

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2021 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Education

CS/HB 7011 — Student Literacy

by Education and Employment Committee; Early Learning and Elementary Education Subcommittee; and Rep. Aloupis and others (SB 1898 by Senators Rodriguez and Harrell)

The bill (Chapter 2021-9, L.O.F.) includes requirements to identify student deficiencies in literacy and intervene as early as prekindergarten, support students in transitioning to kindergarten, and monitor student progress.

The bill establishes a coordinated screening and progress monitoring system, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, for students enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program and students enrolled in public schools in kindergarten through grade 8. The bill requires the results to be used to rate the performance of VPK providers instead of the statewide kindergarten screener, which is administered at the beginning of the kindergarten school year. The results are required to inform instruction and identify symptoms of dyslexia and must be provided to teachers and parents.

The bill also requires:

- Participants who enter specified teacher preparation programs and institutes in the 2022-2023 school year, for coverage areas that include reading instruction or intervention for any students in kindergarten through grade 6, to complete all of the competencies for a reading endorsement, including the practicum, prior to graduation or completion of the program. The bill also requires personnel who supervise such students to hold a certificate or endorsement in reading.
- The Department of Education (DOE) to review the competencies for the reading endorsement and provide a new pathway for teachers to achieve the reading endorsement.
- VPK instructors to initially take three emergent literacy training courses and thereafter take an emergent literacy training course every five years.
- The Just Read, Florida! Office (JRFO) to:
 - Identify instructional materials that implement evidence-based reading practices. The bill streamlines the process by which school districts may adopt identified and approved instructional materials.
 - Provide training to reading coaches and school administrators on evidence-based reading strategies.
 - Work with the Office of Early Learning in the development of emergent literacy training courses, which must be consistent with evidence-based reading instructional and intervention programs.
- Early learning coalitions to adopt best-practices plans for transitioning prekindergarten students into kindergarten.
- The Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) Program established in the bill to provide literacy supports statewide through at least 20 regional literacy support teams.
- The DOE to compile resources for each school district to incorporate into read-at-home plans to provide to parents of students with a reading deficiency.

- A tutoring program established in the bill to afford high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to satisfy community service requirements and earn a designation as a New Worlds Scholar by providing 75 verified tutoring hours to students with a substantial deficiency in reading in kindergarten through grade 3.
- A renamed “evidence-based reading instruction allocation” that provides funds for comprehensive reading instruction to also include VPK completers who are at risk of being identified as having a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2021.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 117-0