



409158

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RS	.	
04/20/2021	.	
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The Committee on Appropriations (Burgess) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause  
and insert:

Section 1. The Legislature finds that the ability to read is fundamental to a productive, fulfilling, culturally rewarding, and civically engaged life. Furthermore, a literacy-rich home environment helps develop reading and writing skills in young learners to prepare them for future academic and career success. Research shows that students who read more perform



11 better academically than those who do not. Unfortunately,  
12 statistics show students who have fewer books and literacy-based  
13 interactions at home than their peers have lower educational  
14 attainment and lifetime income-earning potential. Programs that  
15 deliver books directly to students' homes and support engagement  
16 in reading enable parents to develop their child's reading  
17 skills and enjoyment of reading and foster improved outcomes for  
18 students.

19 Section 2. Section 1003.485, Florida Statutes, is created  
20 to read:

21 1003.485 The New Worlds Reading Initiative.-

22 (1) The New Worlds Reading Initiative is established under  
23 the Department of Education to improve literacy skills and  
24 instill a love of reading by providing high-quality, free books  
25 to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who are reading  
26 below grade level.

27 (2) DEFINITIONS.-As used in this section, the term:

28 (a) "Administrator" means the Department of Education or a  
29 third-party entity contracted to administer the initiative.

30 (b) "Initiative" means the New Worlds Reading Initiative.

31 (3) The administrator shall:

32 (a) Develop, in consultation with the Just Read, Florida!  
33 Office under s. 1001.215, a selection of high-quality books  
34 encompassing diverse subjects and genres for each grade level to  
35 be mailed to students in the initiative.

36 (b) Facilitate the distribution of books as provided in  
37 paragraph (5) (c) either directly or through an agreement with a  
38 book distribution company.

39 (c) Assist local implementation of the initiative by:



40 1. Providing assistance to local communities to raise  
41 awareness of the initiative, including through the use of  
42 partnerships between public libraries and school districts to  
43 implement events such as family library nights, library card  
44 drives, summer access and activities, and other activities  
45 designed to increase family engagement and instill a love of  
46 reading in students.

47 2. Developing and providing marketing materials to school  
48 districts and any partnering nonprofit organizations to assist  
49 with public awareness campaigns.

50 (d) Maintain a clearinghouse for information on national,  
51 state, and local nonprofit organizations that support efforts to  
52 provide books to children.

53 (e) Develop training materials for parents of students in  
54 the initiative, including brief video training modules, which  
55 engage families in reading and assist with improving student  
56 literacy skills. The administrator shall periodically send, via  
57 text message and e-mail, tips for facilitating reading at home  
58 and hyperlinks to the video training modules.

59

60 Beginning September 30, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
61 Department of Education shall report to the President of the  
62 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the  
63 Commissioner of Education the number of students participating  
64 in the initiative in each school district and the academic  
65 achievement and learning gains, as applicable, of participating  
66 students based on data provided by school districts as permitted  
67 under s. 1002.22. The department shall establish a date by which  
68 each school district must annually provide the data necessary to



69 complete the report.

70 (4) Each school district shall participate in the  
71 initiative by partnering with local nonprofit organizations,  
72 raising awareness of the initiative using marketing materials  
73 developed by the administrator, coordinating book delivery, and  
74 identifying students and notifying parents pursuant to  
75 subsection (5).

76 (5) (a) A student in kindergarten through grade 5 must be  
77 provided books through the initiative if the student has a  
78 substantial reading deficiency identified under s. 1008.25(5) (a)  
79 or scored below a Level 3 on the preceding year's statewide,  
80 standardized English Language Arts assessment under s. 1008.22.

81 (b) Each school district shall notify the parent of a  
82 student who meets the criteria under paragraph (a) that the  
83 student is eligible to receive books at no cost through the New  
84 Worlds Reading Initiative and provide the parent with the  
85 application form developed by the administrator, which must  
86 allow for the selection of specific book topics or genres for  
87 the student.

88 (c) Once an eligible student is identified, the school  
89 district shall coordinate with the administrator to initiate  
90 book delivery on a monthly basis during the school year, which  
91 must begin no later than October and continue through at least  
92 June.

93 (d) At the beginning of each school year, students must be  
94 provided options for specific book topics or genres in order to  
95 maximize student interest in reading.

96 (e) A student's eligibility for the initiative continues  
97 until promotion to grade 6 or until the student's parent opts



98 out of the initiative.

99 (6) School districts and partnering nonprofit organizations  
100 shall raise awareness of the initiative, including information  
101 on eligibility and video training modules under paragraph  
102 (3) (e), through, at least, the following:

103 (a) The student handbook and the read-at-home plan under s.  
104 1008.25 (5) (c).

105 (b) A parent or curriculum night or separate initiative  
106 awareness event at each elementary school.

107 (c) Partnering with the county library to host awareness  
108 events, which should coincide with other initiatives such as  
109 library card drives and other family engagement programming.

110 (7) Books must be provided under this section at no cost to  
111 families.

112 (8) If the department contracts with a third-party entity  
113 to act as administrator, the entity must be capable of  
114 coordinating statewide marketing, dissemination of books, and  
115 development of video training modules, as well as completing all  
116 other duties of the administrator.

117 Section 3. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section  
118 1008.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

119 1008.25 Public school student progression; student support;  
120 reporting requirements.—

121 (5) READING DEFICIENCY AND PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.—

122 (c) The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial  
123 deficiency in reading, as described in paragraph (a), must be  
124 notified in writing of the following:

125 1. That his or her child has been identified as having a  
126 substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and



127 explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact  
128 nature of the student's difficulty in learning and lack of  
129 achievement in reading.

130 2. A description of the current services that are provided  
131 to the child.

132 3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions  
133 and supports that will be provided to the child that are  
134 designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.

135 4. That if the child's reading deficiency is not remediated  
136 by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained unless he or  
137 she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause.

138 5. Strategies, including multisensory strategies, through a  
139 read-at-home plan the parent can use in helping his or her child  
140 succeed in reading.

141 6. That the statewide, standardized English Language Arts  
142 assessment is not the sole determiner of promotion and that  
143 additional evaluations, portfolio reviews, and assessments are  
144 available to the child to assist parents and the school district  
145 in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and  
146 ready for grade promotion.

147 7. The district's specific criteria and policies for a  
148 portfolio as provided in subparagraph (6)(b)4. and the evidence  
149 required for a student to demonstrate mastery of Florida's  
150 academic standards for English Language Arts. A parent of a  
151 student in grade 3 who is identified anytime during the year as  
152 being at risk of retention may request that the school  
153 immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio.

154 8. The district's specific criteria and policies for  
155 midyear promotion. Midyear promotion means promotion of a



156 retained student at any time during the year of retention once  
157 the student has demonstrated ability to read at grade level.

158 9. Information about the student's eligibility for the New  
159 Worlds Reading Initiative under s. 1003.485 and information on  
160 parent training modules and other reading engagement resources  
161 available through the initiative.

162 Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

163  
164 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

165 And the title is amended as follows:

166 Delete everything before the enacting clause  
167 and insert:

168 A bill to be entitled  
169 An act relating to literacy improvement; providing  
170 legislative findings; creating s. 1003.485, F.S.;  
171 establishing the New Worlds Reading Initiative under  
172 the Department of Education; defining terms; providing  
173 duties of the administrator; requiring the  
174 administrator, in consultation with a specified  
175 entity, to develop a selection of books; requiring the  
176 administrator to facilitate distribution of books;  
177 requiring the administrator to assist with local  
178 implementation of the initiative; requiring the  
179 administrator to maintain a clearinghouse for  
180 specified information; requiring the administrator to  
181 develop and disseminate certain training materials by  
182 specified means; establishing reporting requirements;  
183 establishing student eligibility requirements;  
184 requiring school districts to partner with certain



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185 entities; requiring school districts to identify  
186 eligible students and notify the students' parents;  
187 requiring school districts to coordinate with the  
188 administrator to initiate book delivery; providing  
189 requirements for book delivery; requiring that  
190 students be offered certain options relating to books;  
191 specifying when student eligibility ends; requiring  
192 school districts to raise awareness of the initiative;  
193 requiring that books be delivered at no cost to  
194 families; authorizing the Department of Education to  
195 contract with a third-party entity; providing  
196 requirements for such third-party entity; amending s.  
197 1008.25, F.S.; requiring that a certain notification  
198 include information about the initiative; providing an  
199 effective date.