

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 520
 SPONSOR: Senator Miller
 SUBJECT: Reading/Kindergarten-Grade 4
 DATE: February 27, 2001 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill requires each public elementary school to develop and implement a reading program that includes daily reading and literacy in kindergarten through grade 4. The Department of Education must provide technical support to any public school that requests assistance to implement this requirement.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001.

This bill creates an unnumbered section of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The 1999 Legislature enacted ch. 99-398, L.O.F., an education accountability law, popularly known as "A+". The law sought to end social promotion and to set the expectation that all students will learn to read. Under s. 232.245, F.S., if a student does not meet expected levels of performance in reading, writing, science, and mathematics, the school must develop an academic improvement plan in cooperation with the student's parents. In grades 1, 2, and 3, a student who has significant problems in reading must be given intensive reading instruction. If the student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of fourth grade, and if the student scores below specified level for achievement in reading, the student must be retained.

In 2000, almost one-third of Florida's fourth grade students scored at performance Level I on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), a level that indicates little success with the Sunshine State Standards. Students must be able to read well in the early grades in order to succeed with the Sunshine State Standards.

To improve students' reading, the Department of Education has undertaken a reading initiative known as FLARE (Family Literacy and Reading Excellence). The state receives \$26 million in federal funds to implement FLARE. In March 1999, the Commissioner of Education formed Florida's Reading and Family Literacy Partnership to provide leadership and statewide visibility for the reading initiative. The reading initiative informs teachers of important research findings, resources, and teaching strategies. Even though Florida's standards and the reading initiative might imply that daily reading instruction would take place in the early grades of elementary school, there is no statutory requirement for such daily instruction.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill requires each public elementary school to develop and implement a reading program that includes daily reading and literacy in kindergarten through grade 4. The amount of daily time to be spent on reading and literacy activities will be locally determined. The Department of Education must provide technical support to any public school that requests assistance to implement this requirement.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None. The Department of Education does not project a cost for this requirement because all elementary schools are likely requiring daily reading instruction under current funding.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
