

SENATE, No. 2646

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts to provide training and coaching to certain teachers on student literacy and reading interventions; requires DOE to establish program for literacy coaches.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning student literacy and supplementing chapter 6 of
2 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. As used in this act:

8 “Reading deficiency” means scoring below grade level or being
9 determined to be at risk of scoring below grade level on a screening
10 assessment, diagnostic assessment, standardized summative
11 assessment, or progress monitoring.

12 “Reading intervention” means an evidence-based strategy
13 frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies that includes, but
14 shall not be limited to, individual instruction, tutoring, or mentoring
15 that target specific reading skills and abilities.

16 “Science of reading” means evidence-based reading instruction
17 practices that address the acquisition of language, phonological and
18 phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling, fluency, vocabulary,
19 oral language, and comprehension that can be differentiated to meet
20 the needs of individual students.

21

22 2. a. A school district shall annually provide training to any
23 teacher employed in grades kindergarten through 12 who provides
24 reading interventions to students that exhibit a reading deficiency,
25 and any teaching staff member holding an educational services
26 certificate with a reading specialist endorsement.

27 b. The training shall include, at minimum, information on:

28 (1) the science of reading;

29 (2) reading intervention techniques, including scientifically-
30 backed approaches to teaching students to read; and

31 (3) distinguishing between identification of a student who may
32 be eligible for special education and related services in accordance
33 with the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," 20 U.S.C.
34 s.1400 et seq. and a student who may exhibit signs of a reading
35 deficiency.

36

37 3. a. The Department of Education, in consultation with
38 Commissioner of Education-approved educator preparation program
39 providers in the State, shall establish and implement a “train the
40 trainer” program for the creation of literacy coaches in public
41 schools. The purpose of the program shall be for reading specialists
42 to provide instruction to interested teachers on the science of
43 reading and reading interventions.

44 b. The department shall issue a literacy coach certificate to any
45 teacher who completes the training, provided the teacher submits
46 proof of completion on a form as determined by the department.

1 c. A literacy coach shall receive a one-time stipend from the
2 department. The stipend shall be in an amount determined by the
3 department, subject to available funds.

4

5 4. a. A school district shall provide any teacher employed in
6 grades kindergarten through 12 with ongoing coaching support to
7 aid in the delivery of reading interventions. The support shall
8 include, at minimum:

9 (1) on-site teacher training on evidence-based reading
10 instruction and data-based decision making;

11 (2) example lessons;

12 (3) classroom observance during the delivery of reading
13 interventions; and

14 (4) immediate feedback for improving reading instruction, if
15 applicable.

16 b. A literacy coach who receives a certificate under the
17 program established pursuant to section 3 of this act may conduct
18 the training established pursuant to subsection a. of this section,
19 provided it does not conflict with the other job responsibilities of
20 the teaching staff member. Within the limit of available funds, the
21 literacy coach shall be eligible for a stipend from the department for
22 any school year in which the literacy coach conducts the training.

23

24 5. The training and coaching established pursuant to this act
25 shall count towards the professional development requirements
26 established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2013, c.105 (C.18A:6-131).

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28 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
29 the first full school year following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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34 This bill requires school districts to provide training and
35 coaching to teachers regarding student literacy and reading
36 interventions necessary for students with reading deficiencies.

37 Under the bill, a school district is required to annually provide
38 training to any teacher in grades kindergarten through 12 who
39 provides reading interventions to students that exhibit a reading
40 deficiency, and any teaching staff member holding an educational
41 services certificate with a reading specialist endorsement.

42 The training is required to include information on: (1) the
43 science of reading; (2) reading intervention techniques; and (3)
44 distinguishing between identification of a student who may be
45 eligible for special education and related services in accordance
46 with the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," and a
47 student who may exhibit signs of a reading deficiency.

1 The bill requires the Department of Education, in consultation
2 with Commissioner of Education-approved educator preparation
3 program providers in the State, to establish and implement a “train
4 the trainer” program for the creation of literacy coaches in public
5 schools. Reading specialists are to provide instruction to interested
6 teachers on the science of reading and reading interventions. The
7 department is required to issue a literacy coach certificate to any
8 teacher who completes the training, provided the teacher submits
9 proof of completion on a form as determined by the department.
10 Under the bill, a literacy coach is to receive a one-time stipend from
11 the department. The stipend is to be in an amount determined by
12 the department and subject to available funds.

13 Additionally, the bill requires a school district to provide
14 kindergarten through grade 12 teachers with ongoing coaching
15 support to aid in the delivery of reading interventions. The support
16 is required to include: (1) on-site teacher training on evidence-based
17 reading instruction and data-based decision making; (2) example
18 lessons; (3) classroom observance during the delivery of reading
19 interventions; and (4) immediate feedback for improving reading
20 instruction, if applicable. A literacy coach can conduct this
21 training, provided the training does not conflict with the other job
22 responsibilities of the teaching staff member. Within the limit of
23 available funds, the literacy coach is eligible for a stipend from the
24 department for any school year in which the literacy coach conducts
25 the training.

26 The training and coaching established by this bill are to count
27 towards the current professional development requirement on
28 reading disabilities for certain public school teaching staff
29 members.

30 The bill defines the “science of reading” as evidence-based
31 reading instruction practices that address the acquisition of
32 language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and
33 spelling, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension
34 that can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students.
35 “Reading deficiency” is defined as scoring below grade level or
36 being determined to be at risk of scoring below grade level on a
37 screening assessment, diagnostic assessment, standardized
38 summative assessment, or progress monitoring. “Reading
39 intervention” is defined as an evidence-based strategy frequently
40 used to remediate reading deficiencies that include, but are not
41 limited to, individual instruction, tutoring, or mentoring that target
42 specific reading skills and abilities.