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HOUSE BILL 3124

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1998 Regular Session

By Representatives Johnson, Talcott, Smith, Hickel, Sterk, Sump, Mastin, Radcliff, Benson, Mielke, Sherstad, Backlund and Delvin

Read first time 02/16/98. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to reading improvement; amending RCW 28A.300.130;  
2 adding new sections to chapter 28A.165 RCW; creating new sections;  
3 providing expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the ability to  
6 read fluently, accurately, and with comprehension is critical to  
7 success in school and in life. Research has found that reading  
8 instruction and curriculum in the early grades must consist of a  
9 comprehensive program that builds upon the firm foundational skills of  
10 phonemic awareness, decoding, and reading comprehension, to provide  
11 students with the skills necessary to engage in rich literature  
12 activities, and further develop thinking and application skills.

13 The legislature further finds that many primary grade teachers  
14 would benefit from additional professional development instruction in  
15 beginning reading skills and access to current information regarding  
16 scientifically proven instructional strategies that improve student  
17 achievement in reading. The role of professional development in  
18 supporting and sustaining a high-quality teaching force is critical.  
19 Schools and school districts should be encouraged to review their

1 reading programs in the early grades to ensure they are meeting the  
2 needs of all children in their districts. The legislature further  
3 finds that many primary grade teachers would benefit from additional  
4 professional development instruction in beginning reading skills and  
5 access to current information regarding research-based and  
6 scientifically validated instructional strategies that improve student  
7 achievement in reading as identified in the essential academic learning  
8 requirements.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The definitions in this section apply  
10 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

11 (a) "Phonemic awareness instruction" means teaching awareness of  
12 letter sounds, and segmenting and blending phonemes, syllables, and  
13 words in a sequential progression.

14 (b) "Explicit systematic decoding instruction" means direct,  
15 sequential teaching of how to read words fluently and automatically  
16 that includes instruction in letter-sound correspondences, letter  
17 combinations, multisyllabic words, blending, and structural elements,  
18 and initially incorporates the use of decodable text. "Explicit  
19 systematic decoding instruction" does not include the use of context  
20 and syntax as word identification strategies in teaching beginning  
21 reading skills.

22 (c) "Decodable text" means connected text containing a high  
23 percentage of words that provide practice on the letter-sound  
24 correspondences and letter combinations previously taught.

25 (d) "Diagnosis of a student's ability to decode" means regularly  
26 assessing the student's mastery of word recognition, fluency and  
27 automaticity, and word analysis in order to plan future instructional  
28 activities.

29 (e) "Explicit and systematic instruction in spelling" means  
30 teaching a logical scope and sequence of word knowledge, orthographic  
31 patterns, syllabication, and frequently used words connected to the  
32 sequence used in reading and writing instruction.

33 (f) "Vocabulary instruction" means teaching word meanings.

34 (g) "Instruction in reading comprehension skills" means explicit,  
35 systematic teaching of vocabulary development, text structure, context,  
36 syntax, and syntactic patterns, including but not limited to,  
37 strategies for higher order thinking skills such as interpretation,  
38 summarization, prediction, clarification, and question generation.

1 (2) This section expires July 30, 2005.

2 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) To the extent funds are appropriated,  
3 elementary schools interested in providing professional development and  
4 related materials for certificated instructional staff that provide  
5 direct instructional services to students in kindergarten, first, and  
6 second grade may apply for and receive funding from the office of the  
7 superintendent of public instruction. The application for funding  
8 shall be limited to:

9 (a) Verification that the school has developed a comprehensive  
10 school-wide reading improvement plan that includes, but is not limited  
11 to, a beginning reading-language arts program for use in kindergarten  
12 through second grade. In addition to other primary elements that the  
13 beginning reading-arts program may include, the primary elements of the  
14 program must:

15 (i) Provide numerous daily opportunities for teachers in  
16 kindergarten and first grade to read to students from a variety of  
17 printed materials including rich literature and expository text;

18 (ii) Provide explicit and sequential instruction in phonemic  
19 awareness for all students in kindergarten and first grade and students  
20 with limited English proficiency;

21 (iii) Provide explicit systematic decoding instruction and practice  
22 in using those skills in decodable text materials;

23 (iv) Require diagnosis of a student's ability to decode in first  
24 and second grade;

25 (v) Provide explicit and systematic instruction in spelling and  
26 provide students in kindergarten and first grade with an opportunity to  
27 use student-invented spelling in all writing activities;

