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HOUSE BILL 2419

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State of Washington

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By Representatives Johnson, Talcott, Sterk, Sump, Mulliken, Lambert, Thompson, Smith, McCune, Benson, Cooke, O'Brien and Backlund

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1 AN ACT Relating to reading improvement; amending RCW 28A.165.050;  
2 adding new sections to chapter 28A.165 RCW; creating a new section;  
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 definitions in this section apply  
6 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

7 (1) "Phonemic awareness instruction" means teaching awareness of  
8 letter sounds, and segmenting and blending phonemes, syllables, and  
9 words in a sequential progression.

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

1 (3) "Decodable text" means connected text containing a high  
2 percentage of words that provide practice on the letter-sound  
3 correspondences and letter combinations previously taught.

4 (4) "Diagnosis of a student's ability to decode" means regularly  
5 assessing the student's mastery of word recognition, fluency and  
6 automaticity, and word analysis in order to plan future instructional  
7 activities.

8 (5) "Explicit and systematic instruction in spelling" means  
9 teaching a logical scope and sequence of word knowledge, orthographic  
10 patterns, syllabication, and frequently used words connected to the  
11 sequence used in reading and writing instruction.

12 (6) "Vocabulary instruction" means teaching word meanings.

13 (7) "Instruction in reading comprehension skills" means explicit,  
14 systematic teaching of vocabulary development, text structure, and  
15 syntactic patterns, including but not limited to, strategies for higher  
16 order thinking skills such as interpretation, summarization,  
17 prediction, clarification, and question generation.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Beginning June 30, 1998, and every  
19 September 30th thereafter, all schools in which less than one-quarter  
20 of all students tested on the fourth grade assessment in reading met  
21 the state-wide standard, or in schools where average performance on the  
22 reading component of the state-wide standardized test required in RCW  
23 28A.230.190 remained in the bottom quartile for the previous three  
24 years, shall develop a school-wide improvement plan that focuses on the  
25 improvement of reading performance throughout the school. As the  
26 primary element of the improvement plan, the school shall implement a  
27 beginning reading-language arts program for use in kindergarten through  
28 second grade that will:

29 (a) Provide numerous daily opportunities for teachers in  
30 kindergarten and first grade to read to students from a variety of  
31 printed materials including rich literature;

32 (b) Provide explicit and sequential instruction in phonemic  
33 awareness for all students in kindergarten and first grade;

34 (c) Provide explicit systematic decoding instruction and practice  
35 in using those skills in decodable text materials;

36 (d) Require diagnosis of a student's ability to decode in first and  
37 second grade;

1 (e) Provide explicit and systematic instruction in spelling, and  
2 provide students in kindergarten and first grade with an opportunity to  
3 use student-invented spelling in all writing activities;

4 (f) Provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension skills  
5 and opportunities for students to apply them; and

6 (g) Provide students with structured assistance in learning to  
7 write with ample opportunities to engage in writing activities.

8 (2) To the fullest extent possible, school districts shall redirect  
9 funding available to schools identified under this section from the  
10 learning assistance program, Title I, and other available resources to  
11 begin implementation of the reading-language arts programs required of  
12 this section. Funds expended for teacher training in reading  
13 instruction in schools identified under this section may only be  
14 expended for training in accordance with section 3 of this act.

15 (3) Schools identified under this section shall notify the parent  
16 or guardian of each student enrolled in the school that the school has  
17 been identified under this section and the level of performance that  
18 identified them as such. The notification shall include the details of  
19 the school's reading improvement plan required in this section.  
20 Schools identified under this section for more than one year shall  
21 annually report their progress in improving student performance to the  
22 parent or guardian of each student enrolled in the school.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The state board of education shall  
24 develop a list of providers of professional development in beginning  
25 reading instruction. Eligible providers must provide training in the  
26 following skills necessary to teach beginning readers:

27 (a) Phonemic awareness strategies;

28 (b) Explicit systematic decoding instruction and how to assess a  
29 student's ability to decode;

30 (c) Explicit spelling and vocabulary instruction;

31 (d) Explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies; and

32 (e) Research findings on the skills needed by beginning and  
33 proficient readers, and how beginning reading skills are acquired.

