LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 1st Session, 2025

Bill Number HB455 **Sponsor** Baca

Tracking Number .230871.1 **Committee Referrals** HEC/HAFC

Short Title Pre-K Through 3rd Grade Online Math & Reading

Analyst Andrews **Original Date** 3/4/2025
Last Updated

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 455 (HB455) makes a $1 million appropriation to the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to provide targeted, supplemental online math and reading support for students in prekindergarten through third grade for early intervention and strengthening of foundational literacy and numeracy skills. HB455 would require funding to be used to implement online, evidence-based instructional programs grounded in the science of reading, provide professional development for educators, and supply high-quality learning materials for caregivers.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates $1 million from the general fund to ECECD for expenditure in FY26. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY26 shall revert to the general fund. The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 (HB2/HAFCS) does not contain an appropriation to implement the provisions of HB455.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

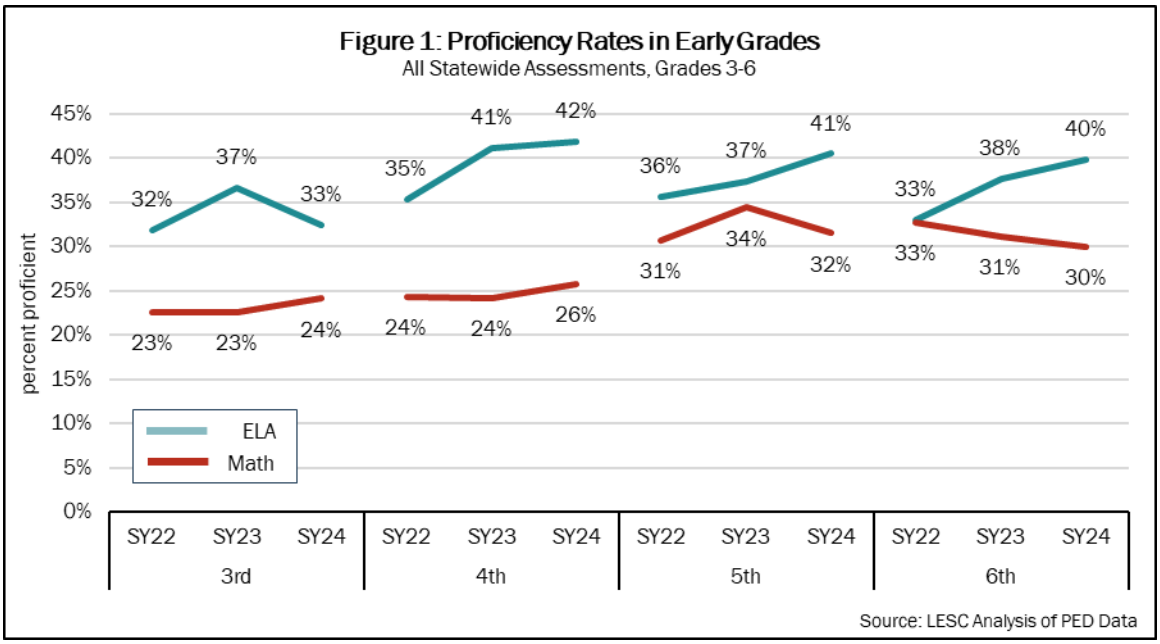
Online Supplemental Math and Reading Programs. As ECECD notes in their bill analysis, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children aged three through 10 should have no more than one hour of screen time per day. HB455 does not provide guidance as to how many hours per day students would be expected to participate in this supplemental programming.

Numerous vendors offer online math and reading programs for prekindergarten through third grade, which vary in their evidence base, but can impact student achievement by providing valuable practice in foundational math and reading skills.

Math Achievement. One in four students are proficient in math in New Mexico, with even lower proficiency rates for students with disabilities, as well as students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and English learners. In the consolidated *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit, the court pointed to low proficiency rates in math overall as well as the persistent achievement gaps

between student subgroups, as part of evidence the state violated students' fundamental rights. While only a quarter of students demonstrate proficiency in mathematics, there are still meaningful differences among students by grade level. As shown below in **Figure 1: Proficiency Rates in Early Grades**, math achievement actually rises through fifth grade in New Mexico then begins to decrease starting in sixth grade until it reaches a low of 15 percent in grade 11.

Early Literacy. Literacy is a foundational skill, but most students in New Mexico cannot read or write proficiently, with data from the Public Education Department (PED) showing 39 percent of New Mexico students testing as proficient in reading during the 2023-2024 school year (SY24). However, overall student proficiency in reading has been growing recently: from 34 percent in SY22 to 39 percent in SY24. Recent LESC staff evaluation found legislative investments may have contributed to student growth in English language arts (ELA).



Literacy in New Mexico. New Mexico embarked on a strategic path to ensure all literacy instruction is evidence-based with the passage of Laws 2019, Chapter 256 (Senate Bill 398), investing in structured literacy as a mechanism to improve student proficiency in reading. The science of reading is an interdisciplinary body of research that explains how individuals learn to read and the best practices for reading instruction, and structured literacy is research-based practices within the classroom. Together, this body of research and practices form scientifically based reading instruction. As part of its efforts toward structured literacy, since SY21, the state has required and provided training in these practices through the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training for kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) educators and administrators. PED has estimated that all K-5 educators have begun LETRS training as of SY25. It is unclear how proposed professional development in HB455 would interact with this training.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB455 would appropriate $1 million to ECECD for online math and reading support for students in prekindergarten through third grade. As kindergarten through third grade is under the

administration of PED, ECECD notes that a memorandum of understanding or agreement (MOU or MOA) would need to be developed to transfer funds to support the online reading and math supports including the professional development and materials.

ECECD notes there would need to be a formula to determine a cost per child to ensure equitable distribution of funds between ECECD and PED. ECECD also notes that the MOU or MOA would need to address any data sharing, reporting, data management that might be required to measure and demonstrate outcomes.

RELATED BILLS

Duplicates SB416, Pre-K Through 3rd Grade Math & Reading Help.

Relates to SB242, Advancing the Science of Reading Act, which would amend the Public School Code and create the Advancing the Science of Reading Act to ensure educator preparation programs use only structured literacy practices, and future educators are trained in scientifically based reading instruction.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)
- New Mexico Regional Cooperatives (NMRECA)

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