

By: Representatives Faulkner, Clark, James- To: Education
Jones, Brown, Denton, Karriem, Summers,
Holloway (76th), Anderson (110th), Crudup,
Gibbs (36th), Gibbs (72nd), Jackson (11th),
Kinkade, Mansell, Mickens, Sanders, Taylor,
Thompson, Butler-Washington, Hulum, Paden, Nelson

HOUSE BILL NO. 857

1 AN ACT TO EXPAND THE PROVISIONS OF THE LITERACY-BASED
2 PROMOTION ACT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CERTAIN INTERVENTION AND
3 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR LITERACY PROFICIENCY AMONG STUDENTS
4 IN GRADE 4 THROUGH GRADE 8; TO DEFINE TERMINOLOGY; TO REQUIRE THE
5 STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR
6 SCHOOL AND DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS, TEACHERS, LITERACY
7 COACHES, INTERVENTIONISTS, TUTORS AND OTHER IDENTIFIED PERSONNEL
8 OF FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS TO
9 ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS
10 WITH READING DIFFICULTIES; TO PRESCRIBE WHAT THE SYSTEM OF
11 SUPPORTS SHALL ENTAIL; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
12 EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND PROMULGATE RULES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
13 OF AN EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM OF LITERACY INTERVENTION FOR STUDENTS
14 IN GRADE 4 THROUGH GRADE 8; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
15 EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A FORMULA TO IDENTIFY MIDDLE LITERACY SUPPORT
16 SCHOOLS (M-LSS) BASED ON READING PROFICIENCY DATA AS DETERMINED BY
17 THE MISSISSIPPI ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (MAAP); TO REQUIRE THE
18 STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
19 LEGISLATURE BY DECEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR OF THE PROGRAM
20 IMPLEMENTATION OVER THE COURSE OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR; AND FOR
21 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

23 **SECTION 1.** It is the intent of the Legislature to expand
24 upon the literacy success achieved by Mississippi teachers and
25 students in kindergarten through Grade 3 by providing the support
26 and resources required for expansion of the state's literacy
27 program to Grade 4 through Grade 8.



28 **SECTION 2.** As used in this act, the following terms shall
29 have the meaning ascribed herein, unless context of use clearly
30 requires otherwise:

31 (a) "Science of reading" refers to the large body of
32 evidence that informs:

33 (i) How proficient reading and writing develop;

34 (ii) Why some have difficulty; and

35 (iii) How to most effectively assess and teach

36 and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and
37 intervention for reading difficulties.

38 (b) "Three-cueing system" means any model of teaching
39 students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax and visual
40 cues, which may also be known as "MSV".

41 (c) "Universal screener" means an assessment that is
42 administered three (3) times per year, initially within the first
43 thirty (30) days of the school year and repeated at midyear and at
44 the end of the school year to identify or predict students who may
45 be at risk for poor reading outcomes and is typically brief and
46 conducted with all students at a particular grade level.

47 (d) "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability
48 that is neurobiological in origin. Dyslexia is characterized by
49 difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by
50 poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties
51 typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of
52 language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive



53 abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.
54 Secondary consequences may include problems in reading
55 comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede
56 growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

57 (e) "Structured literacy" means an evidence-based
58 approach to teaching oral and written language aligned to the
59 science of reading. It is based on the science of how kids learn
60 to read and is characterized by direct, explicit, systematic,
61 sequential, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction in phonology,
62 sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax
63 and semantics.

64 **SECTION 3.** The State Department of Education shall provide a
65 system of support for school and district instructional leaders,
66 teachers, literacy coaches, interventionists, tutors and other
67 identified personnel of Fourth-, Fifth-, Sixth-, Seventh- and
68 Eighth-Grade students to ensure that they have the knowledge and
69 skills to support students with reading difficulties. The system
70 of support shall include:

71 (a) Professional learning for school and district
72 instructional leaders, teachers, special education teachers,
73 literacy coaches, interventionists, tutors and other identified
74 personnel of Fourth-, Fifth-, Sixth-, Seventh- and Eighth-Grade
75 students. Comprehensive training grounded in the science of
76 reading to ensure all teachers have the knowledge and skills to
77 support a range of students with diverse needs, students with



78 reading difficulties, multilingual students and students with
79 characteristics of dyslexia, including:

