

Committee on Education

CS/CS/HB 3 — Home Book Delivery for Elementary Students

by Education and Employment Committee; PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee; and Rep. Trabulsy and others

The bill establishes the New Worlds Reading Initiative to improve literacy skills and instill a love of reading by providing high-quality free books to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who are reading below grade level. The bill provides for tax credit contributions to the initiative. Specifically, the bill requires:

- The Department of Education (DOE) to:
 - o Designate a state-level administrator with an academic innovation institution that has extensive specified early literacy experience, to implement the initiative.
 - o On the DOE website, publish information about the initiative, and, annually starting September 30, 2022, report on participating student achievement and learning gains.
- The state-level administrator to:
 - o Develop, in consultation with Just Read, Florida!, a diverse selection of high quality books for each grade level.
 - o Distribute books through the mail at no cost to students either directly or through an agreement with a book distribution company.
 - o Assist school districts and any partnering nonprofit organizations with developing public awareness of the initiative.
 - o Maintain a clearinghouse for information on national, state, and local nonprofit organizations that support efforts to improve literacy and provide books to children.
 - o Develop training materials for parents of students in the initiative.
 - o Submit an annual financial report to the DOE which includes the number of students and households served.
 - o Expend eligible contributions received only for the purchase and delivery of books, and an administrative fee not to exceed two percent of total eligible contributions.
- School districts to:
 - o Notify the parent of a student with a substantial reading deficiency or who scored below a level 3 on the statewide English Language Arts Assessment that the student is eligible to receive books at no cost through the New Worlds Reading Initiative.
 - o Coordinate with the administrator to initiate monthly book delivery during the school year, beginning no later than December 31 during the 2021-2022 school year, and no later than October in subsequent years. A student remains in the initiative until he or she is promoted to sixth grade or his or her parent opts out, whichever is earlier.
 - o Partner with local nonprofit organizations to raise awareness of the initiative, including information on eligibility and video training modules, the student handbook, the read-at-home plan provided to parents of students identified with a substantial reading deficiency, and local awareness events.
- The Department of Revenue to administer the tax credit provisions of the initiative.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 114-0