

SENATE BILL 242

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL; ENACTING THE ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF READING ACT; REQUIRING TEACHER LICENSING CANDIDATES TO DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN STRUCTURED LITERACY AND THE SCIENCE OF READING; REQUIRING THE USE OF HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR ALL STUDENT TEACHING AND SUPERVISED FIELD EXPERIENCES; DISALLOWING BALANCED LITERACY AS A TEACHING METHOD IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND STATE INSTITUTIONS; PROVIDING FOR LITERACY COORDINATORS; PROVIDING MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT.

.229422.3AIC February 20, 2025 (4:27pm)

underscoring material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = → bold, blue, highlight  
delete = → bold, red, highlight, strikethrough

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = → bold, blue, highlight ←  
delete = → bold, red, highlight, strikethrough ←

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--Sections 1 through 8 of this act may be cited as the "Advancing the Science of Reading Act"."

SECTION 2. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Advancing the Science of Reading Act:

A. "balanced literacy" means an instructional philosophy using strategies such as three-cuing systems for word identification that emphasize whole language approaches over systematic phonics;

B. "high-quality instructional materials" means instructional materials that are a comprehensive full course of study that is research-based, culturally and linguistically relevant, designed to support equitable learning for all students and aligned with the New Mexico content standards and benchmarks and performance standards;

C. "science of reading" means an interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing;

D. "scientifically based reading instruction" means instruction grounded in empirical research, including explicit

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and the science of reading; and

E. "structured literacy" means an evidence-based approach to teaching oral and written language aligned with the science of reading that is based on the science of how children learn to read and is characterized by explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative and diagnostic instruction in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax and semantics."

SECTION 3. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] TEACHERS--ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE.--

A. To be SFC→initially←SFC licensed as a teacher for pre-kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth through ninth grade, sixth through twelfth grade or pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade special education, in addition to other licensing requirements, an applicant shall have successfully completed the following:

- (1) three credit hours in phonemic awareness and phonics;
- (2) three credit hours in fluency, vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension; SFC→and←SFC
- (3) a minimum of one hundred hours of supervised field experience in public school classrooms SFC→;

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

and←SFC

SFC→(4) for teacher candidates placed in elementary classrooms, the one hundred hours of supervised field experience must be in public school classrooms←SFC

implementing the science of reading and high-quality instructional materials, including:

(a) planning and teaching reading lessons focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; and

(b) observing and applying scientifically based reading instruction techniques under the supervision of a teacher trained in the science of reading and using high-quality instructional materials.

B. For alternative licensure, an applicant shall have the same requirements provided for applicants in Subsection A of this section, but the credit hours for structured literacy shall be completed during the first twelve months of the alternative program.

C. To be licensed as a teacher in special education, in addition to other requirements, an applicant shall have successfully completed the following:

(1) three credit hours in phonemic awareness and phonics with strategies for supporting students with learning disabilities or dyslexia;

(2) three credit hours in fluency, vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension; SFC→and←SFC

.229422.3AIC February 20, 2025 (4:27pm)

underscored material = new

[bracketed material] = delete

Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←

delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

(3) a minimum of one hundred hours of supervised field experience in public school classrooms SFC→; and←SFC

SFC→(4) for special education teacher candidates placed in elementary school classrooms, the one hundred hours of supervised field experience must be in public school classrooms←SFC implementing the science of reading, including:

(a) planning and teaching lessons focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; and

(b) observing and applying scientifically based reading instruction techniques under the supervision of a teacher trained in the science of reading.

D. All candidates seeking licensure in pre-kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten through eighth grade or fifth through ninth grade or pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade special education shall pass the required New Mexico teacher assessment for reading with an emphasis on the science of reading to demonstrate proficiency in the essential components of teaching reading.

E. Education preparation programs shall ensure that candidates seeking initial standard or alternative licensure in pre-kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth through ninth grade, sixth through twelfth grade and pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade special

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

education meet the minimum course and credit hour requirements in the science of reading as provided in the Advancing the Science of Reading Act."

