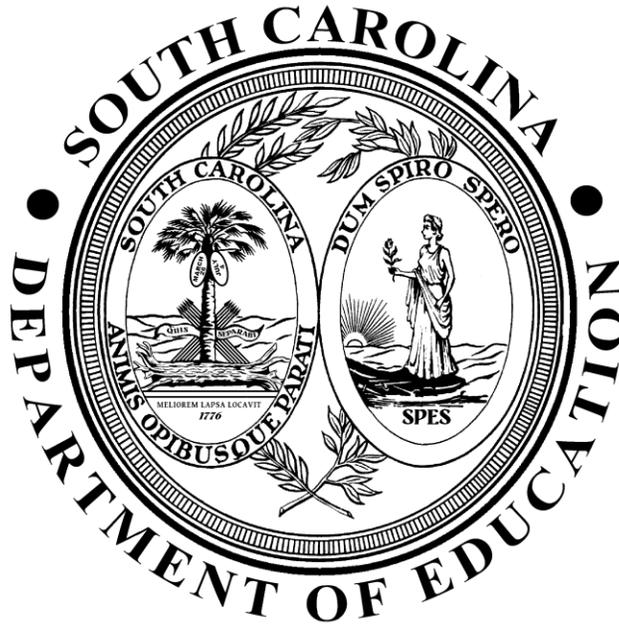


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*



## **2016-17 Annual Reading Coach Report**

Office of Early Learning and Literacy  
Read to Succeed Team

Report to the General Assembly  
Pursuant ACT 284

January 17, 2017

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## **Background**

In 2014 Act 284, Read to Succeed, was approved by Governor Nikki Haley and signed into law. The legislature designed the statute with the intention of increasing the number of students in South Carolina who can proficiently read and comprehend grade-level text. This is significant because research indicates that when students fall behind in literacy skills in the early years, they often fail to demonstrate reading proficiency in later grades. Without effective instruction and appropriate intervention in the early grades, these children become the students in our high schools least likely to graduate ready for college and careers. Furthermore, research confirms that students reading below grade level at the end of third grade are six times more likely to leave school without a high school diploma (Murnane, Sawhill, & Snow 2012). To combat this dilemma in our schools, Section 59-155-180 (C) (2) (3) of the Read to Succeed Act provides assistance to elementary schools through the use of reading/literacy coaches.

The 2016 Appropriations Act requires the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to report on the coaching initiatives as follows:

(H) The Department of Education shall require:

(1) any school district receiving funding under subsection (A) to identify the name and qualifications of the supported reading/literacy coach; as well as the school in which the coach is assigned; and

(2) any school district receiving funding under subsection (G) to account for the specific amounts and uses of such funds.

(I) With the data reported by the school districts, the department shall report by January fifteenth of the current fiscal year on the hiring of and assignment of reading/literacy coaches by school. The department shall also report the amount of funds that will be used for Summer Reading Camps.

Act 284 of 2016, Proviso 1.66.

The Office of Finance of the SCDE, reports districts used \$1,340,620.50 in EIA funds for the fiscal year 2017 for Act 284-mandated summer reading camps.

## **Research to Support the Use of Reading Coaches**

To work towards reforming our schools and increasing student literacy achievement in South Carolina, Read to Succeed legislation and Proviso 1.66 provide guidelines to elementary schools on the use of state funding for school-based reading coaches.

According to Joyce and Showers (2002), coached teachers use new strategies more appropriately, exhibit greater long-term retention of knowledge and skills, and are more likely to explain new strategies to their students. In addition, when teachers are coached on new knowledge and skills, there is a 95 percent transfer to classroom practice.

The International Literacy Association (2010) (ILA) recommends five specific qualifications for reading/literacy coaches. For certification, ILA recommends that a “Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach” have:

- “A valid teaching certificate

- Previous teaching experience
- A master's degree with a concentration in reading and writing education
- Program experiences that build knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to working with students, supporting or coaching teachers, and leading the school reading program
- Typically the equivalent of 21–27 graduate semester hours in reading, language arts, and related courses. The program must include a supervised practicum experience, typically the equivalent of 6 semester hours. The supervised practicum experience should require working with students who struggle with reading...” (ILA 2010).