34 (2) Any person or public, private, or private nonprofit entity that  
35 seeks to be placed on the list of providers of professional development  
36 in beginning reading instruction that may be hired by a school district  
37 or school pursuant to sections 2 through 6 of this act, shall submit an  
38 application to the state board that includes the curricula of the

1 program to provide the training described in subsection (1) of this  
2 section. The state board shall approve or disapprove all applications  
3 within forty-five working days of receipt of the application. The  
4 board shall state the reasons for disapproving any application received  
5 pursuant to this section. Any decision of the board shall be based  
6 solely on the ability of the training to meet the requirements of this  
7 section. The state board may not include professional development  
8 providers that promote reading strategies that focus on the use of  
9 context or syntax as beginning reading strategies.

10 (3) The board shall maintain, update annually, and make available  
11 to schools and school districts through print and electronic media the  
12 list of approved providers, and shall distribute the list separately to  
13 each educational service district and to each school identified under  
14 section 2 of this act.

15 (4) The board may audit and study the effectiveness of any program  
16 of professional development provided pursuant to this section.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The legislature recognizes the need for  
18 professional development in beginning reading skills in order to  
19 facilitate increased student performance. It is the intent of the  
20 legislature to provide all certificated instructional staff providing  
21 direct instructional services to students in kindergarten through  
22 second grade with an opportunity to receive professional development in  
23 reading strategies that have proven reliable and replicable results in  
24 teaching beginning reading skills. To the extent funds are  
25 appropriated, all districts shall provide all interested certificated  
26 instructional staff providing direct instructional services to students  
27 in kindergarten through second grade professional development  
28 opportunities in the following beginning reading skills:

- 29 (a) Phonemic awareness strategies;  
30 (b) Explicit and systematic decoding instruction and how to assess  
31 a student's ability to decode;  
32 (c) Explicit spelling and vocabulary instruction;  
33 (d) Explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies; and  
34 (e) Research findings on the skills needed by beginning and  
35 proficient readers, and how beginning reading skills are acquired.

36 (2) All schools identified in section 2 of this act shall provide  
37 professional development in beginning reading instruction in accordance

1 with this section and shall have priority for funds allocated for this  
2 purpose.

3 (3) Beginning July 31, 1998, each educational service district  
4 shall align all existing, scheduled, and future professional  
5 development opportunities in beginning reading instruction with the  
6 requirements of subsection (1) of this section. The state board of  
7 education shall review the curriculum the educational service district  
8 intends to use for professional development in beginning reading  
9 instruction to ensure the curriculum meets the requirements of  
10 subsection (1) of this section. No professional development  
11 opportunities in beginning reading instruction may be conducted by the  
12 educational service district until the state board approves the  
13 intended curriculum.

14 (4) Funds expended in accordance with this section must be expended  
15 only for providers of professional development approved by the state  
16 board of education pursuant to section 3 of this act and may not be  
17 used for staff development, intervention, or remediation programs.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The center for the improvement of reading  
19 instruction is established within the office of the superintendent of  
20 public instruction. The center shall serve as a resource for school  
21 districts and schools to provide teachers and other professionals with  
22 information about the important body of knowledge and techniques  
23 available to enable them to help children become successful readers.

24 By July 30, 1998, the center shall develop a list of commercially  
25 published beginning reading or language arts programs that have been  
26 validated by experimental or quasi-experimental research and that  
27 includes a brief bibliography of the research used to validate the  
28 program. By August 30, 1998, the center shall also develop a list of  
29 beginning reading programs with primary instructional components that  
30 require the use of all of the following strategies: Phonemic  
31 awareness; explicit, systematic instruction in decoding; use of  
32 decodable text to support instruction; and explicit instruction in  
33 reading comprehension strategies. The list shall be transmitted to  
34 each educational service district and school district by September 1st  
35 of each year and shall be maintained and updated quarterly by the  
36 center.

