
DIGEST

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HB 85 Reengrossed

2021 Regular Session

McKnight

Abstract: Creates a literacy program for certain public school students in kindergarten through 5th grade.

Proposed law establishes the Steve Carter Literacy Program for eligible students. Defines "eligible student" as a public school student who is in kindergarten or the first, second, or third grade and who reads below grade level or is at risk for reading difficulties according to a literacy screener, a student who is in the fourth or fifth grade and who scored below mastery in English language arts on the state assessment in the prior school year, or a student in these grades recommended by an English teacher. Gives priority to the lowest performing economically disadvantaged students.

Proposed law provides for payments of up to \$1000 per student per school year for eligible services intended to improve reading or literacy skills.

Proposed law requires the Dept. of Education to administer the program pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education. Further requires the department to:

- (1) Develop an application process and accept applications for both students and service providers.
- (2) Evaluate students for eligibility.
- (3) Evaluate service providers for eligibility.
- (4) Remit payments to service providers for services rendered.
- (5) Annually report to the House and Senate education committees on the program.

Proposed law requires the department to evaluate program provider effectiveness through participants' Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) state assessment scores and literacy screener results. Provides that providers who fail to demonstrate improvement in students' reading abilities for two consecutive years shall be deemed ineligible to participate in the program.

Proposed law requires the department to notify school governing authorities and the governing authorities to notify the parents or legal guardians of eligible students of the program and the application process.

Proposed law requires that implementation of the program is subject to the appropriation of funds. Requires program payments to be made only from money appropriated for the purpose of increasing early literacy or supporting academic achievement among elementary school students.

(Adds R.S. 17:4032.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Specify that the applications the department shall process and accept are those for both students and service providers.
2. Specify that potential service providers shall include those with expertise in early literacy.
3. Change annual deadline from Oct. 31 to Sept. 30 for public school governing authorities to notify parents of eligible students regarding the program application process. Require that authorities notify parents after the Sept. 30 deadline if a reading deficiency is discovered after such date.
4. Increase maximum payment for services per student from \$500 to \$1,000.
5. Specify that the teaching certificate an eligible tutor holds shall be in elementary education or reading and requires that an eligible tutor be trained in the state English language arts standards.
6. Add reading services provided by public schools and public school districts to the list of eligible expenses.
7. Change the types of funds that can be used for program purposes.

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Appropriations to the engrossed bill:

1. Provide proposed law is subject to the appropriation of funds.
2. Add cap of \$250 per program participant per school year for books for home use.
3. Add requirement for the department to evaluate the program's effectiveness through participants' LEAP scores and literacy screener results.
4. Remove requirement that a tutor's valid teaching certificate be from Louisiana.