These recommendations from the ILA are deeply aligned with the guardrails set forth in Proviso 1.66. This Proviso, quoted below, establishes the direct qualifications of a reading coach in South Carolina:

(D) Schools and districts accepting funding to support a coaching position agree that the reading/literacy coach must not serve as an administrator. If the department finds that school districts are using these funds for administrative costs as defined in statute they must withhold that district’s remaining balance of funds allocated pursuant to this proviso.

(E) The Department of Education must publish guidelines that define the minimum qualifications for a reading/literacy coach. These guidelines must deem any licensed/certified teacher qualified if, at a minimum, he or she:

- (1) holds a bachelor’s degree or higher and an add-on endorsement for literacy coach or literacy specialist; or
- (2) holds a bachelor’s degree or higher and is actively pursuing the literacy coach or literacy specialist endorsement; or
- (3) holds a master’s degree or higher in reading or a closely-related field.

Act 284 of 2016, Proviso 1.66(D)-(E).

## **2016-17 Reading Coach Education and Experience Levels**

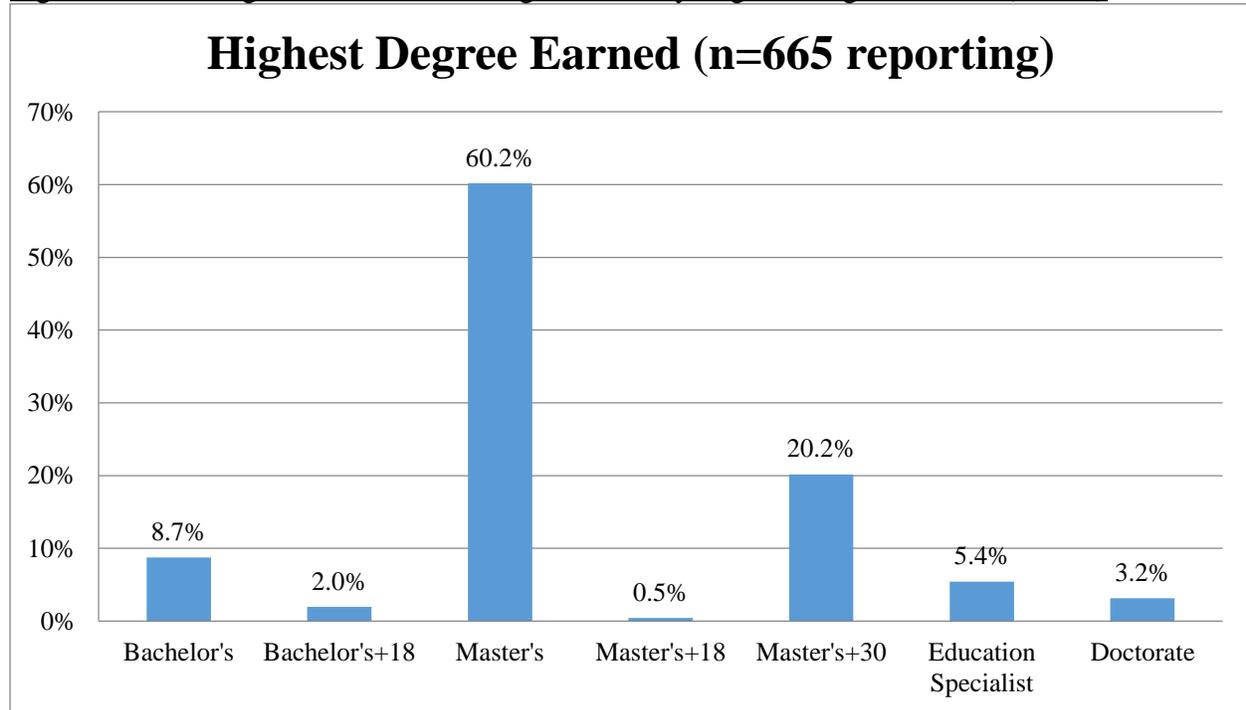
During the 2016-17 academic year, there were 693 state-funded reading coaches across South Carolina. Table 1 shows the break-down of coach education levels, years of teaching experience, and years of coaching experience by number of coaches. Data were gathered from a self-reported survey of coaches conducted by the SCDE’s Office of Early Learning and Literacy. Over half of reading coaches hired have a master’s degree or beyond and between six and twenty years of teaching experience. Years of experience coaching other teachers, however, is significantly less. Of the 676 coaches responding, most had two or fewer years of coaching experience. Figures 1 through 3 illustrate the demographic breakdown by percentages.

