

By: Representatives Creekmore IV, McCarty

To: Education;  
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 988

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE INCREASING READING EFFICIENCY AND  
2 ACCOUNTABILITY DEVELOPMENT (IREAD) PILOT PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE  
3 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING EARLY  
4 CHILDHOOD LITERACY IN SCHOOLS WITH EVIDENTIARY DATA REPORTS OF  
5 CHRONIC READING INEFFICIENCY AND UNDERPERFORMING READERS BEGINNING  
6 WITH THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL  
7 FOCUS ON ENHANCING THE OUTPUTS OF LITERACY PROFICIENCY AMONG  
8 ELEMENTARY STUDENTS; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO  
9 DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT IREAD PILOT PROGRAM AS AN EDUCATIONAL  
10 TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM TO ASSIST TEACHERS, LITERACY COACHES AND  
11 PARENTS IN PROMOTING READING; TO REQUIRE THE BOARD TO ADOPT  
12 POLICIES GOVERNING THE PROGRAM AND ESTABLISH MINIMUM CRITERIA; TO  
13 PRESCRIBE THE MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR SERVICES AND PROGRAM ELEMENTS  
14 TO BE PROVIDED BY THE SELECTED TECHNOLOGY VENDOR; TO REQUIRE THE  
15 LEGISLATURE TO APPROPRIATE \$750,000.00 TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
16 EDUCATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION, SUPPORT AND CONTINUATION OF THE  
17 IREAD PILOT PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO  
18 SUBMIT A REPORT ON THE IREAD PILOT PROGRAM TO THE EDUCATION AND  
19 APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND  
20 SENATE BY JANUARY 1, 2026; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PILOT PROGRAM SHALL  
21 BE MADE AVAILABLE TO A MINIMUM OF 10,000 ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN  
22 KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 3 IN SCHOOLS SELECTED BY THE STATE  
23 BOARD OF EDUCATION IN EACH OF THE FOUR CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS; TO  
24 PROVIDE THAT PRIORITY FOR INCLUSION IN THE PILOT PROGRAM SHALL BE  
25 GIVEN TO SCHOOLS WITHIN EACH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT IN ELIGIBLE  
26 SCHOOLS IN "D" AND "F" RATED SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVING  
27 PROPORTIONALLY THE LARGEST POPULATION OF UNDERSERVED AT-RISK  
28 FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

29 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

30 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created the Increasing Reading  
31 Efficiency and Accountability Development (iREAD) pilot program



32 within the State Department of Education for the purpose of  
33 improving early childhood literacy in schools across the state  
34 that have evidentiary data reports of chronic reading inefficiency  
35 and underperforming readers. The program shall be first made  
36 available beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, and shall  
37 focus on enhancing the outputs of literacy proficiency among  
38 elementary students in kindergarten through Grade 3 through the  
39 science of reading with scope and sequence with the use of  
40 instructional technology tools, application-based (app-based)  
41 software, programming and assisting interactive devices.

42 (2) The State Board of Education shall develop and implement  
43 the Increasing Reading Efficiency and Accountability Development  
44 (iREAD) pilot program as an educational technology platform to  
45 assist teachers, literacy coaches and parents in promoting  
46 reading, word recognition, phonemic awareness and comprehension.  
47 The board shall adopt policies governing the program which must  
48 include, at a minimum, the following:

49 (a) Provide iREAD technology assistance and devices to  
50 a minimum of ten thousand (10,000) elementary students enrolled in  
51 schools with evidentiary data reports of chronic reading  
52 inefficiency and underperforming readers;

53 (b) Eligibility criteria for the selection of schools  
54 for participation in the pilot program, including a definition of  
55 the term "chronic reading inefficiency";