28 (vi) Provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension skills  
29 and opportunities for students to apply them; and

30 (vii) Provide students with structured assistance in learning to  
31 write with ample opportunities to engage in writing activities;

32 (b) Verification that the intended professional development  
33 supports the efforts of the school's beginning reading-language arts  
34 program required in (a) of this subsection and includes primary  
35 emphasis on the following beginning reading skills:

36 (i) Phonemic awareness strategies;

37 (ii) Explicit and systematic decoding instruction and how to assess  
38 a student's ability to decode;

1 (iii) Explicit spelling and vocabulary instruction;  
2 (iv) Explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies; and  
3 (v) Research findings on the skills needed by beginning and  
4 proficient readers, and how beginning reading skills are acquired;

5 (c) Verification that to the fullest extent possible, school  
6 districts shall redirect funding available to elementary schools  
7 receiving funding provided in accordance with this section, from the  
8 learning assistance program and other available resources to begin  
9 implementation of the reading-language arts program required in (a) of  
10 this subsection;

11 (d) Verification that funds expended for professional development  
12 in beginning reading instruction in schools receiving funding provided  
13 in accordance with this section are expended in accordance with this  
14 section and will not be used for staff development, intervention, or  
15 remediation programs; and

16 (e) Verification that representatives of kindergarten, first, or  
17 second grade teachers and reading specialists from the school will be  
18 attending a leadership and accountability institute conducted by the  
19 office of the superintendent of public instruction in accordance with  
20 section 6 of this act.

21 (2) Funding provided pursuant to this section shall be available to  
22 schools no later than June 1, 1998. Priority for funding shall be  
23 given to those schools in which less than one-quarter of all students  
24 tested on the fourth grade assessment in reading met the state-wide  
25 standard, or in schools where average performance on the reading  
26 component of the state-wide standardized test required in RCW  
27 28A.230.190 were in the bottom quartile for the previous three years.  
28 Priority shall then be given to those schools in which less than one-  
29 third of all students tested on the fourth grade assessment in reading  
30 met the state-wide standard, or in schools where average performance on  
31 the reading component of the state-wide standardized test required in  
32 RCW 28A.230.190 were in the bottom third for the previous three years.  
33 Priority shall then be given to schools in which one-half of all  
34 students tested on the fourth grade assessment in reading met the  
35 state-wide standard, or in schools where average performance on the  
36 reading component of the state-wide standardized test required in RCW  
37 28A.230.190 were in the bottom half for the previous three years.

38 (3) Funding provided pursuant to this section may be used to  
39 provide additional professional development materials for classroom

1 volunteers providing assistance in kindergarten, first, and second  
2 grades, interested in attending the professional development  
3 opportunity identified in subsection (1)(b) of this section.

4 (4) An elementary school receiving funding in accordance with this  
5 section shall certify and provide documentation to the superintendent  
6 of public instruction that funds received were expended for  
7 professional development and related materials in accordance with this  
8 section.

9 (5) Schools or school districts that received funds under RCW  
10 28A.300.330 are not eligible to apply for funds in accordance with this  
11 section.

12 (6) This section expires July 30, 2005.

13 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.300.130 and 1996 c 273 s 5 are each amended to  
14 read as follows:

15 (1) Expanding activity in educational research, educational  
16 restructuring, and educational improvement initiatives has produced and  
17 continues to produce much valuable information. The legislature finds  
18 that such information should be shared with the citizens and  
19 educational community of the state as widely as possible. To  
20 facilitate access to information and materials on educational  
21 improvement and research, the superintendent of public instruction, to  
22 the extent funds are appropriated, shall establish the center for the  
23 improvement of student learning. The primary purpose of the center is  
24 to provide assistance and advice to parents, school board members,  
25 educators, and the public regarding strategies for assisting students  
26 in learning the essential academic learning requirements pursuant to  
27 RCW 28A.630.885. The center shall work in conjunction with the  
28 commission on student learning, educational service districts, and  
29 institutions of higher education.

30 (2) The center shall:

31 (a) Serve as a clearinghouse for the completed work and activities  
32 of the commission on student learning;

33 (b) Serve as a clearinghouse for information regarding successful  
34 educational restructuring and parental involvement programs in schools  
35 and districts, and information about efforts within institutions of  
36 higher education in the state to support educational restructuring  
37 initiatives in Washington schools and districts;

1       (c) Develop an independent unit within the center to focus  
2 primarily on both research-based and scientifically validated reading  
3 instructional practices. The unit shall serve as a resource for school  
4 districts and schools to provide teachers and other professionals with  
5 information about the important body of knowledge and techniques  
6 available to enable them to help children become successful readers.

