

S.F. No. 1273 – The Read Act (delete-all amend scs1273a-1)

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Section 1. **Definitions.** Amends the definition of world’s best workforce by striking the goal of having all third grade students achieve grade-level literacy.

Section 2. **Adopting plans and budgets.** States that a school district, under the world’s best workforce provisions, only needs to include information regarding literacy as it relates to English language learners.

Section 3. **Title; The Read Act.**

Establishes the title of sections 120B.12 to 120B.123 as the Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, or the “Read Act.”

Section 4. **Literacy goal.** Amends the state’s literacy goal to state that teachers provide evidence-based literacy instruction instead of comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective immediately.

Section 5. **Identification; report.** Requires districts to use screeners instead of assessments.

Requires districts to include a summary of the district’s efforts to screen and identify students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia in the literacy plan, instead of reporting to the commissioner.

Section 6. **Intervention.** Requires a school district or charter school to provide a personal learning plan for a student who is unable to demonstrate grade-level reading proficiency, instead of encouraging the district or charter to provide the plan. Requires the plan to include targeted instruction and ongoing progress monitoring of the student’s progress. Prohibits a student from being held back solely due to literacy delays or not demonstrating grade-level proficiency. Requires the department to post a model personal learning plan on its website.

Section 7. **Local literacy plan.** Requires school districts to annually update their local literacy plan. The plan must include the screeners used to assess reading proficiency by school site and grade level, the literacy curriculum used by school site and grade level, and student data on foundational

literacy skills and mastery. Directs the commissioner to develop a model local literacy plan. Directs the commissioner to report to the legislature a summary of the local literacy plans.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective July 1, 2023.

Section 8. **Commissioner.** Updates the commissioner’s responsibilities for recommending screening tools to assess reading proficiency and identify students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective July 1, 2023.

Section 9. **Literacy Data.**

Subdivision 1. **Literacy rates.** (a) Directs a school district or charter school to report to the commissioner the following information:

- (1) the reading curriculum and interventions used in each grade;
- (2) the number and percentage of students that read at grade-level at the beginning and end of the previous school year; and
- (3) any assessment used to assess students’ reading proficiency and progress.

(b) Directs the commissioner to establish a database of literacy rates in Minnesota.

Subd. 2. **Teacher reading credentials.** Directs Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board to report the number and percentage of teachers that have received training that is identified by the board or the commissioner of education as effective literacy training based on the science of reading.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective immediately.

Section 10. **Read Act Implementation.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (b) Defines “CAREI” as the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota.

(c) Defines “district” as a school district, charter school, or cooperative unit under section 123A.24, subdivision 2.

(d) Defines “evidence-based” to mean the instruction or item described is based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence and has demonstrated a record of success in increasing students’ reading competency. Evidenced-based instruction does not include the three-cueing system.

(e) Defines “literacy specialist” as a person licensed by Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board as a teacher of reading, a special education teacher, or a kindergarten through grade six teacher, who has completed professional development approved by the Department of Education in structured literacy.

(f) Defines “literacy trainer” as a literacy specialist with expertise in working with educators as adult learners. A district literacy trainer supports the district’s implementation of the Read Act. Allows a literacy trainer to be employed by one district, jointly by two or more districts, or provide services to districts through a partnership with the Regional Centers of Excellence or another district.

(g) Defines “progress monitoring” as using data collected to inform whether interventions are working.

(h) Defines “structured literacy” as an approach to reading instruction where teachers carefully structure literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction to facilitate children’s literacy learning and progress.

(i) Defines “three-cueing system” or “meaning structure visual” (MSV) as a method that teaches students to use meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues when attempting to read an unknown word.

Subd. 2. Department of Education. Directs the department to partner with CAREI to approve literacy curricula and professional development programs. Directs the department to make a list of approved evidence-based screeners available to districts. Directs the department to regularly provide districts with information about professional development opportunities on evidence-based reading instruction. Directs the department to employ a literacy specialist to support district implementation of the Read Act.

