

**STORAGE NAME:** h0555.ge.doc

**DATE:** February 17, 2002

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION  
ANALYSIS**

**BILL #:** HB 555

**RELATING TO:** Reading Instruction

**SPONSOR(S):** Representative(s) Joyner

**TIED BILL(S):** None.

**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COUNCIL(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:**

- (1) COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION
- (2) COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
- (3) COUNCIL FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
- (4)
- (5)

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THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUING STATUTES, OR TO BE CONSTRUED AS AFFECTING, DEFINING, LIMITING, CONTROLLING, SPECIFYING, CLARIFYING, OR MODIFYING ANY LEGISLATION OR STATUTE.

**I. SUMMARY:**

HB 555 requires each public elementary school to develop and implement an appropriately designed reading program to include daily reading and literacy development in kindergarten through grade five. Each public elementary school must devote a *locally determined amount of time each day* to reading and literacy development in kindergarten through grade five. If a public elementary school requests assistance pertaining to implementing the reading program, the Department of Education must provide technical support and guidance.

Earlier this year, Governor Bush announced his plans to implement a *consistent statewide research based reading initiative*. *The initiative is not expected to require any legislation or change in current statutory law*. While HB 555 would devolve authority for reading program design and implementation to the school level, it could impair the ability of the state to set consistent, research based standards for reading programs, as well as restrict the authority of school districts to implement district wide programs.

Since the bill directs "*each public school* to develop and implement an appropriately based reading program," any statewide standards developed for school reading programs would only be recommendations made to the districts or schools. A school district could be prohibited from implementing district wide standards and programs that are consistent from school to school. Schools would have the authority and responsibility for designing and implementing reading programs whether or not they had the expertise to do so. *Each elementary school is currently implementing some kind of reading program, and they vary considerably in effectiveness*.

The Department of Education (DOE) currently provides technical assistance in reading; however, the bill's provisions may require this role be expanded. If the technical assistance role of DOE is expanded, an additional FTE could be required. Otherwise, the fiscal impact appears to be minimal.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- |                                   |                              |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u>         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u>             | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

If a public elementary school requests assistance, the bill requires the Department of Education to provide technical assistance to implement the bill at the school level.

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

**The National Reading Panel Research**

The National Reading Panel (NRP) issued a report in 2000 that responded to a Congressional mandate to help parents, teachers, and policymakers identify key skills and methods central to reading achievement. The Panel was charged with reviewing research in reading instruction that focused on the critical years of kindergarten through third grade and identifying methods that consistently relate to reading success.<sup>1</sup>

The NRP reviewed more than 100,000 studies. Through a carefully developed screening procedure, NRP members examined research that met several important criteria:

- The research had to address achievement of *one or more skills in reading*. Studies of effective teaching were not included unless reading achievement was measured.
- The research had to be *generalizable* to the larger population of students. Thus, case studies with small numbers of children were excluded from the analysis.
- The research needed to examine the *effectiveness* of an approach. This type of research requires the comparison of different treatments, such as comparing the achievement of students using guided repeated reading to another group of students not using that strategy.
- The research needed to be regarded as *high quality*. An article or book had to have been reviewed by other scholars from the relevant field and judged to be sound and worthy of publication.<sup>2</sup>

The NRP found that students need reading instruction that includes the following five components:

- Phonemic awareness—is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds—phonemes—in spoken words.
- Phonics—teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sound (phonemes) of spoken language.
- Fluency—is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read a text silently, they recognize words automatically and group words quickly to help them gain

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<sup>1</sup> *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, National Institute for Literacy, September 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, National Institute for Literacy, September 2001.

meaning from what they read. Less fluent readers focus their attention primarily on decoding individual words. Therefore, they have little attention left for comprehending the text.

- Vocabulary—there are four types of vocabulary—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Scientific research shows children learn the meaning of most words indirectly through everyday experience with oral and written language.
- Text comprehension—is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words and do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading. Good readers have a purpose for reading and think actively as they read. Text comprehension strategies can be taught through explicit instruction, cooperative learning, by helping readers use strategies flexibly and in combination.<sup>3</sup>

### **Reading Instruction in Florida**

Pursuant to s. 233.061, F.S., each school district must provide all courses required for high school graduation and appropriate instruction designed to ensure that students meet state board adopted standards in the following subject areas: reading and other language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, health and physical education, and the arts.

Pursuant to s. 231.002(2)(d), F.S., the Legislature finds that effective educators are able to recognize signs of students' difficulty with the reading and computational process and apply appropriate measures to improve students' reading and computational performance.

