

HOUSE BILL 167

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION; PROVIDING THAT THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHALL PAY THE COST OF HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CREDENTIAL TESTS AND ASSOCIATED TEST PREPARATION COSTS FOR NEW MEXICO RESIDENTS HAFC→; ~~MAKING AN APPROPRIATION~~←HAFC SFC→; **REQUIRING PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO TEACH THE SCIENCE OF READING**←SFC .

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

.229555.2SAAIC March 18, 2025 (4:04pm)

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SECTION 1. A new section of Chapter 21, Article 1 NMSA 1978 is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CREDENTIAL TESTS--FREE FOR NEW MEXICO RESIDENTS.--The higher education department shall provide free high school equivalency credential tests to New Mexico residents who:

- A. are at least sixteen years of age;
- B. are not currently enrolled in secondary school;
- C. have not graduated from an accredited high school or received a high school equivalency certificate or a diploma; and
- D. have passed an official practice test with scores indicating test readiness."

SFC→SECTION 2. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS--TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO TEACH READING.--

A. As used in this section:

(1) "high-quality instructional materials" means instructional materials that are a comprehensive full course of study that is research-based, culturally and linguistically relevant and designed to support equitable learning for all students;

(2) "science of reading" means an interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about

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reading and issues related to reading and writing;

(3) "scientifically based reading instruction" means instruction grounded in empirical research, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and the science of reading; and

(4) "structured literacy" means an evidence-based approach to teaching oral and written language aligned with the science of reading that is based on the science of how children learn to read and is characterized by explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative and diagnostic instruction in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax and semantics.

B. Structured literacy is the primary approach to teaching foundational literacy skills for all learners. Literacy instruction for English learners shall include evidence-based practices for bi-literacy, differentiation and culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. Public school students shall be taught to read using the science of reading, structured literacy and scientifically based reading instruction.

C. Each teacher preparation program shall offer courses and student teaching sufficient for level one licensure that:

(1) include the science of reading, structured

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literacy and scientifically based reading instruction;

(2) for elementary teacher candidates, provide a minimum of one hundred hours of supervised field experience in public school classrooms implementing the science of reading, structured literacy and scientifically based reading instruction, including:

(a) planning and teaching reading lessons focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; and

(b) observing and applying scientifically based reading instruction techniques under the supervision of a teacher trained in the science of reading; and

(3) include training and teaching teacher candidates to identify when students are not reading at grade level.

D. In collaboration with public post-secondary teacher preparation programs, the public education department shall develop specific teacher preparation standards related to the five components of the science of reading, including the knowledge and skills teachers need to support struggling readers and those with dyslexia as well as the knowledge and skills teachers need to support English language learners.

E. As part of the public education department's review process, the department shall monitor all teacher preparation programs, and programs that fail to adhere to the

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science of reading shall be required to submit corrective action plans and may face the loss of state approval.

F. As part of the state approval review process for teacher preparation programs, each program shall provide evidence of alignment with New Mexico's statutory and regulatory requirements for structured and systematic science of reading instruction.

G. Initial approval and ongoing review shall include:

(1) evaluation of coursework and field experiences to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to implement evidence-based reading instruction practices aligned with the science of reading;

(2) assessment of faculty qualifications and professional development related to scientifically based reading instruction methodologies;

(3) documentation of how the program integrates state-adopted literacy standards, including explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension;

(4) collection of data demonstrating the effectiveness of graduates in applying science-of-reading practices during their first three years of teaching, as available through performance-based assessments or other state-approved measures; and

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(5) evidence of partnerships with kindergarten through twelfth grade public schools to ensure high-quality student teaching and supervised field experiences that emphasize science of reading instructional practices and the use of high-quality instructional materials during student teaching and other supervised field experiences.

H. The public education department shall provide guidelines for evaluating compliance with science of reading instruction requirements during the review process. These guidelines shall include minimum performance thresholds for coursework, assessments and candidate outcomes.

I. Programs failing to meet the established science of reading instruction standards may be placed on a corrective action plan with specific requirements and time lines for achieving compliance. Noncompliance may result in probationary status or the loss of state approval.

J. As part of an annual accountability report, teacher preparation programs shall include:

(1) a summary of program changes made to enhance science of reading instruction aligned to the standards;

(2) data on teacher candidate performance in science of reading instruction-related coursework and clinical experiences; and

(3) graduate impact data on student literacy

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outcomes, where available."←SFC

H AFC → ~~SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION. -- Two million dollars (\$2,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the higher education department for expenditure in fiscal year 2026 for costs to provide free high school equivalency credential tests to New Mexico residents and to pay associated test preparation costs incurred by the department. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2026 shall revert to the general fund.~~ ←H AFC

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