



SB242 establishes definitions to be used in the Advancing the Science of Reading Act, including definitions of “balanced literacy”, “high-quality instructional materials”, “science of reading”, “scientifically based reading instruction”, and “structured literacy”.

SB242 establishes additional teacher licensure requirements, requiring applicants have successfully completed:

- 3 credit hours in phonemic awareness and phonics;
- 3 credit hours in fluency, vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension;
- A minimum of 100 hours of supervised field experience in public school classrooms implementing the science of reading and high quality instructional materials.

For licensure applicants in alternative teacher licensure programs, structured literacy credit hours must be completed in the first twelve months of the alternative licensure program.

Applicants seeking licensure in pre-kindergarten through ninth grade or pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade special education must pass a New Mexico teacher assessment for reading with an emphasis on the science of reading, demonstrating proficiency in the essential components of teaching reading.

Education preparation programs will ensure licensure candidates have met the minimum course and credit hour requirements required in SB242.

SB242 requires student teachers or field experience candidates in public schools to use high-quality instructional materials in planning reading instruction and teaching lessons under the observation of trained teachers. High-quality materials are defined in SB242.

All state-approved teacher preparation programs shall employ literacy coordinators. The coordinators are charged with overseeing the implementation of, and compliance with, the Advancing the Science of Reading Act. Additionally, the literacy coordinators are to serve as liaisons between the teacher preparation program, the public education department, school districts, and charter schools.

SB242 does not contain an appropriation, however, it requires sufficient funding be provided to support the salary and administrative costs of the literacy coordinators.

SB242 charges the public education department with monitoring, reviewing, and enforcing the implementation of the Advancing the Science of Reading Act. During the department’s review of teacher preparation programs, the teacher preparation program must provide evidence of alignment with the provisions of SB242. Teacher preparation programs that fail to meet the standards set by SB242 may be placed on a corrective action plan to include timelines and requirements. Noncompliance may result in probationary status or the loss of state approval.

SB242 requires teacher preparation programs, as part of their annual accountability report, to include:

- a summary of program changes to enhance the science of reading instruction aligned to the standards;
- data on candidate performance in science of reading instruction related coursework

- and clinical experiences;
- graduate impact data on student literacy outcomes, where available.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB242 will impact post secondary education institutions. However, the costs are indeterminate.

- Institutions will be required to ensure public schools partners are in compliance with the requirement of SB242 prior to placing student teachers.
- Institutions will have costs associated with the required collecting and reporting on of program graduate's effectiveness in applying the science of reading during their first three years of teaching.
- Institutions will be required to have literacy coordinators.

SB242 mentions funding will be provided for literacy coordinators, no appropriation is made, and there is no mention of funding distribution methodology.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB242 aims to increase the skills and abilities of our students to better prepare them in the science of teaching reading.

### *Additional Requirements for Licensure.*

It is unclear if the required 100 hours of supervised field experience is included in the current 240 hours of field experience or if this is an *additional 100 hours*. Additionally, it is unclear if the 100 hours includes flexibility for field experiences in mixed age classrooms and play based settings.

New Mexico Junior College (NMJC) educator preparation courses cover the key areas for the Science of Reading. NMJC's courses are based on age/grade level. Depending upon the implementation of the requirements, NMJC may need to restructure their reading courses to meet the specific reading requirement.

San Juan College (SJC) notes they have fully integrated the science of reading approach into their alternative teacher preparation program, recognizing the importance of teacher candidates being competent in the science of reading.

SJC expresses some concerns regarding the licensure requirements, their 3-year alternative residency pathway program was designed to meet Martinez Yazzie mandates. It supports the needs of indigenous and Hispanic teacher candidates, providing a supportive transition into the teaching profession. If passed as drafted, SB242 may increase barriers to the teaching profession for underrepresented teacher candidates.

SJC requests the 100 hours of supervised field experience remain flexible. In the SJC 3-year alternative program:

- year 1 is a residency year where the candidate co-teaches with a mentor teacher;
- year 2 transitions candidates into the teacher of record role;
- year 3 includes the completion of coursework and formal field experience;
- clinical/practicum is embedded into every course – exceeding the 100-hour requirement;

***Literacy Coordinators for Educator Preparation Programs.***

Item C, page 8 (lines 2 – 4) state ‘sufficient funding shall be provided to support salary and administrative costs of literacy coordinator positions’. As SB242 is amending the public school code, it is assumed the funding will be provided to the public education department. It is unclear if the literacy coordinators located within each educator preparation program will be employees of the public education department or will be employees of the institution housing the preparation program. If the employees are employed by the institutions, there is no language mandating the public education department transfer the necessary funds to the institutions.

***Monitoring & Enforcement.***

SB242 requires the public education department work with stakeholders to develop teacher preparation programs. It is unclear how New Mexico’s educator preparation programs – tradition and alternative teacher licensure, post-secondary education institution based and stand-alone preparation programs -- will be included in the process.

