

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 182

BY SENATOR DONAHUE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the state Department of Education to create the Early Literacy Commission to study and make recommendations to develop and implement an aligned system to provide effective evidence-based reading instruction for children from birth through third grade.

WHEREAS, the state's implementation of the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Act, enacted in 2012, has received national recognition from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others as a best practice for the coordination and quality of early childhood education; and

WHEREAS, children who receive quality early care need a strong K-12 educational system which will facilitate and support their continued growth; and

WHEREAS, students who do not read proficiently by the end of the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school, and those who have not mastered at least a basic level of reading proficiency are nearly six times as likely to leave school without earning a diploma; and

WHEREAS, students who are not proficient in reading as third graders make up nearly two-thirds of the students who fail to graduate on time from high school; and

WHEREAS, research shows that early reading skills have a positive impact on college attendance and that ninth graders who read on grade-level as third graders are three times more likely to go to college than those who did not; and

WHEREAS, eighty-five percent of all juveniles who come into contact with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate, as are sixty percent of all prison inmates; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana spends more than two hundred seventy thousand dollars annually to remediate students who read below grade level; and

WHEREAS, decades of research provide a scientific basis for understanding how to best help students become proficient readers; and

WHEREAS, evidence-based instruction methods include five systematic components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, which have been affirmed by the Institute of Education Sciences and the national Institute of Child Health and Human Development and have been recommended by the National Reading Panel.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the state Department of Education to create the Early Literacy Commission to study and make recommendations to develop and implement an aligned system to provide effective evidence-based reading instruction for children from birth through third grade.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall be composed of twenty-two members as follows:

- (1) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.
- (2) The commissioner of higher education, or her designee.
- (3) The governor, or his designee.
- (4) Two local school superintendents from school systems which are implementing evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents.
- (5) One school principal whose school is implementing evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Louisiana Association of School Principals.
- (6) One member from the staff of the Board of Regents, appointed by the commissioner of higher education.
- (7) One member from the staff of the state Department of Education, appointed by the state superintendent of education.
- (8) The executive director of the Children's Cabinet, or his designee.
- (9) One parent with a demonstrated commitment to, and understanding of, evidence-based reading instruction from Decoding Dyslexia Louisiana, appointed by the state superintendent of education in consultation with stakeholders.

(10) Two educators with a demonstrated commitment to, and understanding of, evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the state superintendent of education and the Center for Development and Learning.

(11) The president of the Louisiana Early Childhood Association, or his designee.

(12) The president of the Louisiana Association of Colleges of Education for Teacher Education, or his designee.

(13) The dean of the college of education of a Louisiana postsecondary institution who is a member of Deans for Impact, appointed by the commission of higher education.

(14) The executive director of the Center for Development and Learning, or his designee.

(15) The executive director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, or his designee.

(16) A faculty member or researcher from a Louisiana public college or university who is well-versed in evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the commissioner of higher education.

(17) A faculty member or researcher from a Louisiana nonpublic college or university who is well-versed in evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

(18) One member who is well-versed in evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the Louisiana Reading Association.

(19) One member who is well-versed in written language acquisition and evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the Louisiana Speech-Language Hearing Association.

(20) One member who is a teacher of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, appointed by the director of the Louisiana School for the Deaf.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that vacancies shall be filled in the manner of original appointment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and an affirmative vote of the quorum present is

required for any official action of the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses as provided by the respective appointing authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state superintendent and the commissioner of higher education, or their designees, shall serve as cochairmen and that the state Department of Education shall provide staff support to the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall meet upon the call of the cochairmen, but shall meet at least three times a year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall study and make recommendations relative to improving the reading proficiency of third grade students and shall:

(1) Gather and analyze data to determine the degree to which evidence-based reading is being implemented with fidelity in the state's public schools and childhood care and education settings.

(2) Conduct an assessment of the number of practicing educators, including K-3 teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists, with training and skills in evidence-based reading instruction.

(3) Assess the degree to which state colleges of education and alternative certification programs provide a program of study on evidence-based reading practices for K-3 teachers, special education teachers, and education specialists.

(4) Make recommendations regarding how the state might ensure that all teacher preparation programs produce teacher candidates with the competencies needed to teach evidence-based instruction from day one.

(5) Make recommendations regarding how to assist school systems to adopt reading programs that utilize systematic and cumulative evidence-based reading instruction.

(6) Make recommendations regarding how the state can equip educators with the evidence-based competencies and skills needed to ensure the reading proficiency of third grade students.

(7) Develop and propose a timeframe for increasing the reading proficiency of third grade students and establish benchmarks for the intervening years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations by January 15, 2020, and a written report of the status of the implementation of its recommendations by January 15, 2021. These reports shall be submitted to the governor, the Senate Committee on Education, the House Committee on Education, the Board of Regents, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Children's Cabinet.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the state superintendent of education and the commissioner of higher education.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE