

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2023

To authorize a pilot program for dyslexia screening and early literacy intervention using evidence-based services for students suspected of having an early reading deficiency or dyslexia, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 18, 2021

Ms. HOULAHAN (for herself, Mr. WESTERMAN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. BUCSHON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To authorize a pilot program for dyslexia screening and early literacy intervention using evidence-based services for students suspected of having an early reading deficiency or dyslexia, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Reading Early and
5 Addressing Dyslexia Act” or the “READ Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) More than 30,000,000 adults in the United
2 States are not able to read or write above a third-
3 grade level.

4 (2) Of adults in the United States who live in
5 poverty, nearly half have low levels of literacy.

6 (3) Children whose parents have low levels of
7 literacy are more than 70 percent more likely to also
8 have low levels of literacy and are more likely to get
9 poor grades, display behavioral problems, have high
10 absentee rates, repeat school years, or drop out.

11 (4) The 2019 National Assessment of Edu-
12 cational Progress 4th Grade Reading Level Assess-
13 ment showed the national average reading score for
14 2019 was lower than 2017.

15 (5) More than 70 percent of State prison in-
16 mates have low levels of literacy.

17 (6) Low levels of literacy are connected to over
18 \$230,000,000,000 a year in health care costs in the
19 United States.

20 (7) Dyslexia is thought to be the most common
21 neurocognitive disorder, affecting about 10 percent
22 of children in school.

23 (8) In 1997, Congress asked the Director of the
24 National Institute of Child Health and Human De-
25 velopment at the National Institutes of Health, in

1 consultation with the Secretary of Education, to con-
2 vene a national panel, the National Reading Panel,
3 to assess the status of research-based knowledge, in-
4 cluding the effectiveness of various approaches to
5 teaching children to read. The report, released in
6 2000, documented overwhelming evidence that in-
7 struction in phonics enhances all students' success in
8 learning to read.

9 (9) In 2014, in response to the Pennsylvania
10 General Assembly's passage of Act 69 of 2014, the
11 Pennsylvania Department of Education developed
12 the Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Interven-
13 tion Pilot Program, which established a three-year
14 early literacy intervention and dyslexia pilot program
15 using evidence-based screening and then evidence-
16 based instruction and intervention for students
17 found to be at risk for future reading difficulties.
18 Such Program identified students in kindergarten
19 who were deemed at risk for reading difficulties, in-
20 cluding dyslexia, using screening tests.

21 (10) Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Con-
22 necticut, Kansas, Louisiana, Montana, New Jersey,
23 Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and South Carolina have
24 all commissioned task forces on early literacy or dys-
25 lexia.

1 (11) Arkansas, Arizona, Oregon, Ohio, Indiana,
2 Illinois, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, North
3 Dakota, South Carolina, and Wyoming have put into
4 place protocols and procedures to screen for early
5 reading deficiencies and dyslexia.

6 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the
7 Congress that—

8 (1) it is in the interest of the Nation to ensure
9 all children in the United States, regardless of abil-
10 ity, disability, or circumstance, be afforded a high-
11 quality education that includes the promotion of lit-
12 eracy skills; and

13 (2) the Individual with Disabilities Education
14 Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) should be robustly
15 funded.

16 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

17 For the purposes of the pilot program authorized by
18 this Act:

19 (1) DYSLEXIA.—The term “dyslexia” means a
20 condition that—

21 (A) is characterized by difficulty with accu-
22 rate or fluent word recognition and by poor
23 spelling and decoding abilities that typically re-
24 sults from a deficit in one or more processes re-

1 lated to the phonological component of lan-
2 guage;

3 (B) is often unrelated to other cognitive
4 abilities and the provision of effective classroom
5 instruction; and

6 (C) may result in problems in reading com-
7 prehension and reduced reading experience that
8 may impede the growth of vocabulary and back-
9 ground knowledge.

10 (2) COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INSTRUC-
11 TION.—The term “comprehensive literacy instruc-
12 tion” has the meaning given such term in section
13 2221(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
14 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6641(b)).

15 (3) INTENSIVE INTERVENTION.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “intensive
17 intervention” means a structured literacy pro-
18 gram that includes explicit, multisensory, and
19 systematic phonics instruction and is delivered
20 in the manner proscribed by the developer of
21 the structured literacy program by a teacher
22 trained in such program.

23 (B) PHONICS INSTRUCTION TERMS.—With
24 respect to phonics instruction that is part of in-
25 tensive intervention—

1 (i) the term “explicit” means instruc-
2 tion in which a teacher clearly explains and
3 models key skills, with well-chosen exam-
4 ples, and students are not expected to de-
5 velop the skills based mainly on exposure
6 and incidental learning opportunities;

7 (ii) the term “multisensory” means
8 instruction that combines listening, speak-
9 ing, reading, and a tactile or kinesthetic
10 activity; and

11 (iii) the term “systematic” means in-
12 struction that is planned and provided in
13 specific sequence, with important pre-
14 requisite skills taught before more ad-
15 vanced skills, and with care taken not to
16 introduce skills in a way that is confusing
17 to students.

18 (4) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
19 “local educational agency” has the meaning given
20 such term in section 8101 of the Elementary and
21 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

22 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
23 the Secretary of Education.

24 (6) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
25 “State educational agency” has the meaning given

1 such term in section 8101 of the Elementary and
2 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

3 **SEC. 4. EARLY LITERACY AND DYSLLEXIA INTERVENTION**
4 **PILOT PROGRAM.**

5 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—Not later than 1 year after
6 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall es-
7 tablish an Early Literacy and Dyslexia Intervention Pilot
8 Program (hereinafter referred to as the “Pilot Program”),
9 in accordance with this Act, to award grants to State edu-
10 cational agencies to provide evidence-based early screen-
11 ing, multi-tier support systems, and comprehensive lit-
12 eracy education, using evidence-based methods of screen-
13 ing and intensive intervention identified in accordance
14 with subsection (d), for students served by the partici-
15 pating local educational agencies in such States. The early
16 screening and support systems identified in accordance
17 with subsection (d) and carried out under the Pilot Pro-
18 gram shall screen and support students for potential risk
19 factors for early reading deficiencies and dyslexia, such as
20 low phonemic awareness, low letter and symbol naming,
21 and inability to remember sequences.

22 (b) GRANT SELECTION AND DISTRIBUTION.—

23 (1) GRANT SELECTION.—The Secretary shall
24 award grants under this Act to 5 State educational
25 agencies to participate in the Pilot Program. The

1 Secretary shall ensure that the State educational
2 agencies awarded grants under this Act serve geo-
3 graphically, racially, and economically diverse stu-
4 dent populations.

5 (2) GRANT PERIOD.—A grant awarded to a
6 State educational agency under this Act shall be for
7 a period of 3 consecutive school years, and shall be
8 for not more than \$500,000 for each school year of
9 the grant period.

10 (c) PARTICIPATING LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGEN-
11 CIES.—Each State educational agency awarded a grant
12 under this Act shall select no fewer than 2 local edu-
13 cational agencies in the State to participate in the Pilot
14 Program under this Act. To be eligible to be selected as
15 a participating local educational agency, a local edu-
16 cational agency shall—

17 (1) have a total enrollment of at least 3,000
18 students;

19 (2) provide full-day kindergarten; and

20 (3) submit an application to the State edu-
21 cational agency at such time and containing such in-
22 formation as may be required by the Secretary and
23 the State educational agency.