7       The unit's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to,  
8 identifying and distributing research on effective reading programs and  
9 practices in accordance with section 3 of this act, providing  
10 assistance in selecting and implementing effective reading programs and  
11 practices, conducting and identifying professional development  
12 opportunities for schools accessing funding in accordance with section  
13 3 of this act, identifying educators interested in assisting schools in  
14 the development and implementation of reading improvement efforts, and  
15 taking other actions to improve reading instruction and curriculum in  
16 the state. The unit shall also provide information on the explicit  
17 instruction of phonemic awareness, decoding skills, spelling,  
18 vocabulary, and comprehension. To the maximum extent possible, staff  
19 at the unit shall collaborate with educational service districts,  
20 colleges and universities, and professional organizations;

21       (d) Provide best practices research and advice that can be used to  
22 help schools develop and implement: ~~((Programs and practices to~~  
23 ~~improve reading instruction;)) School improvement plans; school-based  
24 shared decision-making models; programs to promote lifelong learning  
25 and community involvement in education; school-to-work transition  
26 programs; programs to meet the needs of highly capable students;  
27 programs to meet the diverse needs of students based on gender, racial,  
28 ethnic, economic, and special needs status; and other programs that  
29 will assist educators in helping students learn the essential academic  
30 learning requirements;~~

31       ~~((d))~~ (e) Develop and distribute, in conjunction with the  
32 commission on student learning, parental involvement materials,  
33 including instructional guides developed to inform parents of the  
34 essential academic learning requirements. The instructional guides  
35 also shall contain actions parents may take to assist their children in  
36 meeting the requirements, and should focus on reaching parents who have  
37 not previously been involved with their children's education;

38       ~~((e))~~ (f) Identify obstacles to greater parent and community  
39 involvement in school shared decision-making processes and recommend

1 strategies for helping parents and community members to participate  
2 effectively in school shared decision-making processes, including  
3 understanding and respecting the roles of school building  
4 administrators and staff;

5 ~~((f))~~ (g) Take other actions to increase public awareness of the  
6 importance of parental and community involvement in education;

7 ~~((g))~~ (h) Work with appropriate organizations to inform teachers,  
8 district and school administrators, and school directors about the  
9 waivers available under RCW 28A.305.140 and the broadened school board  
10 powers under RCW 28A.320.015;

11 ~~((h))~~ (i) Provide training and consultation services;

12 ~~((i))~~ (j) Address methods for improving the success rates of  
13 certain ethnic and racial student groups; and

14 ~~((j))~~ (k) Perform other functions consistent with the purpose of  
15 the center as prescribed in subsection (1) of this section.

16 (3) The superintendent of public instruction, after consultation  
17 with the commission on student learning, shall select and employ a  
18 director for the center.

19 (4) The superintendent may enter into contracts with individuals or  
20 organizations including but not limited to: School districts;  
21 teachers; higher education faculty; institutions of higher education;  
22 state agencies; business or community-based organizations; and other  
23 individuals and organizations to accomplish the duties and  
24 responsibilities of the center. The superintendent shall contract out  
25 with community-based organizations to meet the provisions of subsection  
26 (2)~~((d))~~ (e) and ~~((e))~~ (f) of this section. In carrying out the  
27 duties and responsibilities of the center, the superintendent, whenever  
28 possible, shall use practitioners to assist agency staff as well as  
29 assist educators and others in schools and districts.

30 (5) The superintendent shall report annually to the commission on  
31 student learning on the activities of the center.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** By July 31, 1998, each educational service  
33 district shall establish a reading resource center within the district.  
34 Schools accessing funds in accordance with section 3 of this act may  
35 request and the center may assist schools and school districts within  
36 its service area in matching local needs with reading programs,  
37 providing professional development opportunities, and facilitating

