



SPONSOR: Sen. Sturgeon & Sen. S. McBride & Rep. K. Williams &
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Sens. Bonini, Hansen, Lockman, Mantzavinos, Sokola,
Townsend, Walsh; Reps. Baumbach, Morrison

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 4

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO EVIDENCE-BASED READING CURRICULA.

1 WHEREAS, reading is the foundation for learning and lifelong success; and
2 WHEREAS, only 36% of Delaware’s fourth graders scored proficient or advanced on the National Assessment of
3 Educational Progress, placing the State below the national average; and
4 WHEREAS, based on 2019 data, in Delaware, 84% of Black students were not proficient in reading by 4th grade,
5 78% of Hispanic students were not proficient in reading by fourth grade, and 83% of students who were eligible for free or
6 reduced lunch were not proficient in reading by fourth grade; and
7 WHEREAS, Delaware’s economically-disadvantaged students are performing below the national average; and
8 WHEREAS, since 2002, Delaware’s reading scores have dropped from sixth in the nation to thirty-seventh; and
9 WHEREAS, only 51% of third graders score at or above grade level in English Language Arts on Delaware’s state
10 assessment, with gaps in achievement among racial and socioeconomic subgroups; and
11 WHEREAS, advances in understanding how children learn to read has produced a body of research by linguists,
12 psychologists, and cognitive scientists known as the “science of reading”; and
13 WHEREAS, the science of reading reflects a conclusion that effective early reading instruction has 6 essential
14 components: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension, and oral language; and
15 WHEREAS, research shows that children who do not achieve sound reading skills at an early age fall behind their
16 peers and that the gap between proficient readers and those who struggle continues to widen over time; and
17 WHEREAS, proficient third grade readers are nearly 5 times more likely to graduate from high school than their
18 struggling peers; and
19 WHEREAS, in the last decade, states that have adopted science of reading policy standards have seen dramatic
20 gains in reading achievement; and
21 WHEREAS, there are no State standards in Delaware for instructional materials based on the science of reading or
22 requirements that State funds must be used on these materials; and

23 WHEREAS, educators deserve support in selecting and implementing high-quality, research-based instructional
24 materials based on the science of reading.

25 NOW, THEREFORE:

26 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

27 Section 1. Amend Chapter 41, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and
28 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

29 § 4144. Evidence-based reading curricula.

30 (a)(1) The Department of Education (Department) shall maintain a list of evidence-based, reading instruction
31 curricula for grades kindergarten through 3. A curriculum on this list must meet all of the following requirements:

32 a. Align with the essential components of evidence-based reading instruction listed under § 1280(c)(3) of
33 this title.

34 b. Include a logical scope and sequence for skill instruction.

35 c. Include or support the use of high-quality instructional materials.

36 (2) The Department shall publish the current list of curricula under paragraph (a)(1) of this section annually,
37 by December 1.

38 (b) If a school district or charter school serves students in 1 or more of the grades kindergarten through 3, the
39 school district or charter school must do all of the following before the beginning of the 2027 – 2028 school year:

40 (1) Adopt a reading instruction curriculum from the list created under subsection (a)(1) of this section, for
41 students served in grades kindergarten through 3.

42 (2) Approve competency-based professional development for educators providing reading instruction. This
43 professional development must be completed during the contractual day and must be high-quality professional learning
44 aligned with the essential components of evidence-based reading instruction, including any of the following:

45 a. Professional learning associated with the curriculum adopted under paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

46 b. Attainment of micro-credentials.

47 (3) Identify a school-based supervisory position responsible for assisting with the implementation of the
48 curricula adopted under paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

49 (4) Demonstrate that all educators responsible for reading instruction or coaching have completed approved
50 professional development under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, including all educators certified as any of the
51 following:

52 a. Elementary teacher.

53 b. School reading specialist.

54 c. Reading interventionist.

55 d. Special education teacher of students with disabilities.

56 e. Literary coordinator.

57 (c) Beginning October 31, 2023, each school district and charter school shall annually report all of the following to
58 the Department:

59 (1) The curricula adopted under this section.

60 (2) The individuals identified under paragraph (b)(3) of this section and each individual's responsibilities for
61 approving and providing professional development required under paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(4) of this section.

62 (3) How the school district or charter school will ensure that educators comply with the professional
63 development required under paragraph (b)(4) of this section.

64 (d)(1) Beginning December 31, 2023, the Department shall produce an annual report that provides all of the
65 following:

66 a. A list of the curricula adopted under paragraph (a)(1) of this section and the number of schools that
67 have adopted each curriculum listed.

68 b. The number of educators who have received each type of professional development provided under
69 paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

70 c. The percentage of the educators required to receive professional development under paragraph (b)(4) of
71 this section that have completed professional development required under paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

72 (2) The Department shall send the report required under this subsection to the President Pro Tempore of the
73 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the members of the House and Senate Education Committees,
74 the Governor, State Board of Education, P-20 Council, Professional Standards Board, the Director and the Librarian of
75 the Division of Research of Legislative Council, and the Delaware Public Archives.

76 Section 2. Amend Chapter 41, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and
77 insertions as shown by underline as follows and redesignating accordingly:

78 § 4144. Evidence-based reading curricula.

79 (d)(2) The report required under paragraph (d)(1) of this section may be consolidated with the report required
80 under § 158 of this title and submitted as a single report.

81 Section 3. If House Bill No. 304 is enacted into law before January 1, 2023, Section 2 of this Act takes effect
82 January 1, 2023.

Section 4. If House Bill No. 304 is not enacted into law, Section 2 of this Act does not take effect.

SYNOPSIS

This Act requires the Department of Education (“Department”) to maintain and publish a list of evidence-based, reading instruction curricula for grades kindergarten through 3. Each curriculum on this list must align with the essential components of literacy, known as the “science of reading” and use high-quality instructional materials.

This Act also requires that by the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, school districts and charter schools serving students in grades kindergarten through 3 do all of the following:

1. Adopt a reading instruction curriculum from the Department list.
2. Demonstrate that all educators who teach reading complete professional development aligned with the essential components of evidence-based reading instruction.
3. Identify a school-based supervisory position responsible for assisting with the implementation of the adopted curriculum.

In addition, this Act requires school district and charter schools to provide an annual report to the Department regarding the implementation of these requirements and the Department must produce an annual report summarizing this information. The information required in the Department’s report may be consolidated into a single report with the requirements under § 158 of Title 14, if House Bill No. 304 is also enacted this year.

Author: Senator Sturgeon