24 (d) IDENTIFICATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED METHODS
25 OF SCREENING AND INTENSIVE INTERVENTION.—Not

1 later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this
2 Act, the Secretary shall, in consultation with recognized,
3 expert organizations described in section 5(a)(1), State
4 educational agencies the Secretary is consulting with in
5 accordance with section 5(b), and the State educational
6 agencies selected to participate in the Pilot Program, iden-
7 tify—

8 (1) one or more intensive interventions for stu-
9 dents in kindergarten through grade 3, which shall
10 include—

11 (A) phonological awareness and phonemic
12 awareness;

13 (B) sound symbol recognition;

14 (C) alphabet knowledge;

15 (D) decoding skills;

16 (E) encoding skills; and

17 (F) rapid naming; and

18 (2) best practices to instruct educators on—

19 (A) the science of reading;

20 (B) how to execute the intensive interven-
21 tions identified in accordance with paragraph
22 (1);

23 (C) understanding and identifying early
24 reading deficiencies and dyslexia, including how

1 to execute methods of screening identified in ac-
2 cordance with paragraph (3); and

3 (D) how to execute the intensive interven-
4 tion identified in accordance with paragraph
5 (4);

6 (3) one or more evidence-based methods of
7 screening appropriate for students in kindergarten
8 through grade 3 for potential risk factors for early
9 reading deficiencies and dyslexia, which may include
10 the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy
11 Skills tests and phonological and phonemic proc-
12 essing and rapid automatized naming tests;

13 (4) evidence-based intensive intervention for
14 students identified as being at risk for, suspected of
15 having, or having early reading deficiencies or dys-
16 lexia, or both; and

17 (5) a methodology for evaluating the effects of
18 the Pilot Program on the students identified as hav-
19 ing early reading deficiencies or dyslexia, or both.

20 (e) ACTIVITIES.—Each State educational agency par-
21 ticipating in the Pilot Program shall ensure that the fol-
22 lowing activities are carried out using the methods of
23 screening and intensive intervention identified in accord-
24 ance with subsection (d):

1 (1) Provide intensive interventions identified in
2 accordance with subsection (d)(1) that develop basic
3 reading skills and incorporate systematic phonics in-
4 struction to every student in kindergarten through
5 grade 3 who is served by a participating local edu-
6 cational agency in the State.

7 (2) Three times during each school year during
8 the grant period, including at the beginning of the
9 school year, during the middle of the school year,
10 and during the final academic period of the school
11 year, use evidence-based methods of screening identi-
12 fied in accordance with subsection (d)(3) to screen
13 each student in kindergarten through grade 3 en-
14 rolled in each participating local educational agency
15 in the State for low phonemic awareness and other
16 evidence-based risk factors for early reading defi-
17 ciencies and dyslexia.

18 (3) For each student who is suspected of having
19 an early reading deficiency or dyslexia, or both,
20 based on the results of a screening conducted in ac-
21 cordance with paragraph (2)—

22 (A) notify the parent or guardian of such
23 student that the student was screened, the re-
24 sults of the student's screening, and that the

1 student is eligible to receive reading interven-
2 tion services as part of the Pilot Program;

3 (B) provide to the parent or guardian of
4 such student information about additional
5 screening and services available through the
6 Pilot Program, and information on other re-
7 sources available through the local educational
8 agency and State to parents and students about
9 early reading deficiencies and dyslexia, and rec-
10 ommended evidence-based resources and inter-
11 ventions; and

12 (C) in order to provide additional screen-
13 ing, diagnostic assessments, or services to the
14 student under the Pilot Program, require con-
15 sent from the parent or guardian of such stu-
16 dent indicating that the parent or guardian vol-
17 untarily and knowingly consents to the contin-
18 ued participation of the student in the Pilot
19 Program.

20 (4) For each student suspected of having an
21 early reading deficiency or dyslexia based on the re-
22 sults of a screening whose parent or guardian has
23 consented to continued participation in the Pilot
24 Program—

25 (A) conduct diagnostic assessments that—

1 (i) are nationally standardized, norm-
2 referenced screening assessments of phono-
3 logical awareness, alphabetic knowledge,
4 concept of word and grapheme phoneme
5 correspondence; and

6 (ii) are proven to have predictive va-
7 lidity and classification accuracy; and

8 (B) provide intensive intervention identi-
9 fied in accordance with subsection (d)(4) in
10 areas identified by the screening, diagnostic as-
11 sessments, or progress monitoring data col-
12 lected by intervention teachers, that includes
13 timely targeted instruction and strategic re-
14 teaching of specific unlearned material or con-
15 cepts until mastery is achieved.

