

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2023 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/HB 7039 — Student Outcomes

by Education and Employment Committee; PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee; Education Quality Subcommittee; and Rep. Trabulsky and others (SB 1424 by Senator Calatayud)

The bill aims to improve student outcomes by providing specific strategies to support students who are struggling in literacy and mathematics from prekindergarten through grade 5.

The bill modifies supports to improve student literacy. Specifically, the bill directs the statewide focus for literacy instruction in all public schools to employ the science of reading and requires phonics instruction as the primary instructional strategy for word reading, rather than the three-cueing model. The bill also:

- Provides \$8 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education (DOE) to implement the provisions of the bill.
- Provides \$150 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the DOE to assist school districts in implementing the provisions of the bill, which requires a needs assessment to convert from a three-cueing model of reading instruction.
- Authorizes funds from the supplemental academic instruction allocation to be used for evidence-based mathematics interventions extending outside of the school day.
- Authorizes reading interventions funded through the evidence-based reading allocation to be applied before, during, and after the school day.
- Requires the school district reading plan include the assignment of highly effective teachers and reading coaches in kindergarten through grade 2.
- Requires a school charter to include information on the mathematics curriculum and supports for students struggling in mathematics.
- Requires curricula for professional educator preparation to be based on the science of reading and requires the district professional development certification program to include scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies grounded in the science of reading.
- Requires in-service points for reading instruction included in the process for renewal of professional certificates be grounded in the science of reading, and services by independent entities contracted by school districts for professional development of foundational skills for reading be grounded in the science of reading.
- Requires instructional materials for foundational reading skills to be based on the science of reading with primary focus on phonics instruction.

The bill addresses student literacy beginning in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program. The bill:

- Requires that the performance standards for the VPK program address emergent literacy skills that are grounded in the science of reading and include foundational background knowledge to correlate with the content students will encounter in grades K-12.
- Requires a VPK provider's curriculum to develop student background knowledge through a content-rich and sequential knowledge-building early literacy curriculum.

The bill also modifies the New Worlds Reading Initiative. The bill requires the administrator of the initiative, in conjunction with the Just Read, Florida! Office, to develop an online repository of digital science of reading materials and resources. The bill also renames the New World Reading Scholarship Accounts to the New World Scholarship Accounts and extends the program to include:

- Free books for prekindergarten students meeting certain criteria.
- Supports for students with a deficiency in mathematics or having demonstrated characteristics of dyscalculia.

The bill adds to provisions relating to public school student progression for students with substantial deficiencies in reading or that have characteristics of dyslexia, to include students with substantial deficiencies in mathematics and characteristics of dyscalculia. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires a student with a substantial mathematics deficiency to be covered by a federally required student plan to address the deficiency.
- Requires certain elements related to an identified reading or mathematics deficiency to be included in an individualized progress monitoring plan, which requires strategies to be provided to parents to support the student.
- Requires the DOE to provide vetted and state-approved reading and intervention programs.
- Authorizes district school boards to allocate remedial and supplementary instructional resources for deficiencies in mathematics as well as in reading.
- Requires timely notification to parents of students with deficiencies in mathematics as well as reading.
- Adds requirements for intensive interventions for retained third grade students and previously retained third grade students.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 111-0