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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 629

01/19/2023 Authored by Edelson, Hicks, Clardy, Norris, Tabke and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Education Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to education; requiring schools to use approved literacy curriculum;
1.3 requiring literacy specialists; requiring a report; appropriating money; amending
1.4 Minnesota Statutes 2022, sections 120B.12, subdivisions 1, 4a, 5; 122A.06,
1.5 subdivision 4; 124D.98, by adding a subdivision; proposing coding for new law
1.6 in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 120B.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. 120B.1119] TITLE; THE READ ACT.

1.9 Sections 120B.12 to 120B.123 may be cited as "The Read Act."

1.10 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.12, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.11 Subdivision 1. **Literacy goal.** The legislature seeks to have every child reading at or
1.12 above grade level no later than the end of grade 3, including English learners, and that
1.13 teachers provide comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction consistent with
1.14 section 122A.06, subdivision 4, by 2025.

1.15 EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective July 1, 2023.

1.16 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.12, subdivision 4a, is amended to read:

1.17 Subd. 4a. **Local literacy plan.** (a) Consistent with this section, a school district must
1.18 adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than
1.19 the end of grade 3, including English learners. The plan must be consistent with ~~section~~
1.20 sections 120B.123 and 122A.06, subdivision 4, and include the following:

2.1 (1) a process to assess students' level of reading proficiency and data to support the
 2.2 effectiveness of an assessment used to screen and identify a student's level of reading
 2.3 proficiency;

2.4 (2) a process to notify and involve parents;

2.5 (3) a description of how schools in the district will determine the proper reading
 2.6 intervention strategy for a student and the process for intensifying or modifying the reading
 2.7 strategy in order to obtain measurable reading progress;

2.8 (4) evidence-based intervention methods for students who are not reading at or above
 2.9 grade level and progress monitoring to provide information on the effectiveness of the
 2.10 intervention; and

2.11 (5) identification of staff development needs, including a program to meet those needs.

2.12 (b) The district must post its literacy plan on the official school district website.

2.13 (c) By January 1, 2024, the commissioner of education must develop a model local
 2.14 literacy plan that requires all reading instruction and teacher training in reading instruction
 2.15 to be based on the science of reading. By July 1, 2024, a school district must either adopt
 2.16 the model literacy plan or amend its local plan to require all reading instruction and teacher
 2.17 training in reading instruction to be based on the science of reading.

2.18 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective July 1, 2023.

2.19 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.12, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

2.20 Subd. 5. **Commissioner.** The commissioner shall recommend to districts multiple
 2.21 assessment tools to ~~assist districts and teachers with identifying students under subdivision~~
 2.22 2 assess students' reading proficiency at the beginning and end of a school year. The
 2.23 commissioner shall also make available examples of nationally recognized and research-based
 2.24 instructional methods or programs to districts to provide comprehensive, scientifically based
 2.25 reading instruction and intervention under this section.

2.26 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective July 1, 2023.

2.27 Sec. 5. **[120B.123] LITERACY CURRICULUM AND STAFFING.**

2.28 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have
 2.29 the meanings given.

2.30 (b) "Literacy specialist" means a teacher licensed by the Professional Educator Licensing
 2.31 and Standards Board with training and expertise in the science of reading.

3.1 (c) "Science of reading" means evidence-based reading instruction practices that address
 3.2 the acquisition of language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling,
 3.3 fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension that can be differentiated to meet
 3.4 the needs of individual students.

3.5 Subd. 2. **Curriculum.** The commissioner of education must make available to school
 3.6 districts and charter schools a list of approved literacy curricula that are based on the science
 3.7 of reading. The commissioner must, upon request, provide support to school districts seeking
 3.8 to implement an approved curriculum. A school district or charter school must use a literacy
 3.9 curriculum that has been approved by the commissioner.

3.10 Subd. 3. **Literacy specialist.** (a) The board of a school district or charter school must
 3.11 employ or contract with a literacy specialist. A board may satisfy the requirements of this
 3.12 subdivision by contracting with another school district, charter school, or cooperative unit
 3.13 under section 123A.24, subdivision 2, for the services of a literacy specialist.

3.14 (b) A literacy specialist must collaborate with district and school administrators and
 3.15 staff to support the implementation and integration of the science of reading into professional
 3.16 development for teachers and other staff, effective instructional practices, data collection,
 3.17 and feedback.