16 (f) STUDENT PARTICIPATION.—Participation of a
17 student in the Pilot Program, including participation in
18 screening and receipt of intensive intervention, shall not
19 at any time preclude a parent or guardian from requesting
20 or receiving an evaluation of such student for special edu-
21 cation services, including during the course of intensive
22 intervention carried out under the Pilot Program.

23 (g) REPORTS TO SECRETARY.—At the end of each
24 school year of the Pilot Program, each participating State
25 educational agency shall report to the Secretary on the

1 activities of the State educational agency, and each par-
2 ticipating local educational agency in the State, carried
3 out under the Pilot Program, including any data and in-
4 formation the Secretary may require.

5 **SEC. 5. CONSULTATION.**

6 (a) CONSULTATION AND GRANTEE ASSISTANCE.—In
7 establishing, operating, and evaluating the Pilot Program,
8 the Secretary shall—

9 (1) consult with nationally recognized organiza-
10 tions that recognize, support, and advocate for
11 science-based literacy instruction, and specialize in,
12 and have expertise with, the scientific basis of dys-
13 lexia and intensive intervention; and

14 (2) provide State educational agencies partici-
15 pating in the Pilot Program with assistance related
16 to implementation and execution of the Pilot Pro-
17 gram, including access to—

18 (A) technical support mechanisms (such as
19 training and printed reference materials); and

20 (B) the State educational agencies con-
21 sulting with the Secretary in accordance with
22 subsection (b).

23 (b) CONSULTATION WITH STATE EDUCATIONAL
24 AGENCIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
2 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
3 shall select at least one State educational agency
4 with experience implementing and carrying out a
5 program similar to the Pilot Program to be carried
6 out by State educational agencies under this Act.
7 The Secretary shall consult with the selected State
8 educational agencies with respect to providing assist-
9 ance to State educational agencies participating in
10 the Pilot Program. Such assistance may include des-
11 ignated staff assistance, conferences, shadowing, re-
12 source building and sharing, and any other assist-
13 ance the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

14 (2) SELECTION.—To be qualified to be selected
15 as a State educational agency to consult with the
16 Secretary in accordance with paragraph (1), a State
17 educational agency shall—

18 (A) submit to the Secretary an application,
19 at such time and containing such information
20 as the Secretary may require; and

21 (B) have implemented, before the date of
22 enactment of this Act, and carried out for not
23 less than one calendar year before such date, a
24 statewide program that—

- 1 (i) incorporated evidenced-based read-
2 ing instruction for all students served by
3 the State;
- 4 (ii) identified students at-risk for
5 early reading deficiencies or dyslexia in
6 kindergarten;
- 7 (iii) provided evidenced-based inten-
8 sive intervention beginning in kindergarten
9 for students identified as at-risk;
- 10 (iv) collected data to study the impact
11 of such program; and
- 12 (v) used an outside research institu-
13 tion to analyze the data and determine the
14 impact on student outcomes.

15 (3) INELIGIBILITY FOR PILOT PROGRAM.—Any
16 State educational agency selected to consult with the
17 Secretary for the purposes of this subsection shall
18 not be eligible for a grant to participate in the Pilot
19 Program.

20 **SEC. 6. EVALUATION.**

21 (a) EVALUATION.—Not later than one year after the
22 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall enter
23 into a contract with a nationally recognized educational
24 evaluation institution or organization to provide an evalua-
25 tion of the Pilot Program, which shall be completed not

1 later than one year after the completion of the third school
2 year of the Pilot Program. Such evaluation shall review
3 the effectiveness of evidence-based early reading assistance
4 programs for students with risk factors for early reading
5 deficiencies and dyslexia.

