

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 438 (SB 222)

2021 Regular Session

Hewitt

Prior law recognized the importance of reading in early childhood and requires the state Department of Education (DOE) to provide criteria for all students in grades K-3 and provides general requirements of the initiative.

New law expands prior law and requires DOE to:

- (1) Develop a literacy assessment to assess the literacy level of each public school each K-3 student.
- (2) Provide the literacy assessment, at no cost, to each public school.
- (3) Establish the scores on the literacy assessment to determine whether a student's literacy skills are above grade level, on grade level, or below grade level.
- (4) Require, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, each public school to administer the literacy assessment to each student in kindergarten through third grade, within the first thirty days of each school year.
- (5) Provide, within 30 days after the administration of the literacy assessment, a literacy assessment report to each public school governing authority, each public school, and each public school teacher who teaches students in kindergarten through third grade, the number and percentage of students with literacy skills determined to be above grade level, on grade level, or below grade level. The number of students identified for referral for gifted evaluation or targeted for literacy intervention shall also be reported.
- (6) Submit a report, not later than ninety days after the beginning of each school year, to the Senate and House committees on education detailing the results of the literacy assessment for each public elementary school, each public school system, and the state as a whole.
- (7) Report the data for each school, school system, and the state as a whole, in the school progress profiles required by prior law.

Requires the use of the results from the literacy assessment in determining school and district performance scores pursuant to the state accountability system. But prohibits such use prior to the 2023-2024 school year.

Requires, not later than July 31, 2022, that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) revise teacher certification requirements and the requirements of teacher education programs to include foundational literacy skills standards in all educator preparation program of teachers in grades K-3. The foundational literacy skills standards shall include:

- (1) How to effectively teach the foundational literacy skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
- (2) How to differentiate instruction for teaching students with advanced literacy skills and students with significant literacy deficiencies, including dyslexia.
- (3) How to implement effective literacy instruction using high-quality instructional materials.
- (4) Behavior management, trauma-informed principles and practices for the classroom, and other developmentally appropriate supports to ensure that students can effectively access literacy instruction.
- (5) How to administer literacy assessments to students and use the resulting data to improve literacy instruction for students.

Requires BESE to adopt rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement the provisions of new law and to plan for the coordination of the initiative with existing programs and funding sources within schools and school systems.

Requires each public school to:

- (1) Provide each student in grades K-3 age-appropriate, systematic foundational literacy skills with instruction based on scientifically researched methods proven to provide a strong literacy foundation.
- (2) Administer the literacy assessment developed and provided by the department to each student in grades K-3 to determine each student's literacy level within the first 30 days of each school year.
- (3) Provide literacy interventions and supports designed to improve the foundational literacy skills of any student identified as having literacy skills below grade level.
- (4) Ensure that all textbooks and instructional materials used to teach students to read are high-quality, fully aligned to state content standards, and based on literacy strategies that are scientifically researched with proven results in teaching phonological awareness, letter formation, phonics, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Requires a school, within fifteen days of identifying that a student in grades K-3 is below grade level, to notify the student's parent or legal guardian, in writing, that the student has been identified as being below grade level, and provide the student's parent with the following:

- (1) Information regarding the importance of being able to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.
- (2) Activities that may be used at home to improve literacy proficiency.
- (3) Information regarding the specific interventions and supports that the school will provide to improve the literacy proficiency of the student.

Requires each school to provide mid-year and end-of-the-year updates to the parent or legal guardian of each student identified as having literacy skills below grade level detailing the student's progress in gaining foundational literacy skills and providing the parent with additional tools to use at home to improve the student's literacy proficiency.

Requires each school, beginning June 1, 2023, and triennially thereafter, to develop, and submit to the department, a foundational literacy skills plan for students in grades K-3.

Requires each foundational literacy skills plan to include:

- (1) The amount of time to be devoted daily to foundational literacy skills instruction and a description of how the instructional time will be utilized.
- (2) A list of English language arts textbooks and instructional materials adopted by the school.
- (3) A description of the interventions and supports available to students identified as having literacy skills below grade level.
- (4) A description of the professional development in foundational literacy skills instruction provided to teachers who teach grades K-3.

Requires each school post to its foundational literacy skills plan and the latest report on the literacy assessment provided to the department on the school's website.

Requires the BESE to adopt rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement the new law.

Pior law (R.S. 17:24.11) provided for pilot projects for screening of students for dyslexia.

New law repeals prior law.

Prior law (R.S. 17:182) provided for reading programs in elementary schools, literacy screenings, and reporting requirement.

New law supersedes and repeals prior law.

Effective August 1, 2021.

(Amends R.S. 17:24.9; adds R.S. 17:24.10 and 3996(B)(59) and (60); repeals R.S. 17:24.11 and 182)