37 Programs, instructional strategies, and professional development  
38 opportunities offered or promoted by the center or the office of the

1 superintendent of public instruction for beginning reading instruction,  
2 supported wholly or in part by state general funds, must emphasize the  
3 use of phonemic awareness; explicit, systematic instruction in  
4 decoding; and use of decodable text to support instruction as the  
5 primary components of beginning reading instruction, and may not  
6 promote the use of context or syntax as word identification strategies  
7 for beginning readers.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** By July 31, 1998, each educational service  
9 district shall establish a beginning reading resource center within the  
10 district. The center may assist schools and school districts within  
11 its service area in matching local needs with beginning reading  
12 programs, providing professional development opportunities in  
13 accordance with section 4 of this act, and facilitating discussions  
14 among teachers to promote best practices for beginning reading  
15 instruction. At the request of schools identified under section 2 of  
16 this act, the center shall provide assistance in selecting or  
17 implementing beginning reading programs in accordance with section 2 of  
18 this act, identifying professional development opportunities in  
19 accordance with section 4 of this act, and identifying peer educators  
20 within the district interested in assisting these schools in the  
21 development and implementation of the beginning reading improvement  
22 plan required in section 2 of this act.

23 By July 31, 1999, and each July 31st thereafter, each educational  
24 service district shall survey all schools identified under section 2 of  
25 this act to identify the beginning reading instruction programs chosen  
26 by the school to implement its beginning reading improvement plan. The  
27 survey must also identify peer educators within each of these schools  
28 willing to assist other schools in similar program adoptions. The  
29 survey results shall be transmitted to each school within the  
30 educational service district and to the office of the superintendent of  
31 public instruction by September 1, 1999, and each September 1st  
32 thereafter.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) Before September 30, 1998, the office of  
34 the superintendent of public instruction shall establish reading  
35 leadership and accountability institutes to improve student achievement  
36 in beginning reading skills. School district board of directors of  
37 each school district, school administrators, and teachers who have been

1 identified by the school district board of directors as having  
2 demonstrated leadership in reading instruction in the school district  
3 shall be invited to attend the institutes. The institutes will provide  
4 professional development and supporting materials to: Evaluate  
5 beginning reading curriculum and instructional weaknesses in schools to  
6 ensure that the curriculum requires explicit instruction in phonemic  
7 awareness, explicit systematic instruction in decoding skills,  
8 diagnosis of a student's ability to decode, explicit and systematic  
9 instruction in spelling, vocabulary instruction, and explicit  
10 instruction in reading comprehension skills, research on how children  
11 learn to read, diagnosis of reading deficiencies, and the movement of  
12 students from beginning reading skills to independent reading of rich  
13 literature.

14 (2) This section expires December 31, 1998.

15 **Sec. 8.** RCW 28A.165.050 and 1987 c 478 s 5 are each amended to  
16 read as follows:

17 Identification of participating students for an approved program of  
18 learning assistance shall be determined in each district through the  
19 implementation of the findings of the district's needs assessment and  
20 through placement testing. Before placing any student in kindergarten  
21 through second grade in the learning assistance program based on the  
22 student's level of phonemic awareness or inability to read in  
23 accordance with district standards for the student's grade, the student  
24 must first receive six months of direct and explicit instruction in  
25 phonemic awareness, direct, systematic, and explicit instruction in  
26 decoding skills, sound-symbol relationships, and word attack skills.  
27 School districts are encouraged to coordinate the use of funds from  
28 federal, state, and local sources in serving students who are below  
29 grade level in basic skills, and to make efficient use of these  
30 resources in meeting the needs of students with the greatest academic  
31 deficits.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, all  
33 schools identified under section 2 of this act that improve student  
34 performance on the fourth grade assessment such that forty percent of  
35 their students are meeting the state-wide standard shall be allowed to  
36 retain all funds received through the learning assistance program that  
37 they would otherwise lose due to increased student performance.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 10.**    Beginning November 1, 1998, and each  
2 November 1st thereafter, the office of the superintendent of public  
3 instruction shall report to the legislature the names of each school  
4 identified under section 2 of this act. The report shall include the  
5 level of performance that identified the school; the number of years  
6 the school has been unable to meet the performance criteria of section  
7 2 of this act; and a brief description of the school improvement plan  
8 developed in accordance with section 2 of this act.

9        Beginning November 1, 1999, the report shall also include the  
10 results of the surveys completed in accordance with section 6 of this  
11 act.

12        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 11.**    Sections 1 through 6, 9, and 10 of this act  
13 are each added to chapter 28A.165 RCW.

14        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 12.**    Sections 1 through 6 and 9 of this act  
15 expire July 30, 2005.

16        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 13.**    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.

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