**Table 1: 2016-17 Reading Coach Education and Experience Levels**

Number of Coaches by Education Level		Number of Coaches by Years Teaching Experience		Number of Coaches by Years Coaching Experience	
58	BA/BS	29	1–5 years	104	0 years
13	BS+18	134	6–10 years	106	1 year
400	Masters	137	11–15 years	266	2 years
3	Masters+18	160	16–20 years	49	3 years
134	Masters+30	87	21–25 years	22	4 years
36	Ed Specialist	124	26 or more years	21	5 years
21	Doctorate	5	No Report	10	6 years
11	No Report			57	7–10 years
				33	11–15 years
				5	More than 15 years
				3	No Report

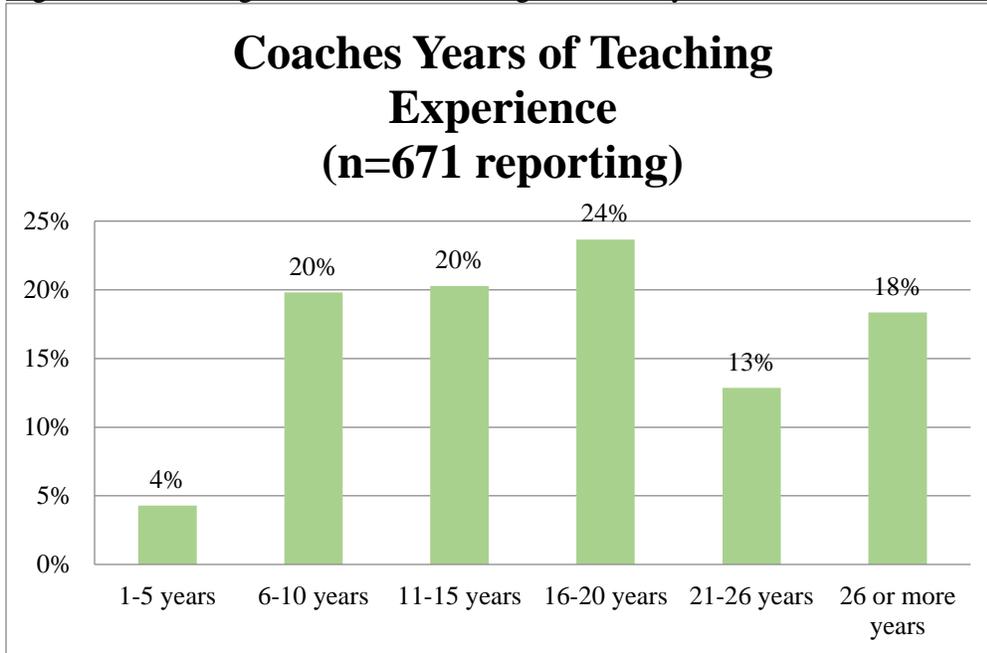
*Note.* Data were gathered from a self-reported survey of coaches (n = 676) conducted by the SCDE’s Office of Early Learning and Literacy.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 2016-17 Reading Coaches by Highest Degree Earned (n=665)**



