

HCS HB 368 -- READING SUCCESS PLANS

SPONSOR: Gregory (96)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 19 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill will require the State Board of Education (SBE) to require literacy and reading coursework for teacher education programs aligned to certification for teachers in early childhood, elementary, language arts, English, special reading, and special education. Such coursework shall include the core components of reading, oral and written language development, identification of reading deficiencies and language difficulties, the administration of assessments, and the application of assessment data to the classroom (Section 161.097 RSMo.).

This bill requires the SBE to collaborate with the coordinating board for higher education and the Literacy Advisory Council established in the bill to develop a comprehensive system for reading instruction.

This bill modifies current law regarding reading success plans, formerly known as reading intervention programs. Each local school district and charter school shall have on file a policy for reading success plans for any pupils of the district in grades kindergarten through four, rather than through grade three. Each policy shall be aligned with the guidelines developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for reading success plans.

Authority to develop guidelines to assist school districts and charter schools in formulating policies for reading intervention plans is transferred from the SBE to DESE. Any guidelines for instruction must meet the needs of the student by ensuring that instruction is explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and is based on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Frequent assessments are necessary to measure student progress.

Each local school district and charter school is required to include in an individual pupil's reading success plan, individual and small group reading development activities and to provide professional development and training on reading instruction and interventions to teachers (Section 167.268, RSMo.).

As specified in this bill, each school district and charter school

shall administer a reading assessment or set of assessments to each student within the first 30 days of school for grades one through four, and by January 31 for kindergarten, unless a student has been determined in the previous school year to be reading at grade level or above. School districts and charter schools shall provide reading success plans to students with an individualized education plan (IEP) who have a reading deficiency, and for students receiving services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 whose service plan includes an element addressing reading.

This bill removes the requirement that school districts and charter schools design a reading success plan for the student's fourth-grade year if the student's third grade reading assessment determines the student is reading below second-grade level. The provision is replaced with a requirement that school districts and charter schools offer a reading success plan to each kindergarten through fourth grade student who exhibits a reading deficiency, has been identified as being at risk for dyslexia in the statewide dyslexia screening requirement, or has a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. The reading success plan shall be provided in addition to the core reading instruction provided to all students, and shall meet criteria specified in the bill.

Any kindergarten through fourth grade student who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time, based upon local or statewide screening assessments, shall receive an individual reading success plan no later than 45 days after the identification of the deficiency. Such plan shall be created by the teacher and other pertinent school personnel, along with the parent or legal guardian, and shall describe the evidence-based reading improvement services the student shall receive. The reading success plan shall specify if a student was found to be at risk for dyslexia in the statewide dyslexia screening requirement or if the student has a formal diagnosis of dyslexia.

This bill specifies that, students who are not reading at grade level by the end of the second grade shall receive appropriate reading intervention to remedy the student's specific reading deficiency. Each school district and charter school shall conduct a review of student reading success plans for all students who are not reading at grade level by the end of the second grade, and shall address additional support services needed to remedy the areas of deficiency. School districts and charter schools shall provide improvement and support services set forth in the bill.

School districts and charter schools are required, as specified in the bill, to provide an appropriate acceleration for any student not reading proficient or above on a local or statewide third-grade reading assessment and has a reading success plan, and shall meet

certain criteria listed in the bill. Currently, each student for whom a reading success plan has been designed shall be given another reading assessment to be administered within 45 days of the end of the student's fourth-grade year. If such student is determined to be reading below third-grade level, the student shall be referred for an evaluation for an IEP and the district shall provide appropriate intensive structured literacy instruction on a one-to-one individualized basis. If the student does not qualify for an IEP under the state guidelines for qualification, the student shall continue to receive appropriate intensive structured literacy instruction on a one-to-one individualized basis until the student is reading at grade level.

If the student is still not reading at grade level upon completion of the sixth grade, the school district and charter school shall continue to provide a reading success plan to be implemented during the regular school day until such time as the student is reading at grade level, or upon graduation from high school.

Each school district and charter school is required to offer summer school reading instruction to any student with a reading success plan. Districts may fulfill the requirement through cooperative arrangements with neighboring districts or virtual schools.

The parent or legal guardian of any student who exhibits a deficiency in reading or has screened positive for the characteristics of dyslexia shall be notified in writing no later than 30 calendar days. This section has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2022 (Section 167.645).

This bill establishes the Literacy Advisory Council within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The council shall include 15-20 members appointed by the Commissioner of Education. Members shall include stakeholders and specialists specified in the bill. The advisory council shall meet biannually to review best practices in literacy instruction and related policies, and shall make recommendations to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education.

The Department, in conjunction with the Advisory Council, shall identify and create a list of approved materials, resources, and curriculum programs for public school districts and charter schools. A school district or charter school may use materials, resources, or curriculum programs from such list or similar materials that comply with sections 167.268 and 167.645. (Section 186.080)

This bill is similar to SB 54(2021) and to HB 2470 (2020).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that almost half of students are reading below grade level and this bill will force schools to evaluate and develop plans for under performing students sooner. Early identification is essential to prevent students from learning to read the "wrong" way, and that if schools don't know that there is a knowledge gap early, it is often too late to catch students up. A lack of reading ability is a direct indication of a struggling student later on in life.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Gregory; Dara Denny; Donna Kappenman; Gary Norment; Jenna McGeorge; Julie A Pocock; Karla Denny; Kurt Denny; Lisa Norment; Megan Loehner; Melissa Dabbs; Michelle Yepez; Molly Skiljan; Patti Haberberger; Diane Dragan; Kristy Strobe; Lindsey Ackland; Phyllis Lecuru; Taylor Strobe; David Hemingway; Jessica Stuenkel; Christen Schulenberg; Dane Norment; Erin Young; Shannon Troesser; Janice Walker; Peggy Peterman; Dawn Schneider; Heather Crain; Jennell Houts; Suzanne Whitman; Debbie Peterson; Amanda Schwent; Gina Lile; Jessica Brody; Jennifer Edwards; Marla Mckan; Diane Dragan; Michelle Yepez; Kate Casas, Excellence In Education In Action; Noel Leof; and Amanda Schwent.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that imposing mandatory reading curriculum requirements would hurt districts that are successful with the strategies that they are currently using. The bill has antiquated methods of required reporting, and does not take into account the differences between students by applying a one standard fits all solution to a much more complex problem.

Testifying against the bill were Carrie Turner, Mo Council of Administrators of Special Education; Karen Thom; Craig Carson, Ozark R-VI Schools; Southwest Missouri Curriculum Directors; Karen Hood; Keisha Wurgler; Gayle Willey; Dr. Karla Arnold; Janet Tilley, Missouri School Boards' Association; Arnie C. Dienoff; Linda Fugate, Ozark School District; Southwest Missouri Curriculum; and the Southwest Missouri Curriculum Directors Association.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say reading instruction that is evidence based research reading instruction along with additional supports for dyslexic students is an important issue for teachers.

Testifying on the bill was Missouri National Education Association.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.