

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4892

By Delegates Stephens, Pritt, Adkins, Ellington, Willis,

Campbell, and Toney

[Introduced; referred

to the Committee on]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
2 designated §18-2L-1, §18-2L-2, §18-2L-3, §18-2L-4, §18-2L-5, and §18-2L-6, relating to
3 expanding the provisions of the Literacy Based Promotion Act in order to provide certain
4 intervention and implementation strategies for literacy proficiency among students in grade
5 four through grade eight; to define terminology; to require the State Board of Education to
6 provide a system of support for school and district instructional leaders, teachers, literacy
7 coaches, interventionists, tutors and other identified personnel of fourth, fifth, sixth,
8 seventh and eighth grade students to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to
9 support students with reading difficulties; to prescribe what the system of supports shall
10 entail; to require the State Board of Education to develop and promulgate rules for the
11 implementation of an evidence-based program of literacy intervention for students in grade
12 four through grade eight; to require the State Board of Education to submit an annual
13 report to the legislature by December 1 of each year of the program implementation over
14 the course of the previous year; and for related purposes..

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2L. EXPANSION OF LITERACY-BASED PROMOTION ACT.

§18-2L-1. Expansion of Literacy-Based Promotion Act.

1 It is the intent of the Legislature to expand upon the literacy success achieved by West
2 Virginia teachers and students in kindergarten through grade three by providing the support and
3 resources required for expansion of the state's literacy program to grade four through grade eight.

§18-2L-2. Definitions.

1 As used in this act, the following terms shall have the meaning ascribed herein, unless
2 context of use clearly requires otherwise:

3 (1) "Science of reading" refers to the large body of evidence that informs:
4 (A) How proficient reading and writing develop;
5 (B) Why some have difficulty; and

6 (C) How to most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes
7 through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

8 (2) "Three-cueing system" means any model of teaching students to read based on
9 meaning, structure and syntax and visual cues, which may also be known as "MSV".

10 (3) "Universal screener" means an assessment that is administered three times per year,
11 initially within the first thirty (30) days of the school year and repeated at midyear and at the end of
12 the school year to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor reading outcomes and is
13 typically brief and conducted with all students at a particular grade level.

14 (4) "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. Dyslexia
15 is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling
16 and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological
17 component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the
18 provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in
19 reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary
20 and background knowledge.

21 (5) "Structured literacy" means an evidence-based approach to teaching oral and written
22 language aligned to the science of reading. It is based on the science of how kids learn to read
23 and is characterized by direct, explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative, and diagnostic
24 instruction in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax and
25 semantics.

§18-2L-3. Support for students.

1 (a) The State Board of Education shall provide a system of support for school and district
2 instructional leaders, teachers, literacy coaches, interventionists, tutors and other identified
3 personnel of Fourth-, Fifth-, Sixth-, Seventh- and Eighth-Grade students to ensure that they have
4 the knowledge and skills to support students with reading difficulties. The system of support shall
5 include:

6 (1) Professional learning for school and district instructional leaders, teachers, special
7 education teachers, literacy coaches, interventionists, tutors and other identified personnel of
8 Fourth-, Fifth-, Sixth-, Seventh- and Eighth-Grade students. Comprehensive training grounded in
9 the science of reading to ensure all teachers have the knowledge and skills to support a range of
10 students with diverse needs, students with reading difficulties, multilingual students and students
11 with characteristics of dyslexia, including:

12 (A) Explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle,
13 decoding, encoding, fluency including accuracy, morphology including morphological awareness
14 and etymology, vocabulary, comprehension and building content knowledge;

15 (B) Strategies to increase educator knowledge of reading and writing basics for students in
16 grade four through grade eight;

17 (C) Evidence-based strategies for motivating and engaging adolescent learners; and

18 (D) Research-based strategies for accommodations and scaffolding instruction for
19 struggling readers and writers; and

20 (E) Approaches to assist educators in determining causes of reading difficulties, including
21 dyslexia and other learning differences, for students in grade four through grade eight and how
22 word reading, vocabulary, content knowledge, comprehension and writing are affected;

23 (2) Job-embedded coaching support for teachers of grade four through grade eight based
24 on the State Board of Education's Literacy Coaching Model; and

25 (3) Educator preparation programs that equip candidates seeking licensure for elementary,
26 special education and middle school education with training and instruction to:

27 (A) Effectively teach aligned to scientifically based reading instruction, including explicit
28 and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, decoding,
29 encoding, fluency, morphology including etymology, vocabulary, comprehension, and building
30 content knowledge;

31 (B) Implement evidence-based reading instruction using high-quality instructional

32 materials;

33 (C) Provide effective instruction and interventions for a range of students with diverse

34 needs, including multilingual students and students with characteristics of dyslexia;

35 (D) Understand and use student data to make instructional decisions; and

36 (E) Incorporate literacy instruction across all subject matter content areas.

§18-2L-4. Rules.

1 (a) The State Board of Education shall develop and promulgate rules for and shall

2 implement an evidence-based program of literacy intervention and support for students in grade

3 four through grade eight. The program shall include:

4 (1) An approved list of universal screeners to be administered three times per year, initially

5 within the first 30 days of the school year and repeated at midyear and at the end of the school

6 year with progress monitoring capabilities, and a diagnostic tool to support teachers with targeting

7 instruction based on students needs;

8 (2) The means by which schools and students shall be identified for reading intervention

9 and support;

10 (3) The types of interventions and supports to be provided to students identified as having

11 a significant reading deficiency;

12 (4) The manner and timeframe in which those interventions and supports shall be

13 provided; and

14 (5) A credit-bearing structured literacy course for students in grade six through grade eight

15 designed to provide evidence-based reading and writing interventions aligned to the science of

16 reading.

17 (b) The program shall not include intervention resources or instructional materials that use

18 the three-cueing systems method of teaching word reading.

§18-2L-5. Reporting.

1 No later than December 1 of each year, the State Board of Education shall report, in writing

2 to the Legislature, a summary of program implementation in the previous school year, including,

3 but not limited to:

4 (1) The number of students in grade four through grade eight identified as having a

5 significant reading deficiency;

6 (2) Of the identified students, the number who were provided literacy interventions and

7 support;

8 (3) The names of the school districts and schools in which participating students were

9 enrolled at the time of intervention;

10 (4) Evidence that the program is leading to improved student literacy outcomes as

11 demonstrated by school-level assessment data; and

12 (5) As needed, recommendations for legislative action that would further improve literacy

13 outcomes.

§18-2L-6. **Effective** _____ **date.** _____

1 This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2027.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to expand the provisions of the Literacy Based Promotion Act in order to provide certain intervention and implementation strategies for literacy proficiency among students in grade four through grade eight.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.