

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To strengthen literacy outcomes for all students, to amend the comprehensive literacy State development grant program, and to ensure Federal accountability and investment in research, teacher preparation, and evidence-based instruction aligned with the science of reading.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BANKS, and Mr. HICKENLOOPER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To strengthen literacy outcomes for all students, to amend the comprehensive literacy State development grant program, and to ensure Federal accountability and investment in research, teacher preparation, and evidence-based instruction aligned with the science of reading.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Reading Excellence
5 and Achievement for Development Act” or the “READ
6 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

2 The purposes of this Act are to—

3 (1) increase literacy proficiency among students
4 in elementary schools and secondary schools through
5 the use of science of reading-aligned instruction so
6 that students graduate from high school with the
7 reading and writing skills needed to succeed in the
8 workforce and in life;

9 (2) support State educational agencies in imple-
10 menting evidence-based policies aligned with the
11 science of reading;

12 (3) improve teacher preparation and profes-
13 sional development for school -based staff, including
14 through coaching and deliberate, dedicated profes-
15 sional collaboration, to support evidence-based lit-
16 eracy instruction;

17 (4) promote early identification and interven-
18 tion for students at risk of reading difficulties, in-
19 cluding dyslexia;

20 (5) support data-driven literacy strategies to
21 support all students and to close opportunity gaps
22 across student subgroups; and

23 (6) protect and strengthen literacy research ca-
24 pacity through comprehensive centers and the Insti-
25 tute of Education Sciences.

1 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Literacy is a cornerstone for personal
4 growth, economic opportunity, and a strong society.

5 (2) The 2024 National Assessment of Edu-
6 cational Progress reported that—

7 (A) only 35 percent of the 8th grade class
8 of 2024 were proficient in reading; and

9 (B) one-third of 8th graders performed
10 below the National Assessment of Educational
11 Progress basic level, the highest percentage ever
12 recorded.

13 (3) The National Assessment of Educational
14 Progress provides the only nationally representative,
15 independent measure of student achievement over
16 time, offering critical data on the readiness of
17 United States students to compete in the global
18 economy.

19 (4) The 2023 Program for the International
20 Assessment of Adult Competencies estimates that 28
21 percent of adults in the United States perform at
22 the lowest proficiency level of literacy, meaning they
23 have substantial difficulty with everyday reading
24 tasks.

1 (5) Illiteracy costs taxpayers \$224,000,000,000
2 annually and costs United States companies nearly
3 \$40,000,000,000 annually.

4 (6) The interdisciplinary body of research
5 known as the “science of reading” demonstrates the
6 effectiveness of structured, evidence-based literacy
7 instruction.

8 (7) Federal literacy programs under the Ele-
9 mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
10 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), the Adult Education and Fam-
11 ily Literacy Act (29 U.S.C. 3271 et seq.), and the
12 Museum and Library Services Act (20 U.S.C. 9101
13 et seq.) provide important foundations, but are in-
14 sufficient to address the scale of the crisis.

15 (8) The United States is in the midst of a na-
16 tional literacy crisis, requiring strong Federal leader-
17 ship in partnership with State educational agencies
18 and local educational agencies to ensure that all stu-
19 dents have the foundational literacy skills to thrive.

20 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

21 In this Act:

22 (1) **EVIDENCE-BASED.**—The term “evidence-
23 based” has the meaning given the term in section
24 8101(21) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
25 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801(21)), except

1 that subclause (III) of subparagraph (A)(i) of such
2 section shall not apply.

3 (2) SCIENCE OF READING.—The term “science
4 of reading” means an interdisciplinary body of re-
5 search from cognitive science, neuroscience, and edu-
6 cation that—

7 (A) demonstrates the explicit, systematic
8 use of the essential components of phonemic
9 awareness, phonic decoding, fluency, language
10 structure, oral language, vocabulary, back-
11 ground knowledge, and literacy knowledge,
12 which together lead to strong comprehension;

13 (B) recognizes the connection of reading
14 and writing and the importance of strong writ-
15 ing instruction;

16 (C) does not use a three-cueing model; and

17 (D) is inclusive of comprehensive literacy
18 instruction.

19 (3) THREE-CUEING MODEL.—The term “three-
20 cueing model” means an instructional approach
21 that—

22 (A) uses meaning drawn from context, pic-
23 tures, or syntax as the primary basis for teach-
24 ing word recognition (commonly referred to as

1 “meaning, structure and syntax, and visual
2 cues” or “MSV”); or

3 (B) teaches visual memory as the primary
4 basis for word recognition.

5 **SEC. 5. LITERACY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.**

6 Section 2222 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
7 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6642) is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (a)—

9 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “and”
10 after the semicolon;

11 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking the pe-
12 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

13 (C) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(3) implement statewide policies and systems
15 of support to assist local educational agencies and
16 educator preparation programs in improving literacy
17 instruction and outcomes.”;

18 (2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the
19 following:

20 “(b) RESERVATION.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From the amounts reserved
22 to carry out this subpart for a fiscal year, the Sec-
23 retary shall reserve—

24 “(A) not more than a total of 5 percent for
25 national activities, which—

1 “(i) shall include funding for a na-
2 tional independent evaluation—

3 “(I) that shall be conducted in
4 accordance with high-quality, rigorous
5 research standards; and

6 “(II) that may not be canceled or
7 deferred, unless the entity funded to
8 conduct the evaluation violates the
9 terms of the contract, has been given
10 written justification for the contract’s
11 termination, and has been provided an
12 opportunity to appeal the termination
13 within 30 days of receiving the notice
14 of termination; and

15 “(ii) may include support for the re-
16 gional educational laboratories (described
17 in section 174 of the Education Sciences
18 Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9564))
19 and comprehensive centers (established
20 pursuant to section 203 of the Educational
21 Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20
22 U.S.C. 9602)) to support literacy research
23 and technical assistance;

24 “(B) not more than 10 percent for grants
25 to eligible States, as described in paragraph (2);

1 “(C) one half of 1 percent for the Sec-
2 retary of the Interior to carry out a program
3 described in this subpart at schools operated or
4 funded by the Bureau of Indian Education; and

5 “(D) one half of 1 percent for the outlying
6 areas to carry out a program under this sub-
7 part.

8 “(2) GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE LOW-PERFORMING
9 STATES.—

10 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
11 allot funds reserved under paragraph (1)(B)
12 among eligible States described in subpara-
13 graph (B) in proportion to the number of stu-
14 dents enrolled in public elementary schools and
15 secondary schools in each such eligible State,
16 except that no eligible State shall receive less
17 than 0.5 percent of the amount reserved under
18 paragraph (1)(B).

19 “(B) ELIGIBLE STATES.—A State is de-
20 scribed in this subparagraph for a fiscal year if
21 the State for the 2 most recent consecutive as-
22 sessment cycles, ranks within the lowest quintile
23 based on the percentage of students performing
24 at or above the ‘basic’ achievement level in 4th

1 grade reading, as measured by the National As-
2 sessment of Educational Progress.

3 “(C) NEEDS ASSESSMENT.—A State re-
4 ceiving funds under this paragraph shall, not
5 later than 1 year after receiving such funds,
6 conduct a needs assessment that analyzes lit-
7 eracy needs across the State and complete a
8 comprehensive literacy instruction plan based
9 on the results of such assessment.

10 “(D) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE
11 STATES.—The Secretary may award grants, on
12 a competitive basis, to eligible States under
13 subsection (a) from amounts that are in addi-
14 tion to the amounts reserved under paragraph
15 (1)(B).”;

16 (3) in subsection (d)(2)—

17 (A) by striking subparagraph (B) and in-
18 sserting the following:

19 “(B) A description of how the State edu-
20 cational agency, in collaboration with the State
21 literacy team, if applicable, will develop a State
22 comprehensive literacy instruction plan or will
23 revise and update an already existing State
24 comprehensive literacy instruction plan, includ-
25 ing how the State will—

1 “(i) implement universal early literacy
2 screenings and intervention services for
3 students at-risk of falling behind in becom-
4 ing proficient in reading by third grade,
5 which may include high-impact tutoring
6 and summer learning programs;

7 “(ii) increase access for educators to
8 high-quality instructional materials aligned
9 with the science of reading;

10 “(iii) deliver professional development
11 and instructional coaching for educators,
12 with the input of educators, in high-needs
13 schools with the lowest literacy outcomes;

14 “(iv) update State licensure or certifi-
15 cation standards for teachers and evaluate
16 teacher preparation programs to assess
17 alignment with the science of reading; and

18 “(v) meaningfully engage educators
19 from across the State to provide early and
20 ongoing input on how to effectively support
21 educators in improving instructional prac-
22 tice and educational outcomes.”; and

23 (B) in subparagraph (D), by striking “sub-
24 section (f)(1)” and inserting “subsection
25 (f)(2)”;

1 (4) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the
2 following:

3 “(e) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
4 tion, the Secretary shall give priority—