1 discussions among teachers to promote best practices for beginning  
2 reading instruction, all in accordance with section 3 of this act.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) Before September 30, 1998, the office of  
4 the superintendent of public instruction, in cooperation with  
5 educational service districts, shall conduct leadership and  
6 accountability institutes designed to provide teachers, administrators,  
7 and school board members with information and tools to improve  
8 beginning reading instructional programs and practices in their  
9 schools. School district board of directors of each school district,  
10 school administrators, and teachers identified by the school district  
11 board of directors as having demonstrated leadership in reading  
12 instruction in the school district or from schools receiving funds in  
13 accordance with section 3 of this act shall be invited to attend the  
14 institutes. The institutes shall provide professional development and  
15 supporting materials to: Evaluate reading curriculum and reading  
16 instructional weaknesses in schools to determine whether the school has  
17 a comprehensive reading program; for elementary schools, ensure that  
18 the primary, but not sole, element is a beginning reading component  
19 that includes, but is not limited to, explicit instruction in phonemic  
20 awareness, explicit systematic instruction in decoding skills,  
21 diagnosis of a student's ability to decode, explicit and systematic  
22 instruction in spelling, vocabulary instruction, and explicit  
23 instruction in reading comprehension skills; conduct research on how  
24 children learn to read, including those with limited English  
25 proficiency, learning disabilities, or who are economically  
26 disadvantaged; diagnose reading deficiencies; and monitor the movement  
27 of students from beginning or deficient reading skills to independent  
28 reading of rich literature and expository text.

29 (2) School districts sending teams to the institutes must make a  
30 commitment to provide sufficient time to team members before and during  
31 the next school year to support implementation of strategies learned  
32 while at the institute.

33 (3) This section expires December 31, 1998.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction  
35 shall establish a Washington reading corps pilot program to provide  
36 intensive reading instruction to elementary grade students during the  
37 summer, other intercessions for schools with year-round schedules, or



1 other vacation periods between June 1, 1998, and June 30, 1999. School  
2 districts interested in participating in the pilot program shall agree  
3 to conduct pilot programs that: Provide a minimum of eighty hours of  
4 instructional activity for students participating in the pilot  
5 programs; have certificated instructional staff trained in research  
6 validated effective reading strategies providing instruction and  
7 supervision; have classified staff, tutors, and volunteers that have  
8 been provided with training in effective beginning reading strategies  
9 supporting and extending the instruction provided by the certificated  
10 staff; have a ratio of at least one adult for every four students; and  
11 administer a reading preassessment immediately preceding student  
12 participation in the pilot program and a postassessment of student  
13 reading performance immediately after the pilot program. School  
14 districts able to demonstrate that they were unable to achieve the  
15 prescribed adult-student ratio, in spite of good faith efforts to  
16 recruit volunteers, shall not be financially penalized.

17 School districts participating in the pilot program must agree to  
18 evaluate, in a manner prescribed by the superintendent of public  
19 instruction, how effectively their programs improved the reading skills  
20 of students who participated in the pilot program.

21 In selecting districts to participate in the pilot program, the  
22 superintendent of public instruction shall give priority to school  
23 districts that have schools in which less than forty percent of  
24 students met the fourth grade reading standard on the Washington  
25 assessment of student learning or more than forty percent of students  
26 scored in the lowest quartile on the reading component of the  
27 standardized assessment required in RCW 28A.230.190(2). The  
28 superintendent shall distribute a request for districts to participate  
29 in the pilot program by May 1, 1998. Successful participants shall be  
30 notified by the superintendent of public instruction by June 1, 1998.

31 Grant awards, volunteer training, publicity, and assistance with  
32 the recruitment of volunteers shall be coordinated by a steering  
33 committee led by the office of the superintendent of public instruction  
34 and shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from the  
35 Washington service corps, school districts, educational service  
36 districts, and the commission for national and community service.

37 (2) To the extent funds are appropriated for this purpose, the  
38 superintendent of public instruction shall enter into a contract with  
39 an independent contractor to conduct an evaluation of the pilot

1 programs to: Determine how effective the pilot programs were in  
2 improving student reading skills; determine efforts by districts to  
3 recruit and retain volunteers; and determine the numbers of  
4 certificated staff, classified staff, tutors, and volunteers  
5 participating in the pilot program, and the number of students that  
6 participated in each component of the pilot program and the level of  
7 increased student reading achievement attributable to participation in  
8 the pilot program. An evaluation of the pilot programs conducted  
9 during the summer of 1998 shall be submitted to the education and  
10 fiscal committees of the legislature by November 1, 1998. The final  
11 evaluation of all pilot programs during the period of June 1, 1998,  
12 through June 30, 1999, shall be submitted to the legislature by  
13 November 1, 1999.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 3, 5, and 7 of this act  
15 are each added to chapter 28A.165 RCW.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
17 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
18 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
19 immediately.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** If specific funding for the purposes of  
21 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
22 provided by June 30, 1998, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act  
23 is null and void.

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