3.18 (c) The Department of Education must develop a model literacy specialist position
 3.19 description and training requirements for literacy specialists. A school district or charter
 3.20 school is not required to adopt the model position description and training requirements.

3.21 (d) A school district or charter school is eligible for aid under this subdivision. The initial
 3.22 literacy specialist aid for a school district equals \$..... per adjusted pupil unit at the district
 3.23 for the current fiscal year or \$..... The initial literacy specialist aid for a charter school
 3.24 equals \$..... per adjusted pupil unit at the charter school for the current fiscal year. Literacy
 3.25 specialist aid must be used to meet the staffing requirements of this subdivision.

3.26 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective for the 2024-2025 school year and later.

3.27 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 122A.06, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

3.28 Subd. 4. **Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction.** (a) "Comprehensive,
 3.29 scientifically based reading instruction" includes a program or collection of instructional
 3.30 practices that is based on valid, replicable evidence showing that when these programs or
 3.31 practices are used, students can be expected to achieve, at a minimum, satisfactory reading
 3.32 progress. The program or collection of practices must include, at a minimum, effective,

4.1 ~~balanced~~ instruction in all five areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency,
4.2 vocabulary development, and reading comprehension.

4.3 Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction also includes and integrates
4.4 instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluating, and communicating the
4.5 student's reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions
4.6 so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text, write, and
4.7 apply higher level thinking skills. For English learners developing literacy skills, districts
4.8 are encouraged to use strategies that teach reading and writing in the students' native language
4.9 and English at the same time.

4.10 (b) "Fluency" is the ability of students to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper
4.11 expression.

4.12 (c) "Phonemic awareness" is the ability of students to notice, think about, and manipulate
4.13 individual sounds in spoken syllables and words.

4.14 (d) "Phonics" is the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships
4.15 between written letters and spoken words. Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading
4.16 that stresses learning how letters correspond to sounds and how to apply this knowledge in
4.17 reading and spelling.

4.18 (e) "Reading comprehension" is an active process that requires intentional thinking
4.19 during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader.
4.20 Comprehension skills are taught explicitly by demonstrating, explaining, modeling, and
4.21 implementing specific cognitive strategies to help beginning readers derive meaning through
4.22 intentional, problem-solving thinking processes.

4.23 (f) "Vocabulary development" is the process of teaching vocabulary both directly and
4.24 indirectly, with repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items. Learning in rich
4.25 contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology enhance the acquiring of
4.26 vocabulary.

4.27 ~~(g) Nothing in this subdivision limits the authority of a school district to select a school's~~
4.28 ~~reading program or curriculum.~~

4.29 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective July 1, 2023.

5.1 Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 124D.98, is amended by adding a subdivision to
5.2 read:

5.3 Subd. 5. Uses. A school district must use its literacy incentive aid on curriculum,
5.4 instructional materials, and teacher training based on the science of reading, according to
5.5 its local literacy plan under section 120B.12.

5.6 EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective July 1, 2024.

5.7 Sec. 8. APPROPRIATIONS.

5.8 Subdivision 1. Department of Education. The sums indicated in this section are
5.9 appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Education for the fiscal years
5.10 designated.

5.11 Subd. 2. Literacy grants. (a) For grants to school districts and charter schools:

5.12 \$ 100,000,000 2024

5.13 (b) Of this amount, \$30,000,000 must be used to train teachers in the science of reading.
5.14 The remaining amount must be used to pay for costs related to the requirements of Minnesota
5.15 Statutes, section 120B.123, or to purchase books and other instructional materials based on
5.16 the science of reading.

5.17 (c) A school district or charter school must submit a grant application to the commissioner
5.18 in the form and manner determined by the commissioner. The commissioner must report
5.19 to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education
5.20 the districts and charter schools that receive literacy grants, and the amounts of each grant,
5.21 by January 15, 2025, according to Minnesota Statutes, section 3.195.

5.22 (d) This appropriation is available until June 30, 2027.

5.23 Subd. 3. Literacy specialist aid. (a) For aid to support schools in improving literacy
5.24 under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.123:

5.25 \$ 2024

5.26 \$ 2025

5.27 (b) The 2024 appropriation includes \$..... for 2024.

5.28 (c) The 2025 appropriation includes \$..... for 2024 and \$..... for 2025.