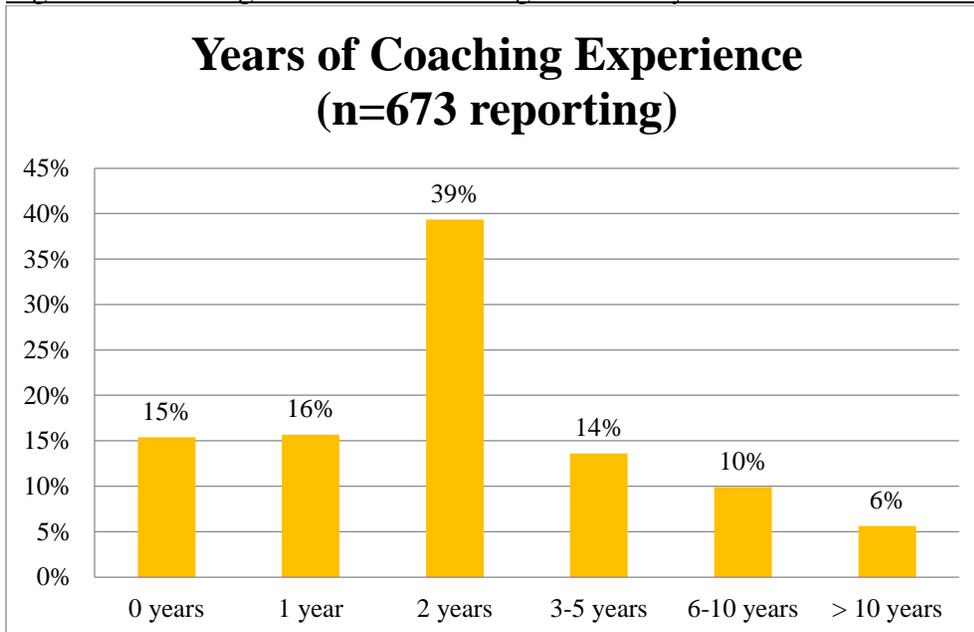
Eighty-nine percent of the coaches have earned advanced degrees, with 8.6 percent holding an Education Specialist or Doctorate degree.

Figure 2. Percentage of 2016-17 Reading Coaches by Number of Years of Teaching Experience



Eighteen percent of reading coaches reported have more than twenty-five years teaching experience. While 37 percent have between sixteen and twenty-five years of experience in the classroom, 40 percent have between than six and fifteen years of teaching experience. Only 4 percent of reading coaches have five or fewer years of teaching experience.

Figure 3. Percentage of 2016-17 Reading Coaches by Number of Years of Coaching Experience



Only 6 percent (n=38) of reading coaches reported having more than ten years' coaching experience, while 70 percent (n=476) have two or fewer years' coaching experience. Thirty-one percent (n=210) of the coaches had no prior coaching experience or one year's coaching experience.

### **Rationale for Hiring from 2015–2016 Report**

The SCDE requested information from districts about their rationales and procedures for hiring 2015–16 reading coaches. Rationales and procedures varied by district and sometimes varied within districts. The majority of districts reported candidates were interviewed by a team. Several districts gave autonomy to the building level principal in selecting the coach. Some districts mentioned the effectiveness and expertise of the candidate. Some mentioned that Reading Recovery-certified teachers were given first priority. One district mentioned candidates were scored with a rubric during an observation or video lesson.

## **Appendix A: Proviso 1.66**

**1.66.** (SDE: Reading/Literacy Coaches) (A) Funds appropriated for Reading/Literacy Coaches must be allocated to school districts by the Department of Education as follows:

(1) for each elementary school in which twenty percent or more of the students scored below proficient on the reading and research test in the most recent year for which such data are available, the school district shall be eligible to receive the lesser of either up to \$62,730 or the actual cost of salary and benefits for a full-time reading/literacy coach; and

(2) for each elementary school in which fewer than twenty percent of the students scored below proficient on the reading and research test during the same period, the school district shall be eligible to receive the lesser of either up to \$31,365 or fifty percent of the actual cost of salary and benefits for a full-time reading/literacy coach. A school district must provide local support for state funds provided under this paragraph. School districts may use existing local funds currently used for reading assistance as the local support.

(B) By accepting these funds, a school district warrants that they will not be used to supplant existing school district expenditures, except for districts that either are currently, or in the prior fiscal year, were paying for reading/literacy coaches with local funds. A district may, however, assign a reading/literacy coach to a primary school rather than to the elementary school to improve the early literacy skills of young children.

(C) Funds appropriated for Reading/Literacy Coaches are intended to be used to provide elementary schools with reading/literacy coaches who shall serve according to the provisions in Chapter 155 of Title 59.

(D) Schools and districts accepting funding to support a coaching position agree that the reading/literacy coach must not serve as an administrator. If the department finds that school districts are using these funds for administrative costs as defined in statute they must withhold that districts remaining balance of funds allocated pursuant to this proviso.

(E) The Department of Education must publish guidelines that define the minimum qualifications for a reading/literacy coach. These guidelines must deem any licensed/certified teacher qualified if, at a minimum, he or she:

(1) holds a bachelors degree or higher and an add-on endorsement for literacy coach or literacy specialist; or

(2) holds a bachelors degree or higher and is actively pursuing the literacy coach or literacy specialist endorsement; or

(3) holds a masters degree or higher in reading or a closely-related field.

