

OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

To: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Hillary Risler, Esq., Legislative Analyst
Date: February 24, 2021
Subj: **LD 138, “An Act To Increase Student Reading Proficiency” (Brennan)**

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Commissioner of Education to establish benchmarks for reading proficiency for elementary students. The benchmarks must provide that by 2025 75% of students entering grade 4 will be proficient in reading.

During the public hearing, the sponsor proposed to replace the bill with an amendment that would direct the DOE to conduct an analysis of reading assessment measures, locally established benchmarks, and reading achievement data available between Spring 2021 and Fall 2022, and reading instructional programs and resources being utilized by SAUs. The DOE’s analysis would be required to be focused on which measures, programs, resources, evidence-based practices, and educator supports are yielding student growth.

The amendment also requires the department to provide two reports to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee on its findings and recommendations for improving student outcomes; the first report would be submitted January 1, 2022 and the second report would be submitted December 1, 2022.

TESTIMONY

- **Proponents** (*Proponents of the bill at the public hearing testified in support of the amended version of the bill*)
 - The ability to read is a fundamental skill and if a student falls behind the student may never recover
 - The proposed amendment is the result of collaboration with stakeholders
 - Suggested reading benchmarks for the K-3 grade span was published in 2000, and this amendment will update that work
 - This amendment will help the committee better understand the reading proficiency of Maine students and empowers the State's education community to thoughtfully examine what is working in schools for which learners, highlight best practices, allow for the intentional and strategic plan for professional learning, and encourage collaboration between the department and schools
 - Taking the time to delve into the data will allow the DOE to identify which measures, programs, resources, evidence-based practices, and educator supports will yield the desired student growth in reading
- **Opponents:**
 - The bill does not allow for the inclusion of a particular research work on reading proficiency
- **Neither For Nor Against:** None

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Authorization for the committee to report out a bill upon receipt of a report
- Clarification on what should be included in the second report due December 2022?

COMMITTEE REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Maine Curriculum Leaders Association resources on literacy best practices

PRELIMINARY FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

- Not yet determined

**Representative Brennan Proposed Amendment
LD 138, An Act to Increase Student Reading Proficiency**

Strike the bill and replace it with the following:

Resolve, Regarding Reading Proficiency Data Analysis

Sec. 1. Reading data analysis. Resolved: That, the Department of Education shall conduct an analysis of reading assessment measures, locally established benchmarks, reading achievement data available between Spring of 2021 and Fall of 2022, and reading instructional programs and resources being utilized by School Administrative Units. The Department's examination shall focus on which measures, programs, resources, evidence-based practices, and educator supports are yielding student growth.

Sec. 2. Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 1, 2022, the Department of Education shall submit a report that includes its findings and a set of recommendations for improving student outcomes in reading to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature and a second report in December 2022.



Reading Instruction and Assessment Best Practice Resources

There is wide consensus now that there is no one right way to teach reading. Reading instruction should be based in the research on reading which includes, but is far from limited to, the teaching of phonics. Teaching all students to learn to read requires skillful use of multiple components: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, word work, vocabulary development, a love for/disposition toward reading, and writing with reading -- using a blend of instructional materials and real books. Further, effective reading instruction, regardless of program and/or materials, is rooted in effective professional learning.

Organizations and Publications

[International Literacy Association](#)

Journal of Early Childhood Literacy

[National Council of Teachers of English](#)

Reading Research Quarterly

[Teachers College Reading And Writing Project](#)

[What Works Clearinghouse](#)

Resources to Learn More

[Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum](#)

[National Reading Panel Report Findings](#)

[Postcards from a Journey: Rough Draft Insights from the Science of Reading Discussion](#) - TCRWP

[Teaching Reading is Rocket Science: What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able to Do](#)

by Louisa Moats

[5 Ways to Support Students who Struggle with Reading Comprehension](#)

Examples of Commonly Used Reading Assessments in Maine Schools

Note: Schools use a combination of assessments in order to measure a complete range of reading skills; no one assessment can provide a complete reading assessment picture.

AimsWeb

Concepts of Print Assessment

Developmental Reading Assessment 3

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Assessment

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress

Teachers College Running Records

Star Reading Assessments

Examples of Commonly Used Instructional Programs and Materials in Maine Schools

Note: These materials and programs are VASTLY different, as is implementation around the state. Some are software programs, most are basal readers with augmentation materials, some are progressions based instructional practices/scope and sequence. All are designed based on some/all/selected best practices and research on early reading.

| | pk | k-2 | 3-5 |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| ELA-Reading | Open the World of Learning (OWL) PreK for Me (Maine DOE) MELDS | Teachers College Reading Units Of Study K for Me (Maine DOE) Reading Street Ready Reading F&P Classroom Benchmark Literacy Journeys My View Reading A-Z Literacy Footprints | Teachers College Reading Units Of Study Reading Street Ready Reading F&P Classroom Benchmark Literacy Journeys My View Literacy Footprints |
| ELA-Phonics | Jolly Phonics Heggerty Phonemic Awareness OG-ISME Sadlier Phonics Lexia Core 5 ELA IXL | Units Of Study Jolly Phonics Blevins F&P Phonics & Word Study Lexia Core 5 ELA IXL FUNdations | F&P Word Study Lexia Core 5 ELA IXL |