SECTION 4. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SCIENCE OF READING--USE OF SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING INSTRUCTION REQUIRED.--

A. Pre-service teachers completing student teaching or supervised field experiences assigned in a classroom in a public school shall use high-quality instructional materials with alignment to a structured literacy approach and the state's literacy framework to provide scientifically based reading instruction using the science of reading.

B. Balanced literacy, which research shows is inconsistent with scientifically based reading instruction and the science of reading, shall not be used to teach reading in New Mexico public schools SFC→, public post-secondary teacher and administrator preparation programs←SFC or state agencies or by anyone who receives state funding."

SECTION 5. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.--

A. All reading instruction coursework for pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public SFC→schools←SFC SFC→post-secondary teacher and administrator preparation programs←SFC and state agencies shall use high-

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

quality instructional materials that:

- (1) are grounded in evidence-based research and consistent with the science of reading;
- (2) do not employ balanced literacy techniques such as three-cuing systems for word identification;
- (3) provide explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; and
- (4) are reviewed and approved as English language arts core instructional material on the multiple list adopted by the department and recognized for structured literacy.

B. Student teaching or field experience candidates in public schools are required to use high-quality instructional materials to plan reading instruction and teach lessons under the observation of trained teachers."

**SECTION 6.** A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] LITERACY COORDINATORS.--

A. Literacy coordinators shall be employed at each state-approved teacher preparation program to oversee the implementation of the provisions of the Advancing the Science of Reading Act and ensure compliance with that act.

B. Literacy coordinators shall:

- (1) participate in department-approved training and professional development;

.229422.3AIC February 20, 2025 (4:27pm)

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

(2) support faculty in delivering science of reading-aligned coursework;

(3) ensure the use of high-quality instructional materials when coaching teachers on reading instruction;

(4) provide professional development for faculty on the latest science of reading research and best practices;

(5) ensure that SEC→student←SEC SEC→pre-service←SEC teachers receive appropriate field experience; and

(6) serve as a liaison between teacher preparation programs, the department and school districts and charter schools.

C. Sufficient funding shall be provided to support salary and administrative costs of literacy coordinator positions."

SECTION 7. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT.--

A. The department shall SEC→work-with-stakeholders to←SEC develop specific teacher preparation standards related to the five components of the science of reading, including the knowledge and skills teachers need to support struggling readers and those with dyslexia as well as the knowledge and skills teachers need to support English language learners.

B. The department, as part of its review process,



underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

shall monitor all SEC→educator←SEC SEC→teacher←SEC preparation programs, and programs that fail to adhere to the science of reading shall be required to submit corrective action plans and may face the loss of state approval.

C. As part of the state approval review process for SEC→educator←SEC SEC→teacher←SEC preparation programs, each program shall provide evidence of its alignment with New Mexico's statutory and regulatory requirements for structured and systematic science of reading instruction.

D. Initial approval and ongoing review shall include:

(1) a reading specialist or literacy expert for all elementary program approvals and on all accreditation renewal review teams;

(2) evaluation of coursework and field experiences to ensure that candidates are prepared to implement evidence-based reading instruction practices aligned with the science of reading;

(3) an assessment of faculty qualifications and professional development related to science-based reading instruction methodologies;

(4) documentation of how the program integrates state-adopted literacy standards, including explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension;

(5) the collection of data demonstrating the

underscored material = new

[bracketed material] = delete

Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←

delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

effectiveness of graduates in applying science of reading practices during their first three years of teaching, as available through performance-based assessments or other state-approved measures; and

(6) evidence of partnerships with kindergarten through twelfth grade public schools to ensure high-quality student teaching and supervised field experiences that emphasize science of reading instructional practices and the use of high-quality instructional materials during student teaching and supervised field experiences.

E. The department shall provide guidelines for evaluating compliance with science of reading instruction requirements during the review process. These guidelines shall include minimum performance thresholds for coursework, assessments and candidate outcomes.

F. Programs failing to meet the established science of reading instruction standards may be placed on a corrective action plan with specific requirements and time lines for achieving compliance. Noncompliance may result in probationary status or the loss of state approval.

