



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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Bill Number: S. 0905 Introduced on January 9, 2024
Author: Hembree
Subject: Read to Succeed
Requestor: Senate Education
RFA Analyst(s): Bryant
Impact Date: January 22, 2024

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill amends the South Carolina Read to Succeed Act. The bill replaces references to the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and requires the department to implement a comprehensive, systematic approach to reading which will ensure that classroom teachers use scientifically-based reading instruction and interventions in certain grades.

This bill also alters certain duties and responsibilities of SCDE, the State Superintendent of Education, and local school districts relating to the Read to Succeed program. Any district failing to provide certain data to SCDE will have 10 percent of their State Aid to Classroom funding withheld until the data is provided. For reference, 10 percent of State Aid to Classroom funding for FY 2023-24 ranges from approximately \$242,000 to \$39,921,000 per district.

The expenditure impact of this bill on SCDE, the state agency schools, the local school districts is pending, contingent upon responses.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 9, 2024

State Expenditure

This bill amends the South Carolina Read to Succeed Act. The bill replaces references to the South Carolina Read to Succeed Office with SCDE and requires the department to implement a comprehensive, systematic approach to reading which will ensure that classroom teachers use scientifically-based reading instruction and interventions in prekindergarten through fifth grade.

This bill alters certain duties and responsibilities of SCDE and local school districts relating to the Read to Succeed program. Districts must provide SCDE with data relating to the yearly success rate of summer reading camps, including the number of third graders promoted using a good cause exemption and the number of first and second graders who are projected to score Does Not Meet and Approaches Expectations or at the lowest levels of the statewide summative reading assessment. Districts that do not provide these reports are ineligible to receive state funding for summer reading camps for the following fiscal year but must continue to operate the camps as required under the Read to Succeed Act.

The bill requires SCDE to develop and implement a state reading proficiency plan, which must be approved by the State Board of Education each year. The plan must be based on research and evidence-based practices aligned to the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills. Each district must also prepare an annual reading proficiency plan for prekindergarten through fifth grade. Additionally, each school serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade must prepare, submit to the district, and post on its website prior to the start of each year an implementation plan aligned with the district's reading proficiency plan. Schools identified by SCDE as serving students in sixth through eighth grade with 50 percent or more of its students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the statewide summative assessment must also prepare, submit, and post an implementation plan.

The bill further requires the State Superintendent of Education to ensure that every student entering publicly funded prekindergarten and kindergarten be administered a readiness assessment approved by the board within the first thirty days of school. The board must approve no more than five universal screeners for selection and use by districts for kindergarten through fifth grade. An approved universal screener must provide screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress in reading, measure foundational literacy skills, identify students who have a reading deficiency, and meet the criteria of a nationally normed formative assessment. Districts must administer a universal screener three times per school year, and after each administration, must notify a parent or guardian regarding the performance of their student and whether the student must be considered for retention. Districts must also create an individualized reading plan for students demonstrating literacy deficiencies and not meeting grade-level proficiencies. SCDE must provide technical support to districts and classroom teachers in administering the universal reading screeners and must require districts to annually submit data as requested. The department will reimburse districts for the cost of the screener upon receipt of the requested data as funding allows. Additionally, SCDE must annually report, on a grade level basis, data received from the districts and implement an online reporting system to monitor the effectiveness of the screeners. The reporting system must track, screen, and monitor the reading progression of students in kindergarten through third grade towards reading proficiency and include a statewide reporting mechanism to identify students with a reading deficiency, including students with characteristics of dyslexia.

This bill modifies exemptions to the mandatory retention policies for third grade students who fail to demonstrate reading proficiency to include students who successfully participate in a summer reading camp at the conclusion of third grade and demonstrate sufficient reading proficiency on the state summative assessment or a norm referenced alternative assessment approved by the board for use in summer reading camps. A district shall include in the summer reading camps kindergarten through second grade students who are not exhibiting grade level reading proficiency. Students in any other grade who are not exhibiting reading proficiency may be included in summer reading camps at the discretion of the district. Additional support in foundational literacy skills must also be provided to students in kindergarten through second grade who are not demonstrating reading proficiency until the student is meeting grade-level reading proficiency.

SCDE is also required to deliver professional development that has demonstrated success in establishing deep knowledge of foundational literacy skills grounded in the science of reading and promoting student reading achievement. Each district shall participate in the implementation of this foundational literacy skills training with the goal of state-wide implementation to include all kindergarten through third grade teachers certified in early childhood, elementary, and special education, and elementary administrators. This training must be offered at no cost to the district or teacher. Successful completion of the training will satisfy the requirements of the literacy endorsement.