5 “(1) to State educational agencies that will use
6 the grant funds for evidence-based activities, defined
7 for the purpose of this subsection as activities meet-
8 ing the requirements of section 8101(21), except
9 that subclause (III) of subparagraph (A)(i) of such
10 section shall not apply; and

11 “(2) to States that demonstrate, based on the
12 needs assessment described in subsection (d)(2)(A),
13 that the State has not yet implemented, on a state-
14 wide basis, a comprehensive approach to the re-
15 quired activities described in subsection (f)(1)(A).”;

16 (5) by striking subsection (f) and inserting the
17 following:

18 “(f) STATE ACTIVITIES.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—

20 “(A) REQUIRED USES.—Each State that
21 receives a grant under this section shall use
22 grant funds not allocated under paragraph (2)
23 to carry out the following:

24 “(i) Ensure pre-service training and
25 in-service training are aligned between

1 success with grade-level work in their core
2 classes, which may include high-impact tu-
3 toring and summer learning programs.

4 “(iii) Provide universal early literacy
5 screening, including for dyslexia, at least
6 once before the third grade, with more reg-
7 ular literacy screenings encouraged as a
8 tool to help identify reading difficulties
9 early and ensure support is provided to
10 struggling readers.

11 “(iv) Develop, incentivize, and support
12 the adoption and implementation of a rec-
13 ommended list of high-quality instructional
14 materials aligned with the science of read-
15 ing.

16 “(v) Convene and solicit input from
17 educators as collaborative, expert partners
18 to advise on improving pre-service training,
19 in-service training, and identify other sup-
20 ports that they may need to successfully
21 implement the science of reading in class-
22 rooms.

23 “(vi) On an annual basis, collect and
24 publicly report implementation data, which
25 shall include—

1 “(I) the number and percent of
2 students receiving screenings and
3 interventions for learning difficulties,
4 disaggregated by grade level and
5 disaggregated by each of the sub-
6 groups of students, as defined in sec-
7 tion 1111(c)(2);

8 “(II) the number and percent of
9 pre-service and in-service teachers re-
10 ceiving professional development and
11 coaching grounded in the science of
12 reading; and

13 “(III) the number of local edu-
14 cational agencies using high-quality
15 instructional materials aligned with
16 the science of reading as rec-
17 ommended by the State.

18 “(B) PROHIBITION OF INCLUSION OF PER-
19 SONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.—A
20 State shall not include any personally identifi-
21 able information in data reported under sub-
22 paragraph (A)(vi).

23 “(2) SUBGRANTS.—Each State that receives a
24 grant under this section shall allocate not less than
25 75 percent of the grant funds to award subgrants to

1 local educational agencies to enable the local edu-
2 cational agencies to carry out activities to improve
3 literacy, such as—

4 “(A) strengthening literacy instruction
5 aligned to the science of reading in elementary
6 schools and secondary schools, including
7 through in-service training for educators;

8 “(B) employing and training literacy in-
9 structional coaches and interventionists;

10 “(C) purchasing and adopting high-quality
11 instructional materials aligned with the science
12 of reading;

13 “(D) conducting universal early literacy
14 screenings, including for dyslexia;

15 “(E) providing direct services to students,
16 which may include high-impact tutoring and
17 summer learning programs, designed to help
18 students reach proficiency in grade-level literacy
19 standards;

20 “(F) conducting outreach to parents and
21 families to help them support their child’s
22 learning at home with strategies grounded in
23 the science of reading;

1 “(G) supporting evidence-based bilingual
2 literacy instruction, including biliteracy develop-
3 ment aligned with the science of reading; and

4 “(H) convening and soliciting early and
5 ongoing input from educators as collaborative,
6 expert partners to advise on improving in-serv-
7 ice training and identify other supports that
8 they may need to successfully implement the
9 science of reading in classrooms.

10 “(3) GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS.—Each State
11 that receives a grant under this section shall—

12 “(A) comply with a biennial evaluation by
13 the Secretary assessing the impact of the activi-
14 ties funded under this grant program; and

15 “(B) ensure that funds provided under this
16 section are used to supplement, and not sup-
17 plant, any State or local funds that would oth-
18 erwise be used for literacy instruction, teacher
19 preparation, or interventions.

20 “(4) TEACHER PREPARATION REQUIRE-
21 MENTS.—

22 “(A) ALIGNMENT WITH THE SCIENCE OF
23 READING.—Each State that receives a grant
24 under this section shall complete and publish,
25 not later than 2 years after receiving the grant

1 funds, a review of all teacher preparation pro-
2 grams in the State to assess alignment with the
3 science of reading and make recommendations
4 to programs, as appropriate, for better aligning
5 course offerings to the science of reading.