G. As part of their annual accountability report, SEC→educator←SEC SEC→teacher←SEC preparation programs shall include:

(1) a summary of program changes made to enhance science of reading instruction aligned to the standards;

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

(2) data on candidate performance in science of reading instruction-related coursework and clinical experiences; and

(3) graduate impact data on student literacy outcomes, where available."

SECTION 8. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] PARENT NOTIFICATION FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT READING ON GRADE LEVEL.--

A. SEC→~~Educator~~←SEC SEC→Teacher←SEC preparation programs shall ensure that teacher candidates are trained to identify when students are not reading at grade level, and candidates shall be prepared to provide appropriate interventions. Additionally, school districts and charter schools shall notify parents of the following:

(1) twice per academic year, the parent of any kindergarten through third grade student shall receive notification on current reading performance; and

(2) all parents of first grade students shall be notified in writing no later than fifteen days after the dyslexia screener has been administered of any reading difficulty. The written notification shall include the following:

(a) that the parent's child has been identified as having difficulty in reading and a reading improvement plan will be developed by the teacher, other

undescored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

pertinent school personnel and the parent;

(b) a description of the current services that are provided to the student;

(c) a description of the proposed research-based reading interventions and supplemental instructional services and supports that will be provided to the student that are designed to remedy the identified areas of reading difficulty;

(d) notification that the parent will be informed in writing of the student's progress toward grade level reading at least monthly; and

(e) a description of the specific skill deficits and strategies for parents to use at home to help the student succeed in reading.

B. The department shall design and provide school districts and charter schools with parent notification templates."

SECTION 9. Section 22-10A-6 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1986, Chapter 33, Section 8, as amended) is amended to read:

"22-10A-6. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE.--

A. The department shall require a person seeking [~~licensure or reciprocity in elementary, special, early childhood or secondary education~~] to be licensed as a teacher for pre-kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth through ninth grade, sixth through twelfth grade or pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade special

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = → bold, blue, highlight ←  
delete = → bold, red, highlight, strikethrough ←

education to have completed the following minimum requirements in the college of arts and sciences:

- (1) nine semester hours in communication;
- (2) six semester hours in mathematics;
- (3) eight semester hours in laboratory science;
- (4) nine semester hours in social and behavioral science; and
- (5) nine semester hours in humanities and fine arts.

B. In addition to the requirements specified in Subsections A and C of this section, the department shall require that a person seeking standard or alternative ~~[elementary licensure shall have completed six hours of reading courses, and a person seeking standard or alternative]~~ secondary licensure shall have completed three hours of reading courses in subject matter content, unless seeking endorsement in language arts. Six semester hours in structured literacy and the science of reading is required for a teaching license in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, special education or for secondary language arts endorsement and the required one hundred hours of supervised field experience SFC → in classrooms implementing the science of reading ← SFC . The department shall establish requirements that provide a reasonable period of time to comply with the provisions of this subsection.

C. Except for licensure by reciprocity SEC → and

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

alternative licensure, ←SEC and except as provided in Subsection B of this section for pre-kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth through ninth grade, sixth through twelfth grade and special education licenses, the department shall require, prior to initial licensure, no less than sixteen weeks of student teaching, a portion of which shall occur in the first thirty credit hours taken in the college of education and shall be under the direct supervision of a teacher and a portion of which shall occur in the student's senior year with the student teacher being directly responsible for the classroom.

D. Nothing in this section shall preclude the department from establishing or accepting equivalent requirements for purposes of reciprocal licensure or minimum requirements for alternative licensure.

E. Vocational teacher preparatory programs may be exempt from Subsections A through C of this section upon a determination by the department that other licensure requirements are more appropriate for vocational teacher preparatory programs.

F. Before December 31, 2021, the department shall create a license endorsement in secondary computer science available to all teachers who hold a valid license and demonstrate sufficient content knowledge in computer science as determined by the department. The department shall consult with computer science education experts with experience in

creating or supporting computer science endorsement pathways when developing computer science endorsement requirements."

