



LFC Requester: Liu

**PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
BILL ANALYSIS
2025 REGULAR SESSION**

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Check all that apply:

Original Amendment
Correction Substitute

Date Prepared: 03/12 /25
Bill No: SB524

Agency Name and Code: PED - 924

Sponsor: Stewart

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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
None	None	N/A	NFA

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		
None	None	None	N/A	NFA

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	None	None	Non	None	N/A	NFA

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act: The [General Appropriation Act of 2025](#) (GAA), would appropriate \$14 million to the Public Education Department (PED) for early literacy support and \$30 million to the PED for a reading intervention program based in the science of reading. The GAA would also appropriate \$5.2 million from the public education reform fund for training secondary educators in evidence-based reading instruction, contingent on the passage of [Senate Bill 201](#) or similar legislation. The general fund appropriation to the state equalization guarantee distribution includes \$59 million for school districts and charter schools to meet teacher mentorship requirements pursuant to

Section 22-10A-9 NMSA 1978, create an educational plan pursuant to Section 22-8- 6 NMSA 1978, provide scientifically based literacy programs pursuant to Section 22-13-29 NMSA 1978 and Section 22-13-32 NMSA 1978, provide career technical education programs pursuant to Section 22-1-12 NMSA 1978 and implement the community school framework pursuant to Section 22-32-6 NMSA 1978.

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: The Senate Education Committee Substitute to Senate Bill 524 (SB524/SECS) would require structured literacy to be the primary approach for teaching foundational literacy skills for all public school students. The bill would require teacher preparation programs to follow the Public Education Department's (PED) standards related to components of the science of reading, including coursework, supervised field experience, and planning and teaching reading lessons, for initial and ongoing accreditation. The bill would also require notification and timely updates for parents of K-3 students on current reading performance and services available to struggling readers.

This bill does not provide an effective date. Laws go into effect 90 days after the adjournment of the Legislature enacting them, unless a later date is specified. If enacted, this bill would become effective June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill does not contain an appropriation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Scientific reading instruction (SRI), or the science of reading, is grounded in the research of how students learn to read. It emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, and is closely tied to structured literacy since both use an explicit, systematic, and sequential instructional approach to help students break down reading and writing skills into a logical sequence following a natural progression of language development.

The science of reading is not only beneficial for fluent English speakers because many languages have foundational skills and there is commonality in the process of mapping the oral language and the written word. According to [Claude Goldenberg](#), a Stanford education researcher, the cognitive processes involved in becoming biliterate are the same in each language; and ongoing development of language, vocabulary, knowledge, and other skills is essential for continued biliteracy development. Despite the evidence that all children can learn to read, many elementary and special education teachers (72 percent) use balanced literacy as their preferred approach to literacy instruction. Balanced literacy focuses on the act of reading itself rather than the skills that must be acquired to read independently. Although balanced literacy offers teachers an approach between teacher-led reading and writing and independent learning, it can be far less effective and even counterproductive.

Since [2019](#), the Public Education Department (PED) has laid the groundwork to bring the science of reading to New Mexico's classrooms. It began with legislation in 2019 that phased out balanced literacy and ushered in a more structured phonics-based literacy approach in the classroom. These efforts continued in 2020 with a statewide literacy initiative that mandated all

K-5 teachers (approximately 9,000) to enroll in Lexia’s LETRS training that increased reading proficiency by [five percentage points](#) for grades 3-8 in the 2023-2024 school year. The recent launch of the [summer reading program](#) (SRP) in 2024 also improved reading proficiency by five percentage points for participating students across 117 statewide programs. The SRP offers free structured literacy instruction to kindergarten through eighth grade students based on the science of reading with high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading, but the summer reading program is designed to be an intervention. This bill acts to put into the daily practice of teaching, high quality literacy instruction that is learned by all pre-service educators. As such, this is the next step in a series of mechanics to improve student performance.

SB524/SECS would establish standards for licensure set by the Public Education Department (PED) that require scientifically based reading instruction for all pre-service teachers in New Mexico. This provision allows incoming teachers to focus on evidence-based approaches to literacy instruction and the training to use explicit instruction in letters and sounds that is critical for beginning readers, especially those with dyslexia or phonological challenges. SB524/SECS would help to deliver a competitive workforce to school districts across the state that support the language and literacy development of English-language learners. More than half ([61 percent](#)) of students in New Mexico are reading at a basic or below basic level, and the provisions of this bill would strengthen interventions that support students at risk for reading failure.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Tailored high-quality reading instruction and the successful implementation of the five components of reading can reduce the disparities in literacy rates among students from different socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Literacy is a foundational skill that can also buffer academic remediation, learning disabilities, and other long-term academic challenges. Supporting future teachers is imperative, particularly with knowing how to teach reading, as that will help improve our state’s k-12 reading proficiency rate. Supporting teachers while they are learning helps build and retain a teacher workforce.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The PED will need to amend licensure rules to accommodate the provisions of SB524/SECS and provide a parent notification template to school districts and charters schools. The department is also directed to develop guidelines for evaluating the compliance of teacher preparation programs with science of reading requirements, as well as teacher preparation standards for teacher preparation programs related to the five components of reading, including for struggling readers, readers with dyslexia, and English learners.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to:

- SB242, Advancing the Science of Reading Act
- SB434, Math & Reading Academic Support

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The execution of the complete plan for improving literacy rates across the state will be stalled accepting that 40% proficiency is satisfactory.

AMENDMENTS

None.