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AN ACT
RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; ENACTING THE HIGH-QUALITY
LITERACY INSTRUCTION ACT; PROVIDING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS; REQUIRING THE USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED
PRACTICES FOR BILITERACY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND
STUDENTS IN BILINGUAL AND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS; REQUIRING
PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE LITERACY ASSESSMENTS TO STUDENTS IN
KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE AND INTERVENTIONS FOR
STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A READING DIFFICULTY; REQUIRING
THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO ASSIGN LITERACY
INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES TO CERTAIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 21-1-53 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2025,
Chapter 149, Section 1) is amended to read:

"21-1-53. TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS--TEACHING
STUDENTS HOW TO TEACH READING.--

A. As used in this section:

(1) "high-quality instructional materials"
means instructional materials that are:

(a) research-based, culturally and
linguistically relevant and designed to support equitable
learning for all students;

(b) aligned with the public education
department's academic content and performance standards and

1 benchmarks; and

2 (c) included on the public education
3 department's multiple list of instructional materials or
4 otherwise approved by the department;

5 (2) "science of reading" means an
6 interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about
7 reading instruction that addresses the acquisition of
8 language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and
9 spelling, fluency, vocabulary, oral language and
10 comprehension; and

11 (3) "structured literacy" means an evidence-
12 based approach to teaching oral and written language that is
13 aligned with the science of reading and based on the science
14 of how children learn to read, is characterized by explicit,
15 systematic, sequential, cumulative and diagnostic instruction
16 in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction,
17 morphology, syntax and semantics and can be differentiated to
18 meet the needs of individual students.

19 B. Structured literacy is the primary approach to
20 teaching foundational literacy skills for all learners, and
21 public school students shall be taught to read using the
22 science of reading and structured literacy. Literacy
23 instruction for English language learners and students in
24 bilingual or dual language programs shall:

25 (1) include evidence-based practices for

1 biliteracy, such as bilingual and dual language instructional
2 models that develop literacy in English and students' home
3 languages; and

4 (2) incorporate differentiation and
5 culturally and linguistically responsive instruction.

6 C. Each teacher preparation program shall offer
7 courses and student teaching sufficient for level one
8 licensure that:

9 (1) includes science of reading and
10 structured literacy;

11 (2) for elementary teacher candidates,
12 provides a minimum of one hundred hours of supervised field
13 experience in public school classrooms implementing the
14 science of reading and structured literacy, including:

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

18 (b) observing and applying
19 scientifically based techniques for reading instruction under
20 the supervision of a teacher trained in the science of
21 reading; and

22 (3) includes training and teaching teacher
23 candidates to identify when students are not reading at grade
24 level.

25 D. In collaboration with public post-secondary

1 teacher preparation programs, the public education department
2 shall develop specific teacher preparation standards related
3 to the five components of the science of reading, including
4 the knowledge and skills teachers need to support struggling
5 readers and those with dyslexia as well as the knowledge and
6 skills teachers need to support English language learners
7 with biliteracy and oral language development and to provide
8 literacy instruction in bilingual or dual language programs
9 and similar settings.

10 E. As part of its review process, the public
11 education department shall monitor all teacher preparation
12 programs, and programs that fail to adhere to the science of
13 reading shall be required to submit corrective action plans
14 and may face the loss of state approval.

15 F. As part of the state approval review process
16 for teacher preparation programs, each program shall provide
17 evidence of its alignment with New Mexico's statutory and
18 regulatory requirements for structured and systematic science
19 of reading instruction, including requirements for supporting
20 English language learners and for biliteracy instruction.

21 G. Initial approval and ongoing review shall
22 include:

23 (1) evaluation of coursework and field
24 experiences to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to
25 implement evidence-based reading instruction practices

1 aligned with the science of reading;

2 (2) an assessment of faculty qualifications
3 and professional development related to scientifically based
4 methodologies for reading instruction;

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

9 (4) the collection of data demonstrating the
10 effectiveness of graduates in applying science of reading
11 practices during their first three years of teaching, as
12 available through performance-based assessments or other
13 state-approved measures; and

14 (5) evidence of partnerships with
15 kindergarten through twelfth grade public schools to ensure
16 high-quality student teaching and supervised field
17 experiences that emphasize science of reading instructional
18 practices and the use of high-quality instructional materials
19 during student teaching and other supervised field
20 experiences.

21 H. The public education department shall provide
22 guidelines for evaluating compliance with science of reading
23 instruction requirements during the review process. These
24 guidelines shall include minimum performance thresholds for
25 coursework, assessments and candidate outcomes.

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

6 J. As part of an annual accountability report,
7 teacher preparation programs shall include:

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

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

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

16 SECTION 2. A new section of the Public School Code,
17 Section 22-15G-1 NMSA 1978, is enacted to read:

18 "22-15G-1. SHORT TITLE.--Chapter 22, Article 15G NMSA
19 1978 may be cited as the "High-Quality Literacy Instruction
20 Act"."

21 SECTION 3. A new section of the Public School Code,
22 Section 22-15G-2 NMSA 1978, is enacted to read:

23 "22-15G-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the High-Quality
24 Literacy Instruction Act:

25 A. "certified academic language therapist" means a SB 37
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1 person recognized by the department as having the requisite
2 skills and credentials to provide diagnostic and prescriptive
3 interventions to students with language-based learning
4 disabilities;

5 B. "high-quality instructional materials" means
6 instructional materials that are:

7 (1) research-based, culturally and
8 linguistically relevant and designed to support equitable
9 learning for all students;

10 (2) aligned with the department's academic
11 content and performance standards and benchmarks; and

12 (3) included on the department's multiple
13 list of instructional materials or otherwise approved by the
14 department;

15 C. "read-at-home plan" means a set of resources
16 for parents to support a student's reading at home that is
17 aligned with the science of reading;

18 D. "science of reading" means an interdisciplinary
19 body of scientifically based research about reading
20 instruction that addresses the acquisition of language,
21 phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling,
22 fluency, vocabulary, oral language and comprehension;

23 E. "structured literacy" means an evidence-based
24 approach to teaching oral and written language that is
25 aligned with the science of reading and based on the science

1 of how children learn to read, is characterized by explicit,
2 systematic, sequential, cumulative and diagnostic instruction
3 in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction,
4 morphology, syntax and semantics and can be differentiated to
5 meet the needs of individual students; and

6 F. "three-cueing model" means reading instruction
7 that teaches word recognition by primarily drawing meaning
8 from context, pictures or syntax."

9 SECTION 4. A new section of the Public School Code,
10 Section 22-15G-3 NMSA 1978, is enacted to read:

11 "22-15G-3. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS--LITERACY AND
12 READING INSTRUCTION.--Instructional materials used in public
13 schools for literacy or reading instruction for kindergarten
14 through third grade shall be high-quality instructional
15 materials. Materials used for intervention, supplemental
16 instruction, initiatives, services or programs for literacy
17 or reading proficiency for kindergarten through twelfth grade
18 shall be culturally and linguistically relevant, consistent
19 with the science of reading and structured literacy and shall
20 not include use of the three-cueing model; provided that
21 instructional materials for English language learners and
22 other students in bilingual or dual language programs or
23 similar settings shall support literacy and biliteracy
24 development in English and home or other languages, if
25 otherwise appropriate."

1 SECTION 5. A new section of the Public School Code,
2 Section 22-15G-4 NMSA 1978, is enacted to read:

3 "22-15G-4. LITERACY ASSESSMENTS.--

4 A. The department shall adopt grade-specific
5 literacy assessments for kindergarten through third grade
6 that:

7 (1) have screening, diagnostic and
8 monitoring capabilities;

9 (2) measure, at minimum, phonological
10 awareness, the alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding,
11 accuracy, vocabulary and comprehension;

12 (3) identify students who have a reading
13 difficulty, including characteristics of dyslexia;

14 (4) can be administered with minimal impact
15 on instructional time; and

16 (5) provide for timely reporting of
17 assessment results that can be integrated with instructional
18 support for teachers and students.

19 B. Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, public
20 schools shall administer the literacy assessments to all
21 students in kindergarten through third grade. The literacy
22 assessment for students in first grade may be administered in
23 lieu of the dyslexia screening required by Section 22-13-32
24 NMSA 1978.

25 C. If a public school identifies a student as

1 having a reading difficulty based on the results of a
2 literacy assessment, the public school shall provide written
3 notice to the student's parents within thirty days. The
4 notice shall include:

5 (1) an explanation that the student was
6 identified as having a reading difficulty and qualifies for
7 literacy interventions;

8 (2) an explanation that the public school
9 will develop a reading improvement plan for the student;

10 (3) a description of the interventions or
11 supplemental instructional services, supports or programs the
12 public school proposes for the student;

13 (4) an assurance that the parents will
14 receive written reports on the student's progress at least
15 four times each school year;

16 (5) a description of the student's specific
17 skill deficits;

18 (6) a read-at-home plan customized to
19 address the student's specific skill deficits; and

20 (7) if applicable, any other information
21 required by state or federal law.

22 D. Immediately after providing parents with
23 written notice, the public school shall provide the student
24 with differentiated core instruction or with targeted or
25 intensive interventions through a multilayered system of

1 support.

2 E. The department shall develop a template for the
3 written notice required by this section and grade-specific
4 templates for read-at-home plans. The read-at-home plan
5 templates shall be customizable but shall include, at
6 minimum:

7 (1) information about the five essential
8 components of reading and, for a student who is an English
9 language learner, the importance of developing the student's
10 home language and English to support the student's biliteracy
11 and long-term literacy outcomes;

12 (2) guidance on how to read with the student
13 at home;

14 (3) suggested daily reading activities;

15 (4) specific strategies and games to build
16 literacy skills; and

17 (5) information about how to monitor
18 progress."

19 SECTION 6. A new section of the Public School Code,
20 Section 22-15G-5 NMSA 1978, is enacted to read:

21 "22-15G-5. TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS--
22 LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES.--

23 A. School districts and charter schools shall
24 train teachers who teach reading and site administrators on
25 how to administer the provisions of the High-Quality Literacy

1 Instruction Act. The training shall also cover how to
2 provide differentiated core instruction and other
3 interventions for students with a reading difficulty and how
4 to use evidence-based practices for English language
5 learners, biliteracy, differentiation, culturally and
6 linguistically responsive instruction and instructional
7 leadership for bilingual and dual language programs.

8 B. Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, the
9 department shall assign a literacy instructional coach to
10 public elementary schools that have an average reading
11 proficiency in the bottom quartile for reading proficiency in
12 the state.

13 C. A literacy instructional coach assigned to a
14 public elementary school shall work with that school for
15 three consecutive school years, regardless of the school's
16 improvements in reading proficiency, and shall have the
17 primary duty of supporting teachers with literacy
18 instruction. Subject to the availability of funding, a
19 literacy instructional coach may be placed full-time at one
20 elementary school or may split time between multiple schools.

21 D. A literacy instructional coach shall be a
22 certified academic language therapist or have the following
23 qualifications:

24 (1) a valid level two or level three
25 teaching license;

1 (2) a bachelor's degree in education and
2 advanced coursework or professional development in the
3 science of reading, multisensory language instruction or
4 other advanced training approved by the department;

5 (3) a reading endorsement or certification
6 or eligibility for a reading endorsement or certification;

7 (4) additional qualifications required by
8 department rule; and

9 (5) for a department-designated school with
10 a significant English language learner enrollment, training
11 and experience in biliteracy or English language
12 development."

13 SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the
14 provisions of this act is July 1, 2026. _____

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