**SECTION 10.** Section 22-10A-7 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2003, Chapter 153, Section 38, as amended) is amended to read:

"22-10A-7. LEVEL ONE LICENSURE.--

A. A level one license is a provisional five-year license for beginning teachers that requires as a condition of licensure that the licensee undergo a formal mentorship program for at least one full school year and an annual intensive performance evaluation by a school administrator for at least three full school years before applying for a level two license.

B. Each school district, in accordance with department rules, shall provide for the mentorship and evaluation of level one teachers. At the end of each year and at the end of the license period, the level one teacher shall be evaluated for competency. If the teacher fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress and competence annually, the teacher may be terminated as provided in Section 22-10A-24 NMSA 1978. If the teacher has not demonstrated satisfactory progress and competence by the end of the five-year period, the teacher shall not be granted a level two license.

C. Except in exigent circumstances defined by department rule, a level one license shall not be extended beyond the initial period.

D. The department shall issue a standard level one

.229422.3AIC February 20, 2025 (4:27pm)

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

license to an applicant who is at least eighteen years of age who:

- (1) holds a baccalaureate degree from an accredited educational institution;
- (2) has successfully completed a department-approved teacher preparation program from [~~a nationally~~] an accredited or state-approved educational institution;
- (3) has passed the New Mexico teacher assessments examination, including for elementary licensure beginning January 1, 2013, a rigorous assessment of the candidate's knowledge of the science of [~~teaching~~] reading; and
- (4) meets other qualifications for level one licensure, including clearance of the required background check.

E. The department shall issue a standard level one vocational license to an applicant who meets the requirements of Subsection D of this section or to an applicant who is at least twenty-three years of age and who:

- (1) has five or more years of professional experience in the vocational field in which the applicant will teach; and
- (2) meets other qualifications for level one licensure, including clearance of a background check pursuant to Section 22-10A-5 NMSA 1978.

F. The department shall issue an alternative level one license to an applicant who meets the requirements of



underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = → bold, blue, highlight  
delete = → bold, red, highlight, strikethrough

Section 22-10A-8 NMSA 1978.

G. The department shall establish competencies and qualifications for specific grade levels, types and subject areas of level one licensure, including early childhood, elementary, middle school, secondary, special and vocational education.

H. The minimum salary for a level one teacher, except for a teacher licensed pursuant to Subsection E of this section, is fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for a standard nine and one-half month contract; provided that teachers in an extended learning time program or ~~[K-5]~~ K-12 plus program shall receive additional salary at the same rate as their base salary for that teaching time.

I. After the issuance of a license, a license holder shall not be required to meet changed requirements to maintain the license until such time as the license expires and the license holder seeks renewal of the license."

**SECTION 11.** Section 22-10A-8 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2003, Chapter 153, Section 39, as amended) is amended to read:

"22-10A-8. ALTERNATIVE LEVEL ONE LICENSE.--

A. ~~[Except as provided in Subsection B of this section]~~ The department shall issue an alternative level one license to a person who is at least eighteen years of age and who:

(1) has completed a baccalaureate degree at an accredited institution of higher education and has received a

.229422.3AIC February 20, 2025 (4:27pm)

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

passing score on a state-approved [~~subject-area~~] examination in the subject area of instruction for which the person is applying for a license; or

(2) has completed a master's degree at an accredited institution of higher education, including completion of a minimum of twelve graduate credit hours in the subject area of instruction for which the person is applying for a license; or

(3) has completed a doctoral or law degree at an accredited institution of higher education; and

(4) has passed the New Mexico teacher assessments examination, including for elementary licensure beginning January 1, 2013, a rigorous assessment of the candidate's knowledge of the science of [~~teaching~~] reading [~~and~~] in the first twelve months of an alternative program;

~~[(5) within two years of beginning teaching, completes a minimum of twelve semester hours of instruction in teaching principles in a program approved by the department; or]~~

SFC→~~(5) has completed six semester hours in structured literacy and the science of reading in the first twelve months of teaching pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth through ninth grade, sixth through twelfth grade, special education in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade or for secondary sixth through twelfth grade language arts endorsement and one hundred hours of supervised field~~

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = → bold, blue, highlight ←  
delete = → bold, red, highlight, strikethrough ←

~~experience in classrooms implementing the science of reading and the remaining minimum of six semester hours of instruction in teaching principles in a program approved by the department;~~ ←SFC

SFC → (6) ←SFC SFC → (5) ←SFC within two years of beginning teaching, has completed a minimum of twelve semester hours SFC →, including six hours ←SFC in the first twelve months SFC → of teaching pre-kindergarten through third grade, kindergarten through eighth grade, fifth through ninth grade, sixth through twelfth grade, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade special education or for sixth through twelfth grade language arts endorsement ←SFC SFC → in the area of structured literacy and the science of reading ←SFC and one hundred hours of supervised field experience SFC → in ←SFC SFC →. For teacher candidates placed in elementary classrooms, the one hundred hours of supervised field work must be in public school ←SFC classrooms implementing the science of reading and the remaining minimum of six semester hours of instruction in teaching principles in a program approved by the department; provided that six of the hours shall include instruction in the science of reading in a program approved by the department; or

[(6)] SFC → (7) ←SFC SFC → (6) ←SFC demonstrates to the department, in conjunction with the school district or state agency, that the person has met the department-approved competencies for level one teachers that correspond to the

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

grade level that will be taught.

B. A person seeking an alternative level one special education license to teach students with disabilities shall be at least eighteen years of age and meet the educational and assessment requirements of Paragraphs (1) through [~~(4)~~] (5) of Subsection A of this section, as applicable. In addition, the person shall serve a fifteen-week apprenticeship under a level two or three-A special education teacher while taking related and interwoven coursework at a post-secondary educational institution that is designed to connect pedagogical theory with teaching practice, including:

- (1) lesson planning;
- (2) classroom and behavior management for students with special needs;
- (3) learning theory;
- (4) foundations of special education; and
- (5) culturally and linguistically relevant teaching techniques.

C. A degree or examination referred to in Subsection A of this section shall correspond to the subject area of instruction and the particular grade level that will enable the applicant to teach in a competent manner as determined by the department.

D. An alternative level one or alternative level one special education teacher shall participate in the same mentorship, evaluation and other professional development

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight↔  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough↔

requirements as other level one teachers.

E. A school district or state agency shall not discriminate against a teacher on the basis that the teacher holds an alternative level one license.

F. The department shall provide by rule for training and other requirements to support the use of unlicensed content area experts as resources in classrooms, team teaching, ~~[on-line]~~ online instruction, curriculum development and other purposes."

SECTION 12. Section 22-15-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1967, Chapter 16, Section 206, as amended) is amended to read:

"22-15-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Instructional Material Law:

A. "core instructional material" means the comprehensive print or digital educational material, including basal material, that constitutes the necessary instructional components of a full academic course of study in those subjects for which the department has adopted content standards and benchmarks;

~~[A.]~~ B. "division" or "bureau" means the instructional material bureau of the department;

~~[B.]~~ C. "director" or "chief" means the chief of the bureau;

~~[C.]~~ D. "instructional material" means school textbooks and other educational media that are used as the basis for instruction, including combinations of textbooks,

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete  
Amendments: new = →bold, blue, highlight←  
delete = →bold, red, highlight, strikethrough←

learning kits, supplementary material and electronic media;

[D.] E. "multiple list" means a written list of those instructional materials approved by the department;

[E.] F. "membership" means the total enrollment of qualified students on the fortieth day of the school year entitled to the free use of instructional material pursuant to the Instructional Material Law;

[F.] G. "additional pupil" means a pupil in a school district's, state institution's or private school's current year's certified forty-day membership above the number certified in the school district's, state institution's or private school's prior year's forty-day membership;

[G.] H. "school district" includes state-chartered charter schools; and

[H.] I. "other classroom materials" means materials other than textbooks that are used to support direct instruction to students."