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HOUSE BILL 2036

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State of Washington                      59th Legislature                      2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Talcott, McDermott, Shabro, Haigh, Anderson,  
Flannigan, Tom, Kenney, Kagi and Santos

Read first time 02/15/2005. Referred to Committee on Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to reading readiness; adding a new section to  
2 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 teaching a child  
5 to read early and well will open doors of learning and wonder that will  
6 benefit the child throughout life. As Graham Greene said, "There is  
7 always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future  
8 in." For the Kennewick school district, that quote captured the vision  
9 of its community for all its students. "Every day some children, for  
10 the first time in their whole lives, see the door crack up. Beyond is  
11 a brilliant world. It is not the world they feel and smell and hear  
12 and touch. It is a symbolic world which they can share with the best  
13 storytellers, generals, athletes, and poets, with the best scientists,  
14 mathematicians, and historians of the past three millennia."

15            The legislature finds that reading is also a gateway skill that  
16 opens doors for children to learn other important subjects such as  
17 math, science, literature, and social studies. It is a skill that is  
18 relied upon for about eighty-five percent of all educational  
19 instruction. The legislature finds that while about forty percent of

1 children learn to read easily, another forty percent need significantly  
2 more help and the remaining twenty percent of children need intensive  
3 and sustained assistance. Yet, research shows that if children do not  
4 learn to read well by the third grade, they are at risk of becoming  
5 academic failures and school dropouts.

6 The legislature finds that a child's ultimate success in school  
7 depends, in no small part, on how well the child was prepared for  
8 school, a preparation that happens mostly at home. Children enter  
9 kindergarten with wide variations in their readiness to learn to read.  
10 These variations lead to reading readiness gaps among students, gaps  
11 that tend to persist as achievement gaps throughout the children's  
12 educational careers. The reading readiness gap is especially acute  
13 between children with parents in a profession and children who come  
14 from low-income homes. The legislature also finds that parental  
15 involvement in a child's life is essential and that parents can help  
16 eliminate the reading readiness gap by reading to their children for  
17 twenty minutes a day.

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

20 The "ready to read" community assistance program is established in  
21 the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The purpose of  
22 the program is to encourage local public-private partnerships that  
23 enhance preliteracy and reading readiness efforts. The  
24 responsibilities of the program shall include but need not be limited  
25 to:

26 (1) The preparation and dissemination of one or more models to  
27 stimulate community support for preliteracy foundations;

28 (2) The stimulation of community efforts to introduce parents of  
29 newborn children to the importance of reading to their children and  
30 other preliteracy activities; and

31 (3) The stimulation of efforts to educate parents and guardians of  
32 preschool age children about child development and literacy

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