

## This response was prepared for Erin Hardin, Special Assistant & Legislative Liaison, Department of Education and Early Development, Alaska

### Your Question:

You asked for research related to the Alaska Reads Act legislation. Specifically, you'd like other state examples of a "reading specialist" definition in statute/bill language.

### Our Response:

Below are several examples of other states' definitions of "reading specialist" (or synonymous term). Because of the rarity with which this appears in statute, I've also included some regulatory language examples.

#### Examples in Statute:

**Alabama:** Ala. Code § 16-6G-4 outlines the specific qualifications and responsibilities of a reading specialist. A reading specialist is "assigned to provide intensive, targeted professional development for elementary school teachers at one school." Statute requires that a reading specialist holds a Professional Educator Certificate and a bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or professional development in science of reading. The duties as assigned by statute include modeling effective reading instructional strategies for teachers and facilitating schoolwide professional development. This was recently adjusted with [H.B. 388](#) (2019) and is not yet updated in Alabama statute.

**South Carolina:** [S.C. Code Ann. § 59-155-120](#) mentions reading specialists in their section on reading interventions. The statute states that "reading/literacy coaches must meet the minimum qualifications established in guidelines published by the Department of Education."

**Virginia:** [Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-253.13:2](#) states that a "reading specialist shall have training in the identification of and the appropriate interventions, accommodations, and teaching techniques for students with dyslexia or a related disorder and shall serve as an advisor on dyslexia and related disorders. Such reading specialist shall have an understanding of the definition of dyslexia and a working knowledge of (i) techniques to help a student on the continuum of skills with dyslexia; (ii) dyslexia characteristics that may manifest at different ages and grade levels; (iii) the basic foundation of the keys to reading, including multisensory, explicit, systemic, and structured reading instruction; and (iv) appropriate interventions, accommodations, and assistive technology supports for students with dyslexia."

**Florida:** [Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1011.62](#) allocates funding for reading specialists and other teachers to conduct intensive reading instruction that includes "research-based reading instruction that has been proven to accelerate progress of students exhibiting a reading deficiency; differentiated instruction based on screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, or student assessment data to meet students' specific reading needs; explicit and systematic reading strategies to develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, with more extensive opportunities for guided practice, error correction, and feedback; and the integration of social studies, science, and mathematics-text reading, text discussion, and writing in response to reading."

**Indiana:** [Ind. Code Ann. § 20-35.5-1-2](#) defines an authorized reading specialist trained in dyslexia as “an employee of a school corporation or public school, including a charter school, who has successfully completed training in a dyslexia program approved by the department.”

#### **Examples in Regulations:**

**Delaware:** [Code Del. Regs. 14 1500](#) defines a reading specialist stating: “‘Reading Specialist’ means an educator whose responsibility is to improve reading achievement in their assigned school or district position. A Reading Specialist provides one-on-one or small group, diagnostic teaching of reading. Responsibilities may include coaching and leading school reading programs. Reading Specialists' assignments may include Title I reading teachers, reading resource teachers and educators who work with teachers in reading and communication skills, including, but not limited to literacy coaches and coordinators, and individuals employed as building or district coordinators of reading or in Reading Cadre positions. Reading Specialists may also serve as a resource in reading and writing for educational support personnel, administrators, teachers, and the community, provide professional development based on historical and current literature and research, work collaboratively with other professionals to build and implement reading programs for individuals and groups of students, and serve as advocates for students who struggle with reading.”

**Colorado:** The Colorado Department of Education includes its endorsement requirements in [1 Colo. Code Regs. § 301-101:6.04](#), stating “To be endorsed as a reading specialist, an applicant must hold a Colorado initial or professional teacher license with an endorsement in an approved content area; hold a master's degree or higher; have completed an approved graduate program for the preparation of reading specialists at an accepted institution of higher education, including a supervised practicum or internship as a reading specialist; have three or more years of full-time, demonstrated classroom teaching experience; must be knowledgeable about research-based literacy instruction”

#### **Additional Resource:**

Education Commission of the States published a 50-State Comparison on Kindergarten – Third Grade Policies that includes the data point [“What are the requirements for teacher training and professional development in reading.”](#) This data point includes some information on reading specialists.