

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs
Consent

AGENDA ITEM: 5 – D (2)
DATE: December 13-14, 2023

SUBJECT

New Specialization Request – USD – Specialization in Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach – MA in Secondary Education

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2.3.2](#) – New Programs, Program Modifications, Curricular Requests, and Inactivation/Termination

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The University of South Dakota (USD) requests authorization to offer a specialization in Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach within the MA in Secondary Education program. The purpose of the proposed specialization is to provide students with the necessary coursework needed in the State of South Dakota to add the Reading endorsement to their teaching license. Completers of this program will be highly qualified to serve in K-12 schools as a Reading Specialist and Literacy Coach. This specialization will duplicate and be cross-listed with the current Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach specialization in the MA in Elementary Education. The new specialization will allow middle and high school teachers with an interest in becoming an Reading Specialist or Literacy Coach to enroll in the specialization while remaining in the MA in Secondary Education.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

USD requests authorization to offer the specialization on campus, online, and using hybrid delivery. USD is not requesting additional state resources to offer the program. One new course will be required.

Board office staff recommends approval of the program.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – New Specialization Request Form: USD – Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach – MA in Secondary Education

DRAFT MOTION 2023-1213_5-D(2):

I move to authorize USD to offer a specialization in Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach within the MA in Secondary Education, as presented.



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

New Specialization

UNIVERSITY:	USD
TITLE OF PROPOSED SPECIALIZATION:	Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach
NAME OF DEGREE PROGRAM IN WHICH SPECIALIZATION IS OFFERED:	Secondary Education, M.A.
INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	May 2024
PROPOSED CIP CODE:	13.1315
UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:	Teacher Residency & Education
BANNER DEPARTMENT CODE:	UCIN
UNIVERSITY DIVISION:	School of Education
BANNER DIVISION CODE:	2E

X	<p><u>Please check this box to confirm that</u> (place an “X” in the left box):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual preparing this request has read AAC Guideline 2.6, which pertains to new specialization requests, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.
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University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

<i>Elizabeth M. Freeburg</i>	10/19/2023
Institutional Approval Signature	Date
<i>President or Chief Academic Officer of the University</i>	

1. Level of the Specialization (place an “X” before the specialization):

<input type="checkbox"/> Baccalaureate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master’s	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
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2. What is the nature/purpose of the proposed specialization? Please include a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the academic field in this specialization.

The purpose of this specialization is to provide students with the necessary coursework needed in the State of South Dakota to add the Reading endorsement to their teaching license. Completers of this program will be highly qualified to serve in K12 schools as a Reading Specialist and Literacy Coach. This specialization will duplicate and be cross listed with the current Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach specialization in the ELED MA program. The current specialization in the ELED MA program is already focused on K12 Literacy. This specialization should have been created in both the ELED and SEED MA programs as many prospective teachers are current middle and high school teachers that do not identify as an Elementary teacher but have a strong interest in becoming a Literacy Coach or Reading Specialist in their schools.

3. Provide a justification for the specialization, including the potential benefits to students and potential workforce demand for those who graduate with the credential.

There is currently a teacher shortage in South Dakota and throughout the nation. According to the Associated School Boards of South Dakota, there were at least 180 open teaching positions at the start of the 2023-24 school year¹. As schools have had to cope with teacher shortages, in some schools, educators in specialist roles, such as Literacy Coaches, are re-entering the classroom to meet staffing needs. This is increasing the demand for more teachers prepared as Literacy experts in schools to ensure students' needs are met. The addition of this specialization in the Secondary Education MA program will create a pathway for those educators that identify as a secondary teacher to gain advanced knowledge of Literacy and how to support students with reading difficulties.

4. List the proposed curriculum for the specialization (including the requirements for completing the major – highlight courses in the specialization):

Prefix	Number	Course Title	CrHrs	New (yes, no)
Master of Arts Secondary Education, Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach Specialization: 30 Credit Hours				
Specialization Requirements 18 Credit Hours				
SEED	752	Reading/Literacy Program Leadership and Change	3	No*
SEED	755	Research & Practices in Reading Instruction	3	No*
SEED	757	Assessment and Interventions for Struggling and Dyslexic Readers	3	No*
SEED	781	Theoretical Foundations of Literacy and Dyslexia	3	No*
ELED/SEED	794	Internship	3	No
ELED/SEED	795	Practicum/Practicum in Secondary Education	3	No
Supporting Area Coursework 12 Credit Hours				
EDER	761	Graduate Research & Design	3	No
Students who have not taken MLED 460 or SEED 450 or an equivalent course, must take one of the following:				
MLED	560	Middle Level Reading Methods	0-3**	No
SEED	550	7-12 Reading and Content Literacy		
Electives approved by advisor (6-9 credit hours required)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may also take Thesis SEED 798 Thesis (4 credits). 				

* Course currently offered under ELED prefix (minor mods to cross-list/equate to SEED prefix processing).

**Students who have not completed middle level reading methods (MLED 460) or secondary reading and content literacy (SEED 450) course or equivalent secondary reading methods courses, will be required to complete one of the courses at the 500-level. Students who have completed this content, will enroll in an elective approved by the advisor.