The bill also amends certain requirements relating to pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. The board is authorized to approve guidelines on an annual basis for professional development, coursework, certification, and endorsement requirements for teachers of early childhood and elementary education whose responsibilities substantially relate to reading and literacy instruction, support, or interventions. The guidelines must include the issuance of appropriate credit to individuals who have completed an intensive and prolonged professional development program. Districts must work with SCDE to offer the required professional development, coursework, certification, and endorsements at no charge to teachers, and in-service hours earned through professional development must be used for the renewal of teaching certificates in all subject areas.

Additionally, beginning September 1, 2026, early childhood, elementary, and special education teacher candidates seeking their initial certification in South Carolina must earn a passing score on a test of reading instruction and intervention and data-based decision-making principles as approved by the board. The board must approve guidelines and procedures to allow in-service educators the option of utilizing the test to exempt requirements established by the board related to professional development, coursework, certification, and endorsements. As part of this process, the board must set a minimum cut score that an in-service educator must achieve to take advantage of this provision of the bill. Contingent upon funding by the General Assembly, the test will be provided at no cost to the teacher.

The bill further requires SCDE to publish annual guidelines and procedures used in evaluating all courses offered to teachers leading to the literacy teacher endorsement by August 1. Prior to August 1, 2026, and every five years thereafter, SCDE must conduct an evaluation of the approved courses. The evaluation must include survey data from prior course participants, and SCDE must remove any courses receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation from the list of approved courses and professional development.

The board must create a statewide adoption list of no more than five nationally normed formative assessments for use in kindergarten through eighth grade aligned with the state content standards in English/language arts and mathematics. Districts must ensure that all students in kindergarten through eighth grade are assessed using a state-approved formative assessment tool during the fall, winter, and spring each year. Districts must provide all formative assessment data and scores from the prior school year to SCDE, and SCDE shall compile the information and submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly by June 1 each year. Any district failing to

provide this data to the department will have 10 percent of their State Aid to Classroom funding withheld until the data is provided.

S.C. Department of Education. The expenditure impact of this bill on SCDE is pending, contingent upon a response.

State Agency Schools. The expenditure impact of this bill on the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, the School for the Deaf and Blind, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School is pending, contingent upon responses.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill alters certain duties and responsibilities of the local school districts relating to the Read to Succeed program. Districts must provide SCDE with data relating to the yearly success rate of summer reading camps. Districts that do not provide these reports are ineligible to receive state funding for summer reading camps for the following fiscal year but must continue to operate the camps as required under the Read to Succeed Act.

This bill requires each district to prepare an annual reading proficiency plan for prekindergarten through fifth grade. Additionally, each school serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade must prepare, submit to the district, and post on its website prior to the start of each year an implementation plan aligned with the district's reading proficiency plan. Schools identified by SCDE as serving students in sixth through eighth grade with 50 percent or more of its students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the statewide summative assessment must also prepare, submit, and post an implementation plan.

Districts must administer a board-approved universal screener three times per school year, and after each administration, must notify a parent or guardian regarding the performance of their student and whether the student must be considered for retention. Districts must also create an individualized reading plan for students demonstrating literacy deficiencies and not meeting grade-level proficiencies. SCDE must provide technical support to districts and classroom teachers in administering the universal reading screeners and must require districts to annually submit data as requested. The department will reimburse districts for the cost of the screener upon receipt of the requested data as funding allows.

This bill also requires districts to include in the summer reading camps kindergarten through second grade students who are not exhibiting grade level reading proficiency. Students in any other grade who are not exhibiting reading proficiency may be included in summer reading camps at the discretion of the district. Additional support in foundational literacy skills must also be provided to students in kindergarten through second grade who are not demonstrating reading proficiency until the student is meeting grade-level reading proficiency.

Each district shall participate in the implementation of the foundational literacy skills training delivered by SCDE. This training must be offered at no cost to the district or teacher. Successful completion of the training satisfies the requirements of the literacy endorsement.

The bill also amends certain requirements relating to pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. Districts must work with SCDE to offer the required professional development, coursework, certification, and endorsements at no charge to teachers, and in-service hours earned through professional development must be used for the renewal of teaching certificates in all subject areas.

Additionally, beginning September 1, 2026, early childhood, elementary, and special education teacher candidates seeking their initial certification in South Carolina must earn a passing score on a test of reading instruction and intervention and data-based decision-making principles as approved by the board. Contingent upon funding by the General Assembly, the test will be provided at no cost to the teacher.

Districts must ensure that all students in kindergarten through eighth grade are assessed using a board-approved formative assessment tool during the fall, winter, and spring each year. Districts must provide all formative assessment data and scores from the prior school year to SCDE each year, and any district failing to provide this data to the department will have 10 percent of their State Aid to Classroom funding withheld until the data is provided. For reference, 10 percent of State Aid to Classroom funding for FY 2023-24 ranges from approximately \$242,000 to \$39,921,000 per district.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the local school districts is pending, contingent upon a response.

Local Revenue

N/A



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