*Each elementary school is currently implementing some kind of reading program, and they vary considerably in effectiveness.*<sup>4</sup> Some reading is being taught in all elementary schools through regular classroom instruction in grades K-5. In addition to regular classroom instruction in reading, the following "pull out" programs offer reading instruction to students who need remedial instruction:

- Integrated language arts—provides instruction to 54,458 students
- Elementary reading— provides instruction to 92,203 students
- Functional basic skills in reading—provides instruction to 1,345 students<sup>5</sup>

### A+ Plan

In 1999, the Legislature enacted chapter 99-398, L.O. F., an education accountability law, popularly known as the "A+ Plan." Section 232.245, F.S., specifies that if a student does not meet expected levels of performance in reading, writing, science, and mathematics, the school must develop an academic improvement plan in cooperation with the student's parents. School boards may not assign a student to a grade level based solely upon a student's age or other factors that constitute social promotion. Retention must be in an intensive program that is different from last year's program and takes into account a student's learning style. School boards must allocate remedial and supplemental instructional resources first to students who fail to meet achievement performance levels required for promotion. These performances levels must encompass reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level.<sup>6</sup>

Pursuant to s. 232.245, F.S., any student who exhibits substantial deficiency in reading skills must be given intensive reading instruction until the reading deficiency is remedied. If the student's reading deficiency, as determined by the locally determined assessment at grades 1 and 2, or by the statewide assessment at grade 3, is not remedied by the end of grade 4, and if the student

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<sup>3</sup> *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, National Institute for Literacy, September 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Florida Department of Education Staff Bill Analysis, December 20, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Telephone conversation with Fred Varn, Florida Department of Education, January 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Sunshine State Standards, Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Support, Florida Department of Education Website, Updated April 14, 2000. These standards are tested on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

scores below the specific level of performance on the statewide assessment test in reading, the student must be retained. The local school board may exempt a student from mandatory retention for good cause.

### Sunshine State Standards

Standards for establishing grade level expectations for reading, writing, science, and mathematics are found in the Sunshine State Standards. In 1996, the State Board of Education approved the Sunshine State Standards to provide expectations for student achievement in Florida. The Standards approved in 1996 were written in seven subject areas, each divided into four separate grade clusters (PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). This format was chosen to provide flexibility to school districts in designing curriculum based on local needs. However, as Florida moves toward greater accountability for student achievement at each grade level, the Sunshine State Standards have been further defined. In the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, the Sunshine State Standards have been expanded to include Grade Level Expectations.<sup>7</sup>

### Reading Summit

In October 1999, the Florida Education Commissioner convened a first ever Reading Summit, "Every Child Reading: An Attainable Goal." The summit provided a focus on literacy and an unprecedented opportunity for leaders within each of Florida's five regions to work together to identify their district's progress in implementing each of the critical elements of the Florida Reading Initiative. The Florida Reading Initiative Policy Framework makes explicit a number of requirements:

- Curriculum must be based on current research;
- Reflect the Sunshine State Standards; and
- Represent a balance of decoding and comprehension strategies.

District reading programs must emphasize prekindergarten and the primary grades but also make provisions for middle and high school. Reading instruction must be diagnostic and prescriptive and evaluated in terms of student achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and locally selected standardized tests. District reading program must be "coordinated," articulated, and consolidated" with other "reading efforts," School Improvement Plans, and the professional development of teachers.<sup>8</sup>

### Governor's Reading Initiative

The Governor has charged the Department of Education with making recommendations for *state standards* for reading programs. School districts may wish to implement *consistent standards for all* public schools in the district.<sup>9</sup> Plans by the Governor and DOE are for a *consistent statewide research based* reading initiative. *The initiative is not expected to require any legislation or change in current statutory law.*

## C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

HB 555 requires each public elementary school to develop and implement an appropriately designed reading program to include daily reading and literacy development in kindergarten through grade five. Each public elementary school must devote a *locally determined amount of time each day* to reading and literacy development in kindergarten through grade five. If a public elementary

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<sup>7</sup> Sunshine State Standards, Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Support, Florida Department of Education Website, Updated April 14, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Mc-Gill-Frazen, Anne, "Teachers' Experiences with the Florida Reading Initiative," Florida 2001: Educational Policy Alternatives, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL, August 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Florida Department of Education Staff Bill Analysis, December 20, 2001.

school requests assistance pertaining to implementing the reading program, the Department of Education must provide technical support and guidance.

This bill could impair the implementation of statewide standards for reading programs or district wide implementation of consistent reading programs based on statewide standards.<sup>10</sup>

While improving reading instruction is a priority, this approach to *school-based* reading program design could prevent the effective implementation of a program developed by the state and district. Any statewide standards developed for school reading programs would only be recommendations made to the districts or schools. A school district could be prohibited from implementing district wide standards and programs that are consistent from school to school. Schools would have the authority and responsibility for designing and implementing reading programs whether or not they had the expertise to do so.<sup>11</sup>

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

**Section 1:** Provides legislative intent regarding required reading instruction; requiring each public elementary school to develop and implement programs for reading and literacy development in kindergarten through grade 5; and requiring the Department of Education to provide technical support and guidance to any public elementary school that requests assistance.

**Section 2:** Provides the bill will become effective July 1, 2002.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

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<sup>10</sup> Florida Department of Education Staff Bill Analysis, December 20, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Florida Department of Education Staff Bill Analysis, December 20, 2001.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The fiscal impact appears to be minimal. Based on surveys of school districts, all schools currently implement reading programs. The Department of Education (DOE) currently provides technical assistance in reading; however, the bill's provisions may require this role be expanded.<sup>12</sup> If the technical assistance role of DOE is expanded, an additional FTE could be required.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not grant rule-making authority.

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

None.

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

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Elsie J. Rogers

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Ouida J. Ashworth

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<sup>12</sup> Florida Department of Education Staff Bill Analysis, December 20, 2001.