Subd. 3. Screeners. Directs a district to use one of the department-approved screeners to screen students in kindergarten through grade 3 within the first six weeks of the school year and again in the last six weeks of the school year.

Subd. 4. Progress monitoring. Directs districts to develop an intervention plan for students not reading at grade level.

Subd. 5. Curriculum. Encourages a district to use evidence-based curriculum designed around teaching the foundational reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

Subd. 6. Professional development. Requires districts to provide training that is evidence-based first to all reading intervention teachers and literacy specialists and then to other teachers in the district, prioritizing elementary school classroom teachers, teachers who work with students with disabilities, English learners, and students who qualify for the graduation incentives program.

Subd. 7. Literacy trainer. Requires a district to employ or contract with a literacy trainer, or be actively supporting a designated literacy specialist through the process of becoming a literacy trainer.

Subd. 8. Read Act implementation partnership. (a) Directs the department to partner with CAREI for two years to support implementation of the Read Act. The department and CAREI must jointly;

- (1) identify at least five literacy curricula that are evidence-based, or focused on structured literacy;
- (2) identify at least three professional development programs that focus on the five pillars of literacy and the components of structured literacy;
- (3) develop an evidence-based lead literacy specialist training program that trains literacy specialists throughout the state;
- (4) identify measures of foundational literacy skills and mastery that a district must report on a local literacy plan;
- (5) provide guidance to districts about best practices in literacy instruction, and practices that are not evidence-based; and

(6) ensure that teacher professional development options are geographically equitable by supporting trainings through the Regional Centers of Excellence.

(b) Requires the department and CAREI to develop a process to give districts the opportunity to request additions to the list of curricula, professional development programs, and screeners.

(c) Requires the department and CAREI to support district implementation efforts by:

- (1) issuing guidance for teachers on implementing curriculum that is evidence-based or focused on structured literacy;
- (2) providing teachers with accessible options for evidence-based professional development focused on structured literacy; and
- (3) providing districts with technical support.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective immediately.

Section 11. **Evidence-based literacy instruction.** Amends the state’s definition of reading instruction to be evidence-based literacy instruction instead of comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction. Redefines “phonics” as the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters or graphemes, and spoken sounds or phonemes. Redefines “reading comprehension” as the ability to read the words on the page and to understand and comprehend the words that have been read.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective immediately.

Section 12. **Uses.** Requires districts to use their literacy incentive aid to support implementation of evidence-based reading instruction. Eligible uses include teacher training on evidence-based screening and progress monitoring tools; evidence-based training using a department-approved training program; employing or contracting with a literacy trainer; and materials, training, and ongoing coaching to ensure reading interventions are evidence-based.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective July 1, 2023.

Section 13. **Read Act Implementation Advisory Council.**

Subdivision 1. **Purpose and duties.** (a) Establishes an advisory council to advise the department and CAREI on implementation of the Read Act.

(b) Directs the council to review the screeners, professional development programs, and curriculum identified by the department and CAREI.

(c) Section 15.059 governs compensation and removal of members.

Subd. 2. **Membership.** Requires the council to consist of the following 16 governor-appointed members:

- (1) three literacy specialists, coaches, or special education teachers that work on literacy interventions with students in kindergarten through grade 5;
- (2) three licensed teachers that work as kindergarten through grade 5 classroom teachers;
- (3) two curriculum coordinators or directors with expertise in kindergarten through grade 5 curriculum;
- (4) two elementary school principals;

- (5) two superintendents or assistant superintendents;
- (6) two members of the public with expertise in literacy;
- (7) one special education director; and
- (8) one representative of the Minnesota Association of College for Teacher Education.

Subd. 3. **Meetings and administrative support.** Requires the advisory council to meet at least four times or more often if requested by the department or CAREI. The meetings are subject to the open meeting requirements in chapter 13D. Directs the commissioner to provide administrative support and meeting space.

Subd. 4. **Expiration.** Sets an expiration date for the advisory council of June 30, 2025.

Effective Date: Makes the section effective immediately.

Section 14. **Appropriations.** Appropriates money for Read Act instructional materials grants, professional development, and a blank amount for the department.