- 56 (c) An application process to be used by eligible  
57 schools desiring to participate in the program;
- 58 (d) The process for the issuance of and the deadline  
59 for receipt of requests for proposals (RFPs);
- 60 (e) Criteria, rules and regulations governing the  
61 process by which vendors and programs will be selected to provide  
62 literacy technology services through the program by the State  
63 Department of Education;
- 64 (f) The administration of three (3) annual assessments  
65 based on Oral Reading Fluency;
- 66 (g) Technology and software programs, which, at a  
67 minimum:
- 68 (i) Have the ability to test weekly or every two  
69 (2) weeks within the technology's software program;
- 70 (ii) Provides access to at least twelve thousand  
71 (12,000) interest-based books in a Lexile scored content library;
- 72 (iii) Automatically prompts a comprehension  
73 questionnaire after completion of certain books;
- 74 (iv) Provides real-time words correction per  
75 minute after every book read;
- 76 (v) Includes a feature that provides definition,  
77 usage and speaks words;
- 78 (vi) Provides real-time data within the app-based  
79 software which is available to parents, students, teachers and  
80 literacy coaches; and



81                   (vii) Provides seamless integration with the  
82 Clever Portal of secured digital resources;

83                   (h) An interchangeable platform of multiple languages;

84                   (i) Interest-based content versus curriculum or  
85 theme-based content, giving student choice over forced curriculum  
86 demands;

87                   (j) Voice recognition software that authenticates and  
88 adapts to the student's vocal intonation, frequency and pitch,  
89 which aid in the measurements of porosity, fluency and  
90 pronunciation;

91                   (k) A deterred focus on gamification of learning, but  
92 primarily focuses on the science of reading and student reading;

93                   (l) Real-time data and Lexile scoring;

94                   (m) Video streaming capability for peer-to-peer reading  
95 with students;

96                   (n) Availability to and accessibility by students three  
97 hundred sixty-five (365) days, twenty-four (24) hours per day;

98                   (o) Accessibility and compatibility for interfacing on  
99 iOS, Android and Microsoft devices;

100                   (p) Being developed on the foundational principles of  
101 the science of reading with scope and sequence;

102                   (q) A list of data collection needs to be used in  
103 implementation and evaluation of the program; and



104 (r) Such other matters determined by the board as  
105 necessary and desirable for the successful implementation of the  
106 pilot program.

107 (3) Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, and each year  
108 thereafter, the Legislature shall appropriate to the State  
109 Department of Education funds in the amount of Seven Hundred Fifty  
110 Thousand Dollars (\$750,000.00) for the implementation, support and  
111 continuation of the Increasing Reading Efficiency and  
112 Accountability Development (iREAD) pilot program.

113 (4) Before January 1, 2026, the State Board of Education  
114 shall submit a report to the Education and Appropriations  
115 Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate on the  
116 Increasing Reading Efficiency and Accountability Development  
117 (iREAD) pilot program. The report must include information  
118 documenting:

119 (a) The effectiveness of the pilot program;

120 (b) The progression of students in the pilot program;

121 (c) Performance measures of students in pilot program  
122 schools in comparison to:

123 (i) Students in pilot program schools in the same  
124 school district;

125 (ii) Students in pilot program schools in  
126 different school districts;

127 (iii) Students within the same school district who  
128 are not in a pilot program school; and



129 (iv) Students in different school districts who  
130 are not in a pilot program school; and

131 (d) Recommendations on whether or not the program  
132 should be expanded to include additional participants and schools.

133 **SECTION 2.** Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, with  
134 funds appropriated by the Legislature, the Increasing Reading  
135 Efficiency and Accountability Development (iREAD) Pilot Program  
136 shall be made available to a minimum of ten thousand (10,000)  
137 elementary students in kindergarten through Grade 3 in pilot  
138 schools selected by the State Board of Education in each of the  
139 four (4) congressional districts, using the criteria developed by  
140 the board in accordance with Section 1(3) of this act. With any  
141 remaining funds available, the pilot program shall be expanded to  
142 additional schools within each congressional district, such  
143 schools having evidentiary data reports of chronic reading  
144 inefficiency and underperforming readers. Priority shall be given  
145 to implementing the program first within each congressional  
146 district in eligible schools in "D" and "F" rated school districts  
147 having proportionally the largest population of underserved  
148 at-risk four-year-old children. Unexpended funds from the prior  
149 fiscal year for this program shall be carried forward and shall  
150 remain in the program.

151 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
152 and after July 1, 2024.