Total number of hours required for completion of specialization	18
Total number of hours required for completion of major	30
Total number of hours required for completion of degree	30

¹ <https://www.dakotanewsnow.com/2023/08/07/over-180-open-teaching-positions-statewide-down-last-year/>

5. Delivery Location

Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.

A. Complete the following charts to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver the entire program on campus, at any off campus location (e.g., UC Sioux Falls, Capital University Center, Black Hills State University-Rapid City, etc.) or deliver the entire specialization through distance technology (e.g., as an on-line program)?

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
On campus	No	

	Yes/No	If Yes, list location(s)	Intended Start Date
Off campus	No		

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods <i>Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline 5.5.</i>	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	Yes	U15 Online Asynchronous U18 Online Synchronous	May 2024

B. Complete the following chart to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver more than 50% but less than 100% of the specialization through distance learning (e.g., as an on-line program)? This question responds to HLC definitions for distance delivery.

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	No		

6. Additional Information:

Although this specialization will require the creation of new courses, all these courses will be cross-listed with their ELED equivalent that is already taught. The course content also already focus on K12 Literacy Education content. This creates a pathway to complete this program for those students that identify as a secondary teacher.



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To Whom It May Concern:

As an educator in South Dakota, it has become increasingly apparent over the past two decades that literacy intervention does not start and stop in elementary school. Having spent the majority of my career focusing on learners in grades 6-12, I have seen first-hand how persistent gaps in a child's reading ability can wreak havoc on growth in all academic areas, while also hindering their social and emotional development. A child who is unable to read at grade level or above faces limitations that span far beyond the pages of a book. As such, it is our responsibility as educators to recognize the significance of this need and provide supports and instructional programming designed to meet these individuals where they are in their educational journey. Continuing to fostering their development as readers of content and curiosity is an essential part of what we do in our schools.

With all of this in mind, I am writing this letter of support for a Masters in Literacy or Literacy Coach program focused on the secondary level. A Master's Degree of this nature would support teachers in grades 6-12 who often need to focus on reading to learn rather than learning to read, allowing for integration of pedagogical literacy strategies across content areas in both general classroom and intervention settings. Secondary teachers in all disciplines would benefit from literacy training, opening the doors endless opportunities – particularly for students falling into gap groups where the need for Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports tends to be more prevalent.

Teacher leaders across the state and nation are hungry for growth opportunities. As you are aware, the vast majority of Master's Degree programs available to them lead to positions outside of the classroom. Offering a degree program that fosters growth in the area of specialized instruction not only creates an additional pathway for leadership and growth but does so with an end goal of retaining the classroom teachers that we so desperately need. As the Board of Regents considers whether or not to approve a Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach Program for secondary educators, please know that I give such consideration my full endorsement, and would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have pertaining to this topic.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Amolins
Director of Instruction and Federal Programs
Harrisburg School District



Dr. Tanya Rasmussen
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SD Board of Regents:

I am writing to provide support for a Masters in Literacy or Literacy Coach program to be offered for teachers at the Secondary Level. We know foundational skills of reading are built in our youngest learners, however many of our learners in secondary grades show gaps in these foundation skills that significantly impact their learning and success. Secondary Teachers typically don't have the pedagogy or knowledge of how children learn to learn during their undergraduate programs, therefore if they have struggling readers and writers in their classrooms, they don't know how to support them or even understand how to recognize skill deficiencies.

A Masters in Literacy would equip Secondary teachers with advanced knowledge and skills in literacy instruction to incorporate strategies to differentiate instruction effectively, ensuring that all students, regardless of their literacy abilities, receive appropriate support. Some secondary students may still struggle with basic literacy skills. A teacher with a Masters in Literacy can provide targeted interventions, preventing further academic challenges.

Secondary teachers would also benefit from a Masters in Literacy to learn about assessment techniques and data analysis to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. They can use this data to tailor instruction, implement interventions, and monitor learner progress.

In addition, in secondary education, students are expected to read and write across various subjects. A literacy specialist can help students build the reading and writing skills necessary for success in science, history, mathematics, and other content areas.

Our schools need Teacher Leaders at every level. A Masters in Literacy opens up opportunities for leadership roles within the school, such as a literacy coach, department head, or curriculum specialist. These roles can have a significant impact on school-wide literacy initiatives and student success. Being a Teacher Leader with an advanced degree would also open up the opportunity for a teacher to deliver professional development to their colleagues. A Masters in Literacy can empower teachers to share best practices in literacy instruction and help their peers improve their teaching methods.

At a time in our state and nation when we are struggling to retain teachers in the profession, I believe providing an opportunity for Secondary teachers to obtain a Masters in Literacy will allow teachers to deepen their knowledge and expertise, leading to increased job satisfaction. Teachers often find it personally fulfilling to continually grow professionally, especially when their new learning leads to being able to make a meaningful impact on their students' success.

In summary, a Masters in Literacy at the Secondary level is valuable for teachers who want to become experts in literacy instruction, better support their students, and advance in their careers. It equips educators with the knowledge and skills needed to address the unique literacy challenges that older students may face and promotes improved learning outcomes in various subject areas.

I support, and would highly encourage, the Board of Regents to approve a Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach Program for Secondary educators.

Educationally Yours,

Dr. Tanya Rasmussen