

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 133

BY SENATOR HEWITT

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the state Department of Education to recreate the Louisiana Early Literacy Commission to study and make recommendations on how best to develop and implement an aligned system that provides effective, evidence-based reading instruction for children from early childhood through third grade.

WHEREAS, in the 2019 Regular Session of the Legislature, Senate Resolution No. 182 requested the creation of the Louisiana Early Literacy Commission; comprised of state education leaders, policymakers, educators, and parents, the commission convened for the first time in September 2019, and the work of the commission culminated in a report released in January 2020 and an addendum released in January 2021; and

WHEREAS, in the report addendum, the commission reaffirmed its initial goals, including supporting \$15 million in annual funding to early literacy and having every teacher use a high-quality curriculum to teach students the foundations of reading and language and literacy; and

WHEREAS, the commission also asserted that every student who struggles to read ought to receive timely, research-based literacy interventions and every school must have a culture in which all teachers are responsible for and equipped to deliver effective literacy instruction.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the state Department of Education to recreate the Louisiana Early Literacy Commission to study and make recommendations on how best to develop and implement an aligned system that provides effective, evidence-based reading instruction for children from early childhood through third grade.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on childhood literacy and recommend responses to that impact.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall be composed of twenty-four members as follows:

(1) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.

(2) The commissioner of higher education, or his designee.

(3) The governor, or his designee.

(4) Two superintendents from school districts that have implemented successful, evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents.

(5) A principal of a school that has implemented successful, evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the Louisiana Association of School Principals.

(6) A Board of Regents staff member, appointed by the commissioner of higher education.

(7) A state Department of Education staff member, appointed by the state superintendent of education.

(8) The executive director of the Children's Cabinet, or his designee.

(9) A parent with a demonstrated commitment to and understanding of evidence-based reading instruction who is a member of Decoding Dyslexia Louisiana, appointed by the state superintendent of education.

(10) Two educators with a demonstrated commitment to and understanding of evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in consultation with the state superintendent of education.

(11) The president of the Louisiana Early Childhood Association, or his designee.

(12) The president of the Louisiana Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, or his designee.

(13) The dean of a college of education of a Louisiana postsecondary education institution who is a member of Deans for Impact, appointed by the commissioner of higher education.

(14) The executive director of the Center for Development and Learning, or his

designee.

(15) The executive director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, or his designee.

(16) A faculty member or researcher from a Louisiana four-year public postsecondary education institution who is well-versed in evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the commissioner of higher education.

(17) A faculty member or researcher from a Louisiana four-year nonpublic postsecondary education institution who is well-versed in evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

(18) A member who is well-versed in evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the Louisiana Reading Association.

(19) A member who is well-versed in written language acquisition and evidence-based reading instruction, appointed by the Louisiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

(20) A teacher who works with students who are deaf or hard of hearing, appointed by the director of the Louisiana School for the Deaf.

(21) A pre-service candidate enrolled in a teacher preparation program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, appointed by the president of the Louisiana Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.

(22) One member shall be appointed from the membership of the Child Care Association of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that vacancies shall be filled in the manner of original appointment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and an affirmative vote of the quorum present is required for any official action of the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses as provided by the respective appointing authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state superintendent of education and the

commissioner of higher education or their designees shall serve as co-chairmen and the state Department of Education shall provide staff support to the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall study and make recommendations relative to improving the reading proficiency of kindergarten through third grade students and shall:

(1) Gather and analyze data to determine the degree to which evidence-based reading instruction is being implemented with fidelity in early childhood care and education settings and in public schools.

(2) Conduct an assessment of the number of new educators in classrooms, including kindergarten through third grade teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists who have undergone training in and have skills in evidence-based reading instruction.

(3) Make recommendations relative to the following:

(a) How colleges of education and alternative certification programs can provide programs of study on evidence-based reading practices for kindergarten through third grade teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists.

(b) How the state department can ensure that all teacher preparation programs produce teacher candidates with the competencies needed to teach evidence-based instruction.

(c) How to assist public schools and public school districts in adopting reading programs that utilize systematic and cumulative evidence-based reading instruction.

(d) How the state department can equip educators with the evidence-based competencies and skills needed to ensure the reading proficiency of kindergarten through third grade students.

(e) How the state department can equip parents with practical tools to address potential literacy loss from the pandemic.

(4) Review the implementation of methods to increase reading proficiency among kindergarten through third grade students and establish future benchmarks.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall submit written reports of its findings and recommendations by January 14, 2022, and January 13, 2023, and shall submit a written report on the status of the implementation of its recommendations and state

Department of Education progress by January 12, 2024, and these reports shall be submitted to the governor, the Senate Committee on Education, the Board of Regents, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Children's Cabinet.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the state superintendent of education and the commissioner of higher education.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE