

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 360

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .191882.2

Short Title: Create Reading First Program

Sponsor(s): Representatives Mimi Stewart and Christine Trujillo and Others

Analyst: LaNysha Adams

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Bill Summary:

HB 360 adds a new section of the *Public School Code* to:

- create the Reading First Program that is modeled after the federal Reading First program (see “Background,” below);
- provide eligibility for grant applications and review panels;
- require local and statewide professional development;
- create the Reading First Fund; and
- make an appropriation.

Fiscal Impact:

\$9.5 million is appropriated from the General Fund to the Reading First Fund for FY 14 and subsequent fiscal years to carry out the provisions in the Reading First program.

According to the Public Education Department (PED) bill analysis, HB 360, if enacted, would provide for the following funding distribution, approximately:

- \$8.6 million for Reading First funding to schools who receive the grant through a competitive application process with priority for Title I schools;
- \$475,000 for professional development provided to teachers and administrators in the grantee schools;
- \$237,500 for technical assistance provided to grantee schools; and
- \$237,500 for PED administrative costs.

Included in House Bill 3, as amended by the House Education Committee, are FY 14 appropriations of:

- \$16.45 million for the K-3 Plus program;
- \$8.5 million for an Early Reading Initiative;
- \$2.0 million for Common Core Transition; and
- \$500,000 for Teaching Support in Schools with a High Proportion of Low-income Students.

Fiscal Issues:

In the federal Reading First program, funding could only be used for:

- reading curricula and materials that focus on the five essential components of reading instruction as defined in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (see “Background,” below);
- professional development and coaching for teachers on how to use scientifically based reading practices and how to work with struggling readers; and
- diagnosis and prevention of early reading difficulties through student screening, interventions for struggling readers, and monitoring of student progress.

Substantive Issues:

According to the University of New Mexico bill analysis, HB 360, if enacted, would be an important, and positive, alternative solution to the problem of students who are at-risk for reading failure, instead of mandatory retention at the third grade.

According to the PED bill analysis, HB 360, if enacted:

- would be duplicative of the New Mexico Reads to Lead initiative and could create additional work for districts;
- may not fund all schools who have low-performing reading students because of eligibility criteria; and
- does not include a requirement for professional development and support for schools to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Background:

Federal Reading First Program

A provision of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the Reading First initiative provided federal funds “to provide assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies in establishing reading programs for students in kindergarten through grade 3 that are based on scientifically based reading research, to ensure that every student can read at grade level or above no later than the end of grade 3.”

Reading First required states and participating school districts to adopt scientifically based reading programs, provide professional development, use reading coaches, and track students’ reading progress using valid and reliable assessments. Congress did not reauthorize the program in 2009, based partially on the US Inspector General’s findings of mismanagement and conflicts-of-interest.

From FY 02 to FY 07, as part of NCLB, Congress appropriated \$1.0 billion annually to states, and \$393 million in FY 08 to states to improve early literacy rates. Over the duration of the Reading First program, New Mexico received approximately \$63.0 million in federal funds.

In 2008, the USDE released the *Reading First Impact Study*, a report that examined instruction and student reading outcomes in 248 schools in 17 districts and one statewide program. The *Reading First Impact Study* found that Reading First:

- did not improve student reading comprehension in first, second, or third grade;
- improved first grader’s skills in decoding unfamiliar words; and
- produced changes in several instructional practices, such as the amount of time spent on five essential components of reading instruction and the amount of professional development in reading instruction.

The *Reading First Impact Study* did not produce “statistically detectable” results of improvement in reading, but the study was also not conducted as a randomized control study, as originally planned. The final report used a regression discontinuity design as the “strongest quasi-experimental method available to produce unbiased estimates of program impacts.”

Scientifically Based Reading Research

According to NCLB, scientifically based reading research is research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

- employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and across multiple measurements and observations; and
- has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparable rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Among its provisions, NCLB defines reading instruction to mean explicit and systematic instruction in:

- phonemic awareness;
- phonics;
- vocabulary development;
- reading fluency, including oral reading skills; and
- reading comprehension strategies.

K-3 Reading Screening Assessment in New Mexico

According to information given by PED staff to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) during the 2012 interim, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next:

- is the tool selected for the state’s K-3 reading screening assessment;
- replaces the current version of DIBELS and includes a series of research-based enhancements that increase the ease of use as well as the reliability and validity of the assessment;
- was used by 40 districts and 10 charter schools reported during school 2012-2013;
- results can be linked to targeted interventions from core reading programs such as *Treasures*, *Trophies*, and *Reading Street*; and
- offers an electronic version called mCLASS® that is administered on a mobile device and provides:

- frequent progress monitoring;
- instructional tools for teachers; and
- reporting capabilities for teachers and administrators.

According to the *DIBELS Next Assessment Manual*, DIBELS Next is comprised of the following six measures used to assess early literacy and reading skills for students from kindergarten through sixth grade:

1. First Sound Fluency, where the assessor says words, and the student says the first sound for each word;
2. Letter Naming Fluency, where the student is presented with a sheet of letters and asked to name the letters;
3. Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, where the assessor says words, and the student says the individual sounds for each word;
4. Nonsense Word Fluency, where the student is presented with a list of vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant nonsense words (e.g., ov, sig, rav) and asked to read the words;
5. DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, where the student is presented with a reading passage and asked to read aloud and then the student is asked to retell what he or she just read; and
6. Daze, where the student is presented with a reading passage where some words are replaced by a multiple choice box that includes the original word and two distractors. The student reads the passage silently and selects the word in each box that best fits the meaning.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

HB 257 *Academic Success Through Remediation Act*

HB 310 *K-3 Program Eligibility*

SB 260a *Academic Success Through Remediation Act*

SB 380 *Compulsory Education for Children Age 4 & Up*

SB 640 *Reading Proficiency Act*