***Effectiveness of graduates.***

SB242 requires reporting on the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom after graduation. Institutions will be required to modify data collection to meet the reporting requirements. Additionally, it is unclear what standards will be used to measure teacher effectiveness.

***Educator preparation programs.***

It is unclear what credentials the public education department will require educator preparation faculty possess. Depending upon the required credentials, institutions may have difficulty in recruiting faculty.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

To implement SB242 the public education department and the higher education department must work in concert with each other. For example, in order to meet the new requirements, educator preparation programs will be required to either revise courses or create new courses. If new courses are required, new courses could face approval delays as the public postsecondary curriculum committee meets only four times a year.

**TECHNICAL ISSUES**

Section 9, subsection B (page 13 line 8) appears to contradict Section 3. Section 9B requires three hours of reading courses whereas Section 3 stipulates two, 3 credit hour courses in reading.

Section 11, A5 & A6 appear to contradict each other.

The prek-12 specialty license is not included in SB242.

It is unclear if SB242 will impact the vocational-technical licenses.

**OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

***Balanced literacy.***

SB242 bans balanced literacy, however there are some practices that are associated with balanced literacy, such as shared reading, interactive read-aloud.

As the public education department has the authority to set educator preparation program standards, the banning of balanced literacy in statute is not necessary. Public education department standards could provide clarification on discouraging ineffective practices (such as the three-cueing system) while encouraging phonemic awareness, oral language, and vocabulary.

The ban on balanced literacy may affect early childhood teacher education programs as well.

### ***Assessments.***

The rigorous assessment of a candidate's knowledge of the science of teaching reading in the first 12 months will dictate the order in which classes are offered for alternative licensure programs to ensure students are prepared for the assessment. As some alternative licensure programs are cohort based programs, if the student does not pass their assessment, it appears the student will not be permitted to move forward with their cohort.

It is unclear if the Praxis examination will be required within the first 12 months of the alternative licensure program. Additionally, it is unclear if SB242 will require both portfolio assessments and the Praxis (or other reading exam) or if the Praxis will replace the portfolio.

With the expansion of the examination-based requirements, there is a concern that many standardized tests are not strong predictors of a teacher's ability to teach reading or ability to conduct effective reading interventions. Performance based assessments, such as teaching portfolios may provide a more accurate evaluation of a teacher's instructional ability.

### ***Middle school, secondary education.***

There appears to be a disconnect in SB242 between elementary education licensure requirements and secondary education licensure requirements. Middle school is considered secondary education, however, middle school teacher education students would be required to take the reading course and reading assessment. This may impact secondary education preparation candidates in their choice of preparation track.

### ***Literacy Coordinators for Educator Preparation Programs.***

SB242 does not set qualifications for the literacy coordinators. Central New Mexico Community College recommends literacy coordinators be at least a level 3 teacher with a reading endorsement or an individual with a master's degree in literacy acquisition. Southeast New Mexico College recommends that literacy coordinators have knowledge of early childhood literacy development, they should have expertise in early childhood education to ensure support for pre-k and k-3 teachers.

It is unclear in SB242 how the literacy coordinators will support the state as New Mexico continues to be responsive to the findings of the court in Martinez Yazzie. It is important for literacy coordinators to meet the needs of Indigenous and Hispanic students, supporting bi-lingual and dual language-programs.

Some institutions may not require a full-time literacy coordinator. Instead of hiring a full-time individual, a current employee could also serve as the literacy coordinator with a stipend provided for the additional work.

### ***Professional development.***

NMICC recommends professional development be provided to current teachers and teacher

educators to support teacher candidates are supported appropriately. LETRS has two levels, LETRS Early Childhood and LETRS (which is K-8). It is unclear if SB242 requires education preparation program faculty to have taken these courses or other training in the science of reading. Additionally, it is unclear if the faculty overseeing educator preparation programs would be required to complete LETRS training.

***Timelines.***

SB242 does not provide timelines or guidance on when the mandates in the bill will be required to be implemented. As the bill is amending the public school code, perhaps the timelines will be set at the discretion of the public education department. However, some of the compliance work lives within higher education department processes, for example creating new coursework or program requirements can take between 12 – 16 months to receive higher education department approval.

Additionally, it is unclear if the requirements in SB242 apply to educator preparation students currently in educator preparation programs or only to newly admitted students after an unspecified date in the future.

***Language.***

Though SB242 is amending the public school code, many of New Mexico’s educator preparation programs are located in our public post secondary education institutions. To make it clear to which department SB242 is referring, NMICC suggests a definition of “department” be included in the definition section.

As SB242 is creating new sections of statute and amending current statute, it can be confusing when the bill is referring to a teacher preparation student and when the bill is referring to a public school student.

***Teacher education student support.***

Though not included in SB242, NMICC recommends additional financial supports be made available to teacher preparation students so as to assist with costs of additional coursework and unpaid field experiences.