

Literacy, Students Big Winners of Legislative Session

BATON ROUGE - The Center for Literacy and Learning today declared that literacy was of the big winners of the recently concluded 2022 Louisiana Legislative Session.

Seven key bills supported by The Center for Literacy and Learning and other literacy advocates were passed by legislators that will begin to put in place policies and evidence-based models that will help improve Louisiana's literacy rates and better assist students who are struggling to read at grade level.

"Legislators get an A for making literacy instruction and support a priority this legislative session," The Center for Literacy and Learning President and CEO John E. Wyble, Ph.D., said. "There is no more critical issue to the future of Louisiana right now than the intersection of literacy and economic development. Through efforts like these, careful implementation and regular evaluation of impacts, Louisiana will be able to begin closing the reading gaps in our state."

Literacy legislation passed includes:

HB 214 by Rep. Richard Nelson (R-Mandeville) strengthens teacher certification standards by requiring applicants for initial certification to teach kindergarten through third grade to pass a test around reading instruction based on scientific and evidence-based principles.

HB 852 by Rep. Laurie Schlegel (R-Metairie) creates a book delivery program for certain public school students in pre-kindergarten through the 5th grade who scores below grade level on literacy assessments.

HB 865 by Rep. Nelson removes reading models and techniques that "employ the three-cueing system model of reading, visual memory as the primary basis for teaching word recognition, or the three-cueing system model of reading based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual. The bill reaffirms that literacy materials align with state content standards and are based on literacy strategies that are backed by scientific research. The legislation passed both the House and Senate with no opposition votes.

HB 911, also known as the Earl Michael Willis Literacy Act, by Rep. Jason Hughes (D-New Orleans) provides for two additional literacy screenings in grades Kindergarten through third grade, with notification to parents when students are identified with literacy skills that are below grade level. The bill requires an individual reading improvement plan to be created by school officials, in coordination with parents, for those students identified as reading below grade level. Willis, who served as vice president of policy for what is now known as The Center for Literacy and Learning, unexpectedly passed away in May 2021.

SB 47 by Sen. Cleo Fields (D-Baton Rouge) will require local public school boards to develop a mixed provider delivery model for prekindergarten instruction.

SB 169 by Sen. Beth Mizell (R-Franklinton) requires a task force of the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission to study and make recommendations regarding compensation within the early childhood care and education field. The task force will be required to issue a report on the matter to the legislature annually. The bill was signed by Governor John Bel Edwards on May 24, becoming Act 82.

SB Bill 203 by Sen. Sharon Hewitt (R-Slidell), passed in the final hours of the legislative session. The bill will allow parents of students reading below grade level to take state education aid and use it for private school tuition and other expenses.

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About The Center for Literacy and Learning

Founded in 1992, The Center for Literacy & Learning is an educational non-profit whose mission is to advance literacy and learning through evidence-based practices in the classroom, home, and community.

The Center, celebrating its 30th anniversary, works toward helping close the achievement gap by providing educators with customized professional learning that is designed to empower educators in recognizing, assessing, and responding to the multiple needs of diverse learners. The Center's proven and research-based methods are built on the Science of Reading which has resulted in positive change in schools and communities.

The Center's core programs include Louisiana Reads!, Cornerstones, Lit Academy, and Growing Reading Brains. The Center also hosts in New Orleans every February Plain Talk about Literacy and Learning®, the largest literacy conference in the world, bringing together literacy and learning experts and attracting education industry professionals from all levels.

For more information about The Center for Literacy & Learning, visit www.mydll.org