80 (i) Explicit and systematic instruction in
81 phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, decoding,
82 encoding, fluency including accuracy, morphology including
83 morphological awareness and etymology, vocabulary, comprehension
84 and building content knowledge;

85 (ii) Strategies to increase educator knowledge of
86 reading and writing basics for students in Grade 4 through Grade
87 8;

88 (iii) Evidence-based strategies for motivating and
89 engaging adolescent learners; and

90 (iv) Research-based strategies for accommodations
91 and scaffolding instruction for struggling readers and writers;
92 and

93 (b) Approaches to assist educators in determining
94 causes of reading difficulties, including dyslexia and other
95 learning differences, for students in Grade 4 through Grade 8 and
96 how word reading, vocabulary, content knowledge, comprehension and
97 writing are affected;

98 (c) Job-embedded coaching support for teachers of Grade
99 4 through Grade 8 based on the State Department of Education's
100 Literacy Coaching Model; and



101 (d) Educator preparation programs that equip candidates
102 seeking licensure for elementary, special education and middle
103 school education with training and instruction to:

104 (i) Effectively teach aligned to scientifically
105 based reading instruction, including explicit and systematic
106 instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle,
107 decoding, encoding, fluency, morphology including etymology,
108 vocabulary, comprehension, and building content knowledge;

109 (ii) Implement evidence-based reading instruction
110 using high-quality instructional materials;

111 (iii) Provide effective instruction and
112 interventions for a range of students with diverse needs,
113 including multilingual students and students with characteristics
114 of dyslexia;

115 (iv) Understand and use student data to make
116 instructional decisions; and

117 (v) Incorporate literacy instruction across all
118 subject matter content areas.

119 **SECTION 4.** The State Board of Education shall develop and
120 promulgate rules for and shall implement an evidence-based program
121 of literacy intervention and support for students in Grade 4
122 through Grade 8. The program shall include:

123 (a) An approved list of universal screeners to be
124 administered three (3) times per year, initially within the first
125 thirty (30) days of the school year and repeated at midyear and at



126 the end of the school year with progress monitoring capabilities,
127 and a diagnostic tool to support teachers with targeting
128 instruction based on students needs;

129 (b) The means by which schools and students shall be
130 identified for reading intervention and support;

131 (c) The types of interventions and supports to be
132 provided to students identified as having a significant reading
133 deficiency;

134 (d) The manner and timeframe in which those
135 interventions and supports shall be provided; and

136 (e) A credit-bearing structured literacy course for
137 students in Grade 6 through Grade 8 designed to provide
138 evidence-based reading and writing interventions aligned to the
139 science of reading.

140 (2) The program shall not include intervention resources or
141 instructional materials that use the three-cueing systems method
142 of teaching word reading.

143 **SECTION 5.** The State Department of Education shall develop a
144 formula to identify Middle Literacy Support Schools (M-LSS) based
145 on reading proficiency data as determined by the Mississippi
146 Academic Assessment Program (MAAP). Each local school district in
147 which a M-LSS is located shall implement with fidelity the middle
148 grades literacy program established under Sections 3 and 4 of this
149 act by:



150 (a) Assisting in the identification of student
151 participants;
152 (b) Making teachers and interventionists available for
153 related training and development; and
154 (c) Adhering to the rules promulgated by the Department
155 for the expansion of literacy success to middle grades.

156 (2) The parents or legal guardian of any student in Grade 4
157 through Grade 8 who is identified as having a significant reading
158 deficiency shall be notified in writing by the district no later
159 than fifteen (15) days after the identification of the reading
160 deficiency. The notification shall include:

161 (a) That his or her child has been identified as having
162 a significant reading deficiency; and

163 (b) A description of the proposed interventions and
164 supplemental instructional services that will be provided to the
165 student to correct the deficiency.

166 **SECTION 6.** No later than December 1 of each year, the State
167 Department of Education shall report, in writing to the
168 Legislature, a summary of program implementation in the previous
169 school year, including, but not limited to:

170 (a) The number of students in Grade 4 through Grade 8
171 identified as having a significant reading deficiency;

172 (b) Of the identified students, the number who were
173 provided literacy interventions and support;



174 (c) The names of the school districts and schools in
175 which participating students were enrolled at the time of
176 intervention;

177 (d) Evidence that the program is leading to improved
178 student literacy outcomes as demonstrated by school-level
179 assessment data; and

180 (e) As needed, recommendations for legislative action
181 that would further improve literacy outcomes.

182 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
183 and after July 1, 2025.

