
SENATE BILL 6538

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Tom, Hobbs, Rasmussen, Kauffman, Kastama, Murray, and Shin; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Read first time 01/17/08. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving reading instruction; adding a new
2 section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that while significant
5 gains have been made in reading achievement by students in public
6 schools during the past decade, additional resources and assistance are
7 needed in middle, junior high, and high schools. In these schools,
8 teachers need additional tools and strategies to increase reading
9 achievement, including professional development pertaining to phonemic
10 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The
11 legislature further finds that without an increased investment by the
12 legislature, a large number of students will continue to leave high
13 school with below-basic reading skills. Without these essential
14 reading skills, these students not only will struggle academically, but
15 also will struggle socially, emotionally, and economically.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) The Washington state adolescent reading program is created.

1 The purpose of the program is to develop and implement a statewide,
2 comprehensive program that will provide teachers the tools, skills, and
3 knowledge to successfully teach struggling adolescent students to read.
4 The program will consist of four major components, which shall include:
5 Statewide leadership and coordination; regional leadership,
6 coordination, and assistance provided by reading specialists at
7 educational service districts; school district curriculum support and
8 technical assistance; and school-based assistance that will vary
9 depending on the number of struggling readers. Assistance shall
10 include both the teaching of foundational literacy and implementation
11 of effective, sustainable reading systems within school districts and
12 schools.

13 (2) Statewide leadership and coordination shall be provided by the
14 office of the superintendent of public instruction. In this capacity,
15 the office shall hire staff who: Understand reading research; know how
16 to apply the research in school districts, buildings, and classrooms;
17 and understand the critical elements needed for systemwide change.
18 These staff shall provide statewide leadership, coordination, technical
19 expertise, and logistics to successfully implement the program.

20 (3) In order to ensure that technical assistance is provided
21 statewide, a reading specialist shall be hired at each educational
22 service district, with two specialists hired in the Puget Sound
23 educational service district. These reading specialists are
24 responsible for providing training and information to school district
25 curriculum directors, middle, junior high, and high school principals,
26 classroom teachers, English language learner teachers,
27 paraprofessionals who assist students in learning to read, and other
28 individuals who are assisting students to read. Selection of the
29 reading specialists shall be done jointly by the superintendent of each
30 educational service district and a representative of the office of the
31 superintendent of public instruction.

32 (4) To help school district curriculum directors understand the
33 foundational skills needed to teach reading and to understand how to
34 implement effective reading systems in school districts and schools,
35 the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the
36 educational service district reading specialists shall provide training
37 opportunities for school district curriculum directors and other

1 appropriate district personnel to address specifically how to improve
2 the teaching of reading in school districts, schools, and classrooms.

3 (5)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
4 create a school-based assistance program that has three different
5 levels of support depending on the number of students who have not met
6 the reading standard on the Washington assessment of student learning.
7 Schools with larger numbers of students who have not met the reading
8 standard shall receive more intensive assistance, while schools with
9 smaller numbers of struggling readers shall be provided a lower level
10 of assistance. The specific types of assistance that will be provided,
11 depending on the level of support, include, but are not limited to:
12 The provision of training and instructional materials in research-based
13 reading intervention programs; site visits to provide technical
14 assistance; the funding of reading coaches; the provision and training
15 on the use of common reading diagnostic assessments; and information
16 regarding how to design a schoolwide reading system.

17 (b) The school-based assistance program shall be initially
18 implemented in high schools in the 2008-09 school year. The
19 school-based assistance program shall be expanded to include middle
20 schools and junior high schools beginning in the 2009-10 school year.
21 The superintendent shall develop criteria and implement a process for
22 selecting the schools that will receive the differing levels of
23 assistance.

24 (c) Schools selected for the two highest levels of assistance shall
25 receive assistance for three school years.

26 (6) Subject to funds appropriated specifically for this purpose,
27 the superintendent of public instruction shall contract with a third
28 party to evaluate the effectiveness of the adolescent reading program
29 and to recommend actions that could be taken to make the adolescent
30 reading program more effective. The evaluation shall be submitted to
31 the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2010.

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