

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Senate Bill 242 (SB242), the Advancing the Science of Reading Act, amends the Public School Code. It applies to kindergarten through 12th grade education and:

- stops the use of balanced literacy and replaces it with structured literacy;
- places requirements on teacher licensure that include focus on structured literacy;
- places requirements on teacher preparation programs to provide training in structured literacy;
- requires literacy coordinators at teacher preparation programs to facilitate the use of structured literacy;
- requires notifications to parents when students are not reading on grade level - including identifications of dyslexia; and
- tasks the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to develop standards and oversee compliance related to structured literacy.

The New Mexico Higher Education Departments's (NMHED's) analysis of this bill focuses on the higher education implications of the proposed legislation. Additional insight may be obtained from other agencies' analyses.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB242 does not provide an appropriation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB242, the Advancing the Science of Reading Act, amends the Public School Code to require the use of structured literacy in kindergarten through 12th grade reading education. This bill defines structured literacy as an evidence-based approach to teaching language and that is based on explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Structured literacy is to be used in place of balanced literacy, a competing approach to teaching literacy. SB242 says that research shows that balanced literacy is inconsistent with scientifically based reading instruction. SB242 also defines the science of reading as an interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about reading.

This bill requires that teachers have a required number of credit hours in and supervised teaching hours implementing structured literacy. The supervised teaching hours are to include planning, teaching, observing, and applying structured literacy. Alternative licensure must meet the same requirements, and the credit hour requirements must be met within the first 12 months of the alternative program. Special education licensure must also meet the same base requirements along with learning to support students with learning disabilities or dyslexia. All licensure-seeking candidates must pass the New Mexico Teacher Assessment for reading with an emphasis on the science of reading. Education preparation programs must also ensure they meet the new requirements for licensure.

SB242 requires that kindergarten through 12th grade education use high-quality instructional material. These are materials that:

- are grounded in evidence-based research and consistent with the science of reading;
- do not employ balanced literacy techniques;
- provide explicit and systematic instruction in structured literacy areas of focus; and
- are reviewed and approved as core instructional material by NMPED and recognized for structured literacy.

SB242 requires that literacy coordinators be employed at all teacher preparation programs to facilitate implementation of and ensure compliance with the requirements in this act. Further, literacy coordinators will participate in NMPED-approved training and professional development, ensure the use of high-quality instructional material, and provide professional development to faculty, among other duties. SB242 states that sufficient funding shall be provided for literacy coordinator positions, but it does not provide an appropriation itself, so there is a question as to how these positions will be funded.

SB242 requires NMPED to set standards related to the requirements in this act as well as monitor performance and, as needed, review corrective action plans when programs fail to adhere to the science of reading.

Finally, SB242 requires reporting to parents at specified intervals and regarding reading performance. In cases where a dyslexia screener has been administered, parents will be notified about the student's identification as having a difficulty with reading and that a reading improvement plan will be developed, a description of available services, a description of the proposed interventions, progress reports, and a description of the student's specific skill deficiencies along with strategies parents can use to support the student with success in reading at home.

SB242 requires the use of structured literacy. The Iowa Reading Research Center at the University of Iowa defines structured literacy as "explicit, systematic teaching that focuses on phonological awareness, word recognition, phonics and decoding, spelling, and syntax at the sentence and paragraph levels.?" The same source contrasts balanced reading as focusing on "shared reading where the teacher reads aloud to students and asks questions about the text, guided reading [where] students read texts at their current ability level and discuss them with the teacher in homogeneous groups, and independent reading where students self-select books to read on their own.?" To provide a different angle on the distinction, the same source explains structured literacy as "deeply rooted in the sounds from which our spoken language is composed (phonemes) and systematically introduces the letters or letter combinations (graphemes) that correspond with each phoneme" and balanced literacy as "focused on grapheme representations combined with context or imagery to teach beginning literacy skills."
(<https://irrc.education.uiowa.edu/blog/2019/04/explanation-structured-literacy-and-comparison-balanced-literacy>)

Since dyslexia is identified in SB242, it could help to note that the International Dyslexia Association supports the use of structured literacy (<https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/>).

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

NMPED is required to provide guidelines to evaluate compliance during the review process that include minimum performance thresholds for coursework, assessments, and candidate outcomes. Programs failing to meet the standards may be placed on a corrective action plan, and noncompliance may result in probationary status or the loss of state approval.

As part of their annual accountability report, educator preparation programs will include:

- a summary of program changes made to enhance science of reading instruction aligned to the standards;
- data on candidate performance in science of reading instruction-related coursework and clinical experiences; and
- graduate impact data on student literacy outcomes, where available.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

N/A

TECHNICAL ISSUES

N/A

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

NMPED could coordinate with school districts or schools to shift reading pedagogy towards structured literacy.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

If SB242 is not enacted, there will be no statewide requirement for using structured literacy to teach reading to kindergarten through 12th grade students. There also will not be the remaining resulting requirements supporting a shift to structured literacy.

AMENDMENTS

N/A