6 “(B) LICENSURE OR CERTIFICATION RE-
7 QUIREMENTS.—Each State that receives a
8 grant under this section shall update or estab-
9 lish licensure or certification standards for pub-
10 lic school teachers in grades kindergarten
11 through 8, which reflect competency in instruc-
12 tional practices aligned with the science of read-
13 ing.”; and

14 (6) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

16 “(1) the terms ‘evidence-based’ and ‘science of
17 reading’ have the meanings given the terms in sec-
18 tion 4 of the Reading Excellence and Achievement
19 for Development Act;

20 “(2) the term ‘high-impact tutoring’ means a
21 form of teaching that—

22 “(A) is conducted 1-on-1 or in small
23 groups;

24 “(B) is intended to complement core class-
25 room instruction; and

1 “(C) includes—

2 “(i) substantial time each week en-
3 gaged in tutoring with trained personnel;

4 “(ii) a sustained and strong relation-
5 ship between the student and tutor;

6 “(iii) progress monitoring of student
7 knowledge and skills attainment;

8 “(iv) an alignment with core class-
9 room instruction; and

10 “(v) supportive coaching for the tutor
11 to ensure quality interactions; and

12 “(3) the term ‘universal early *literacy* screen-
13 ing’ means the systematic and periodic assessment
14 of all students’ foundational reading skills, including
15 phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, flu-
16 ency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as develop-
17 mentally appropriate, to identify those at risk for
18 reading difficulties and to provide timely, evidence-
19 based interventions.

20 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
21 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
22 such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2026
23 through 2035.”.

1 **SEC. 6. PARENT REPORTING.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart 2 of part F of title VIII
3 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
4 (20 U.S.C. 7901 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
5 the following:

6 **“SEC. 8549D. PARENT REPORTING.**

7 “(a) IN GENERAL.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each school receiving as-
9 sistance under this Act that includes any of kinder-
10 garten through grade 8 shall provide notification to
11 the parent of any student who is identified as at risk
12 of reading difficulties or performing below grade
13 level in reading.

14 “(2) NOTIFICATION.—The notification de-
15 scribed in paragraph (1) shall—

16 “(A) be provided not later than 30 days
17 after the beginning of the school year, for stu-
18 dents in any of grades 4 through 8 who were
19 identified as below grade level in reading on the
20 previous year’s summative assessment required
21 under section 1111(b)(2)(B);

22 “(B) be provided not later than 30 days
23 after a student is identified as at risk for read-
24 ing difficulties on any universal early literacy
25 screening (as defined in section 2222(g)(1)(C))

1 administered at any point during the school
2 year; and

3 “(C) include—

4 “(i) the results of the assessment or
5 screening;

6 “(ii) the supports that will be pro-
7 vided to the student to reach proficiency;
8 and

9 “(iii) ways that the parent can sup-
10 port learning at home.

11 “(3) MORE REGULAR NOTIFICATIONS.—A
12 school may provide more regular notification to a
13 parent than that required under paragraph (2) and
14 contain additional information in the notification to
15 assist the parent in understanding and supporting
16 the educational needs of their child.

17 “(b) REPORTS AND NOTICES IN PRIMARY LAN-
18 GUAGES.—A school shall provide each report and notifica-
19 tion described in subsection (a) in the primary language
20 of the parent, to the extent practicable.

21 “(c) MODEL NOTIFICATION TEMPLATES.—The Sec-
22 retary shall develop user-tested parental notification tem-
23 plates and other materials, as determined appropriate by
24 the Secretary, for optional use by schools to help them
25 fulfill the requirements under this section. These tem-

1 plates and materials must be made publicly available on
2 the Department’s website.”.

3 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in
4 section 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
5 of 1965 is amended by inserting after the item relating
6 to section 8549C the following new item:

“Sec. 8549D. Parent reporting.”.

7 **SEC. 7. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

8 (a) APPLICABILITY.—This Act and the amendments
9 made by this Act shall apply with respect to funds award-
10 ed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
11 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 note et seq.) on or after the
12 date of enactment of this Act.

13 (b) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
14 or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed
15 to—

16 (1) limit or alter the rights, protections, and in-
17 dividualized instructional requirements under the In-
18 dividuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.
19 1400 et seq.), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
20 of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), or the Americans with
21 Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);
22 or

23 (2) authorize any officer or employee of the
24 Federal Government to mandate, direct, or control a
25 State, local educational agency, or school’s specific

- 1 instructional content, academic standards and as-
- 2 sessments, curricula, or program of instruction.