



THE FACTS: THE RICA READING TEST BENEFITS CALIFORNIA STUDENTS

The current situation: A bill was just introduced in the California legislature to allow elementary teachers to enter the classroom without demonstrating any knowledge of how to teach reading. For over 20 years, the RICA test has been California's stopgap measure, ensuring new teachers know the science of reading. In fact, it is widely considered to be one of the best reading tests in the country because it reflects this science better than most others.

California has made substantial progress since the RICA was instituted in 1998.

- In 1998, when RICA was adopted, 52% of CA 4th graders could not read. By 2017, this had been reduced to 39%. Prior to RICA's adoption (1992-1998), CA showed no improvement.

Why the RICA matters.

- Experts consider the [RICA one of the two strongest reading tests](#) for teacher licensure in the country. The RICA adheres to the [reading methods identified in six decades of research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health](#), methods [re-confirmed by the Institute of Education Sciences](#).

California should shift its attention from eliminating RICA to mandating that teacher preparation programs train teachers how to teach reading.

- NCTQ's evaluation of 56 undergraduate and graduate elementary teacher preparation programs in California found that [only 9 programs \(16%\) teach scientifically based reading methods](#).
- The RICA offers what most of these prep programs do not. It serves as an essential check on elementary teachers' ability to perform their most crucial task: teaching their students to read.

Dropping the RICA test will not solve California's teacher shortage.

- Nearly everyone ([91% of test-takers](#)) [passes the RICA](#) (2012-2017). This [pass rate compares favorably with publicly available pass rates on other elementary licensing exams](#), such as the most widely used Praxis II elementary test with a pass rate of 72%.
- Unlike many tests, RICA shows little disparity in passing rate by subgroups (African-Americans, 85%; Mexican-American/Chicano, 86%; Other Hispanic, 87%; White, 93%).
- California does not have an overall shortage of elementary teachers. In 2017-2018, [the state credentialed more than 700 more elementary teachers more than it hired](#), and the number of [credentialed elementary teachers has increased 19 percent](#) since 2013-14.
- Over a five-year period, [only 3,045 candidates were not able to pass the RICA](#).

High rates of reading failure lead to tragic consequences, but they are preventable. Studies have shown time and time again that well trained teachers with access to strong curricula can reduce the rate of reading failure down to **less than one in ten students**.

Upholding the RICA test is the surest way for California to put students' needs first and deliver on its duty to give every child the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their full potential.