>(C) A program for the multiple subject teaching credential and the education specialist teaching credential also shall include the study of integrated methods of teaching language arts.</p>	<p>Objective 0005: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for promoting academic language development, including vocabulary development.</p>	<p>Objective 0007: Demonstrate knowledge of principles and evidence-based instructional practices for promoting comprehension and analysis of informational texts.</p>	<p>Objective 0009: Apply knowledge of principles and evidence-based best practices of reading instruction.</p>	<p>Objective 0011: Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to the development of reading comprehension.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>