6 (b) PUBLICATION OF RESULTS.—The Secretary shall
7 make available to the public on the website of the Depart-
8 ment of Education the results of the evaluation carried
9 out under subsection (a).

10 **SEC. 7. REPORT; STUDY; RESOURCE SHARING.**

11 (a) PILOT PROGRAM REPORT.—Not later than the
12 30 days after the completion of the evaluation required
13 under section 6, the Secretary shall submit a report to
14 Congress on the outcome of the Pilot Program and other
15 related matters. Such report shall include—

16 (1) qualitative and quantitative data on the out-
17 comes of State and local educational agencies and
18 students who participated in the Program;

19 (2) qualitative and quantitative data on the ex-
20 perience of educators who participated in the Pro-
21 gram;

22 (3) a list of the methods of screening used to
23 evaluate students for low phonemic awareness and
24 other evidence-based risk factors for early reading
25 deficiencies and dyslexia, and how many partici-

1 participating State educational agencies, participating local
2 educational agencies, and participating schools used
3 each such method;

4 (4) for each school year of the Pilot Program,
5 the number of students in kindergarten through
6 grade 3 in each participating State educational
7 agency, participating local educational agency, and
8 participating school who were—

9 (A) screened for low phonemic awareness
10 and other evidence-based risk factors for early
11 reading deficiencies and dyslexia;

12 (B) suspected of having an early reading
13 deficiency or dyslexia based on the results of
14 such screening; and

15 (C) identified as having early reading defi-
16 ciencies or dyslexia based on a diagnostic as-
17 sessment; and

18 (5) any regulatory, legal, or resource barriers to
19 continuing and expanding the Program.

20 (b) STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the com-
21 pletion of the evaluation required under section 6, the Sec-
22 retary shall provide to Congress, based on the data col-
23 lected as part of the Pilot Program and evaluation carried
24 out under this Act and any other data available to the
25 Secretary—

1 (1) an assessment of—

2 (A) the impact of practices put in place
3 under the Pilot Program, including the practice
4 of instructing teachers on the science of read-
5 ing;

6 (B) the value of the inclusion of the
7 science of reading courses for teacher licensing
8 and certification; and

9 (C) how students perform when taught by
10 teachers who have received instruction on the
11 science of reading; and

12 (2) based on the data collected as part of the
13 Program, whether the Secretary recommends recon-
14 vening the National Reading Panel.

15 (c) RESOURCE SHARING.—Not later than January 1,
16 2025, the Secretary shall use the report required under
17 subsection (a) and the results of the study under sub-
18 section (b) to create and make available an online platform
19 to provide State and local educational agencies with re-
20 sources to identify and best serve students in kindergarten
21 through grade 3 who are identified as being at risk for,
22 suspected of having, or having early reading deficiencies
23 or dyslexia, which shall include—

24 (1) evidence-based methods of screening de-
25 signed specifically for students identified as being at

1 risk for, suspected of having, or having early reading
2 deficiencies or dyslexia;

3 (2) methods of targeted instruction for early
4 reading deficiencies and dyslexia;

5 (3) guidance on developing instructional plans
6 for students identified as having early reading defi-
7 ciencies or dyslexia;

8 (4) developmentally appropriate curricula and
9 engaging instructional materials and practices for
10 students identified as having early reading defi-
11 ciencies or dyslexia;

12 (5) structured multisensory approaches to teach
13 language and reading skills to all students, including
14 students identified as being at risk for, suspected of
15 having, or having early reading deficiencies or dys-
16 lexia; and

17 (6) a list of suggested training programs for
18 teachers on effective reading instruction methods.

19 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

20 There are authorized to be appropriated to award
21 grants to State educational agencies in accordance with
22 this Act, not more than \$2,500,000 for each year of the
23 Pilot Program.

○