

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE BILL 524

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

AN ACT

RELATING TO THE PUBLIC PEACE, HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE;
REQUIRING THAT TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS TEACH STUDENTS HOW
TO TEACH READING USING THE SCIENCE OF READING, STRUCTURED
LITERACY AND SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING INSTRUCTION;
REQUIRING THAT TEACHERS BE TRAINED TO IDENTIFY WHEN STUDENTS
ARE NOT READING AT GRADE LEVEL; REQUIRING PARENTAL NOTIFICATION
WHEN STUDENTS ARE NOT READING AT GRADE LEVEL.

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

SECTION 1. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] 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 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;

(2) "science of reading" means an interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing;

(3) "scientifically based reading instruction" means instruction grounded in empirical research, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and the science of reading; and

(4) "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.

B. Structured literacy is the primary approach to teaching foundational literacy skills for all learners. Literacy instruction for English learners shall include evidence-based practices for biliteracy, differentiation and culturally and linguistically responsive instruction.

1 C. Public school students shall be taught to read
2 using science of reading, structured literacy and
3 scientifically based reading instruction.

4 D. Each teacher preparation program shall offer
5 courses and student teaching sufficient for level one licensure
6 that:

7 (1) includes science of reading, structured
8 literacy and scientifically based reading instruction; and

9 (2) provides a minimum of one hundred hours of
10 supervised field experience in public school classrooms
11 implementing the science of reading, structured literacy and
12 scientifically based reading instruction, including:

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

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

19 E. The public education department shall develop
20 specific teacher preparation standards related to the five
21 components of the science of reading, including the knowledge
22 and skills teachers need to support struggling readers and
23 those with dyslexia as well as the knowledge and skills
24 teachers need to support English language learners.

25 F. As part of its review process, the public

1 education department shall monitor all educator preparation
2 programs, and programs that fail to adhere to the science of
3 reading shall be required to submit corrective action plans and
4 may face the loss of state approval.

5 G. As part of the state approval review process for
6 educator preparation programs, each program shall provide
7 evidence of its alignment with New Mexico's statutory and
8 regulatory requirements for structured and systematic science
9 of reading instruction.

10 H. Initial approval and ongoing review shall
11 include:

12 (1) evaluation of coursework and field
13 experiences to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to
14 implement evidence-based reading instruction practices aligned
15 with the science of reading;

16 (2) an assessment of faculty qualifications
17 and professional development related to science-based reading
18 instruction methodologies;

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

23 (4) the collection of data demonstrating the
24 effectiveness of graduates in applying science of reading
25 practices during their first three years of teaching, as

1 available through performance-based assessments or other state-
2 approved measures; and

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

9 I. The public education department shall provide
10 guidelines for evaluating compliance with science of reading
11 instruction requirements during the review process. These
12 guidelines shall include minimum performance thresholds for
13 coursework, assessments and candidate outcomes.

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

19 K. As part of an annual accountability report,
20 educator preparation programs shall include:

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

24 (2) data on teacher candidate performance in
25 science of reading instruction-related coursework and clinical

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experiences; and

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

SECTION 2. 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. Teacher 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 student has been identified as having difficulty in reading and a reading improvement plan will be developed by the teacher, other pertinent school personnel and the parent;

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

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

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

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

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

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