Within these guidelines, the Department of Education must assist districts in identifying a reading/literacy coach in the event that the school is not successful in identifying and directly

employing a qualified candidate. The provisions of subsection (A), including the local support requirements, shall also apply to any allocations made pursuant to this paragraph.

(F) The Department of Education must develop procedures for monitoring the use of funds appropriated for reading/literacy coaches to ensure they are applied to their intended uses and are not redirected for other purposes. The Department of Education may receive up to \$100,000 of the funds appropriated for reading/literacy coaches in order to implement this program, provided that this allocation does not exceed the department's actual costs.

(G) Prior to the close of the current fiscal year, any unspent or unallocated funds for reading/literacy coaches shall be used to fund Summer Reading Camps.

(H) The Department of Education shall require:

(1) any school district receiving funding under subsection (A) to identify the name and qualifications of the supported reading/literacy coach; as well as the school in which the coach is assigned; and

(2) any school district receiving funding under subsection (G) to account for the specific amounts and uses of such funds.

(I) With the data reported by the school districts, the department shall report by January fifteenth of the current fiscal year on the hiring of and assignment of reading/ literacy coaches by school. The department shall also report the amount of funds that will be used for Summer Reading Camps.

(J) Funds appropriated for reading/literacy coaches shall be retained and carried forward to be used for the same purpose but may not be flexed.

(K) For Fiscal Year 2016-17, if increased funding for reading/literacy coaches is not sufficient to provide additional reading/literacy coaches at each elementary school then the funding must be targeted to the areas of greatest need based on the number of students substantially failing to demonstrate reading proficiency as indicated on the prior year's state assessment.

Retrieved from

[http://www.scstatehouse.gov/query.php?search=DOC&searchtext=1.66&category=BUDGET&year=2016&version\\_id=7&return\\_page=&version\\_title=Appropriation%20Act&conid=8392396&result\\_pos=0&keyval=35153&numrows=10](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/query.php?search=DOC&searchtext=1.66&category=BUDGET&year=2016&version_id=7&return_page=&version_title=Appropriation%20Act&conid=8392396&result_pos=0&keyval=35153&numrows=10)

## **Appendix B:** Excerpt from Act 284

(2) A reading/literacy coach shall be employed in each elementary school. Reading coaches shall serve as job-embedded, stable resources for professional development throughout schools in order to generate improvement in reading and literacy instruction and student achievement. Reading coaches shall support and provide initial and ongoing professional development to teachers based on an analysis of student assessment and the provision of differentiated instruction and intensive intervention. The reading coach shall:

- a) model effective instructional strategies for teachers by working weekly with students in whole, and small groups, or individually;
- b) facilitate study groups;
- c) train teachers in data analysis and using data to differentiate instruction;
- d) coaching and mentoring colleagues;
- e) work with teachers to ensure that research-based reading programs are implemented with fidelity;
- f) work with all teachers (including content area and elective areas) at the school they serve, and help prioritize time for those teachers, activities, and roles that will have the greatest impact on student achievement, namely coaching and mentoring in the classrooms; and
- g) help lead and support reading leadership teams.

(3) The reading coach must not be assigned a regular classroom teaching assignment, must not perform administrative functions that deter from the flow of improving reading instruction and reading performance of students and must not devote a significant portion of his or her time to administering or coordinating assessments. By August 1, 2014, the department must publish guidelines that define the minimum qualifications for a reading coach. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2014-2015, reading/literacy coaches are required to earn the add-on certification within six years, except as exempted in items (4) and (5), by completing the necessary courses or professional development as required by the department for the add-on. During the six-year period, to increase the number of qualified reading coaches, the Read to Succeed Office shall identify and secure courses and professional development opportunities to assist educators in becoming reading coaches and in earning the literacy add-on endorsement. In addition, the Read to Succeed Office will establish a process through which a district may be permitted to use state appropriations for reading coaches to obtain in-school services from department-approved consultants or vendors, in the event that the school is not successful in identifying and directly employing a qualified candidate. Districts must provide to the Read to Succeed Office information on the name and qualifications of reading coaches funded by the state appropriations.

Retrieved from [http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120\\_2013-2014/bills/516.htm](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120_2013-2014/bills/516.htm)

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