

The Maryland State Department of Education Status Report on the Revision of Reading Courses by Institutions of Higher Education

A number of steps have been taken by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to assure that reading courses for preservice teacher educators and inservice teacher educators address Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR). This report describes the processes that have occurred up to the date of this submission. The steps taken in this initiative for course revision are identified below.

SBRR Awareness Sessions

Overview Sessions for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Deans and Directors were held in the fall of 2003. To bring the higher education community and local school system (LSS) personnel on board regarding SBRR, the findings of the National Reading Panel, and specific assessment strategies, Scientifically Based Research awareness sessions were offered on several dates.

Reading Course Revision Committee Work

Following the awareness sessions, a Reading Course Revision Committee, chaired by Dr. Betty Morgan, Superintendent of Washington County Public Schools, was convened and met to create the recommended course guidelines for the revision of the elementary, early childhood, and special education courses required as part of all approved teacher preparation programs:

- Processes and Acquisition of Reading
- Instruction of Reading
- Assessment of Reading
- Materials for Teaching Reading

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, presented the charge to the Committee. Committee members represented universities in the University System of Maryland, private and independent colleges and universities, community colleges, and local school system personnel. Representatives from the State of Maryland International Reading Association (SoMIRAC) and the College Reading Teachers Association were also committee members. The members of the committees met in subcommittees for six working sessions and used electronic processes to facilitate communication and feedback from all committee participants.

External Review Process

Course guidelines were submitted to external reviewers, Dr. Louisa Moats and Dr. Marcia Davidson. Dr. Moats, formerly associated with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), is currently an independent consultant with Moats Associates Consulting, Inc. and a consultant for Literacy Research at Sopris West Educational Services. Dr. Davidson, a former professor in Elementary Education at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington and a national trainer with Read Naturally, is currently a Senior Research Associate at RMC Research Corporation. Dr. Moats recommended a closer alignment of the four courses, an elimination of redundancy, and stronger emphasis on scientifically based reading research as well as the inclusion of the study of language in the Processes and Acquisition of Reading course guidelines. Dr. Davidson made similar recommendations, suggested that the courses be made more achievable, and suggested clarification of several elements.

Internal Review and Revision

The responses from the external reviewers were reviewed by personnel from the Office of Reading First and from the Division of Instruction at the Maryland State Department of Education. Appropriate modifications to the course guidelines were made to align with the Office of Reading First expectations and requirements of the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum. The redesigned course guidelines were resubmitted to external reviewers who expressed positive comments regarding the final version.

IHE Course Guidelines Dissemination

Reading Course Revision Guidelines for Elementary, Early Childhood and Special Education courses were posted on the Maryland State Department of Education Website at www.marylandpublicschools.org in fall 2004. In addition to the *Guidelines*, the membership, the history of the work of the committee, and the resources used are provided.

IHE Technical Assistance

Regional Reading Course Revision Technical Assistance Meetings for IHEs were held to present the new course revision guidelines and written materials to help with course development. All institutions in Maryland have received numerous forms of information regarding the redesigned courses: course guidelines for the four elementary level courses, tips for developing courses, review guidelines, and review rubrics, as well as the explanation of a peer review process for course approval.

Peer Review Process Submission Options

IHEs were initially given a choice of two dates for their revised courses to be submitted to MSDE for the blind peer review by trained reading professionals: March 1, 2005 or October 1, 2005. Only a small number of institutions responded by March 1; the majority of the institutions submitted their courses for the October 1st submission date. Additional review sessions were held in March and June, 2006; **the next review submission date is September 15, 2006.**

Additional Technical Assistance

Additional support activities were offered to IHE personnel during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years to assist in the course revision process. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training for IHE representatives occurred for nine days during the winter and spring of each academic year. Participants who successfully completed the training have earned “trainer of trainers” credit and are authorized to use LETRS materials in their instructional programs. Upon successfully completing LETRS assessments, they have also received CDs of LETRS training materials for their professional use in course instruction.

Additional grant funded resources were provided for Collaborative Reading Course Development. All IHEs were invited to participate in collaborative course development. Self-selected community colleges and some IHEs met intermittently to collaboratively develop course outlines which have been used by several institutions.

Peer Review First Round Process and Outcomes

The IHE Reading Course Peer Review Process began with the first round revised reading course submissions in March, 2005. Six institutions submitted new/redesigned courses for the spring review.

Results of the course review were as follows:

First Round Peer Reviewed Course Status

Met Requirements	Met Requirements Conditionally	Did Not Meet Requirements
N=13 54%	N=3 13%	N=8 33%

The results of the reviews and recommendations of the Peer Review Committee members were shared with the institutions following the reviews. Institutions whose courses did not meet requirements were invited to resubmit their courses for subsequent peer review rounds. Courses that met requirements have been posted on the MSDE website of Approved Maryland Reading Courses and designated with (SBRR) to indicate their newly revised status.

Institutions who have received approval of their courses were expected to begin offering them in the fall semester of 2006.

Peer Review Second Round Process and Outcomes

Second round reading course submissions were due on October 1, 2005. Thirty-four institutions submitted new/redesigned courses for the fall review.

Second Round Peer Reviewed Course Status

Met Requirements	Met Requirements Conditionally	Did Not Meet Requirements
N=97 60%	N=43 26%	N=23 14%

Peer Review Third Round Process and Outcomes

Third round reading course submissions were due on March 1, 2006. Seventeen institutions submitted new/redesigned courses for the spring review.

Third Round Peer Reviewed Course Status

Met Requirements	Met Requirements Conditionally	Did Not Meet Requirements
N= 147 81%	N=23 13%	N=12 6%

Peer Review Fourth Round Process and Outcomes

Fourth round reading course submissions were due on June 5, 2006. Eleven institutions submitted new/redesigned courses for the spring review.

Fourth Round Peer Reviewed Course Status

Met Requirements	Met Requirements Conditionally	Did Not Meet Requirements
N= 170 96%	N=5 3%	N=2 1%

Data reported in each review round is cumulative.

Process Completion

All institutions that offer Maryland State Approved Teacher Education programs will revise and submit the four identified reading courses for approval for preservice and inservice teachers. Courses that fail to meet requirements will be returned to the higher education institution with appropriate feedback to guide their revision processes. The courses will once again be submitted to MSDE for peer review in September, 2006, if necessary. Failure to satisfactorily revise and implement reading courses that include SBRR will place the continued state approval of the higher education institutions in jeopardy. To maintain approval, institutions must meet the SBRR reading course requirements.

It is anticipated that all IHEs will be offering reading courses that address SBRR in the fall session, 2006. Individual institutions which do not meet that target date will be provided additional technical assistance and monitored closely by the Program Approval and Assessment Branch, Division of Certification and Accreditation of MSDE regarding program approval status.

Ongoing Technical Assistance

MSDE is continuing to provide technical assistance. LETRS Training for IHE personnel and LSS personnel who will be teaching revised courses will be provided during the 2006-2007 academic year.

For additional information regarding this process, contact Dr. Cheri Wittmann at cwittmann@msde.state.md.us or call 410-767-0390.