



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 478**

January Session, 2015

House Bill No. 6974

*House of Representatives, April 7, 2015*

The Committee on Education reported through REP. FLEISCHMANN of the 18th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP TASK FORCE CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A DIRECTOR OF READING INITIATIVES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) There shall be a director of  
2 reading initiatives within the Department of Education. The director  
3 shall be responsible for (1) administering the intensive reading  
4 instruction program to improve student literacy in kindergarten to  
5 grade three, inclusive, and close the achievement gap, pursuant to  
6 section 10-14u of the general statutes, (2) assisting in the development  
7 and administration of the program of professional development for  
8 teachers and principals in scientifically-based reading research and  
9 instruction, pursuant to section 10-148b of the general statutes, (3)  
10 administering the coordinated state-wide reading plan for students in  
11 kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, pursuant to section 10-14v of  
12 the general statutes, (4) administering the incentive program described  
13 in section 10-14w of the general statutes, (5) providing assistance to

14 local and regional boards of education in the administration of the  
15 reading assessments described in section 10-14t of the general statutes  
16 and the implementation of school district reading plans, (6) providing  
17 information and assistance to parents and guardians of students  
18 relating to reading and literacy instruction, (7) addressing reading and  
19 literacy issues related to students who are English language learners,  
20 and (8) developing and administering any other state-wide reading  
21 and literacy initiatives for students in kindergarten to grade twelve,  
22 inclusive.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2015	New section

**ED**      *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

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***OFA Fiscal Note******State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None***Explanation***

The bill, which creates a director of reading initiatives position in the State Department of Education (SDE), is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as it conforms statute to current practice.

***The Out Years******State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 6974*****AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP TASK FORCE CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A DIRECTOR OF READING INITIATIVES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill creates a director of reading initiatives position in the State Department of Education (SDE) to:

1. administer the intensive reading instruction program (see BACKGROUND) to (a) improve literacy in grades kindergarten through three and (b) close the achievement gap;
2. assist with the development and administration of a teacher and principal professional development program about scientifically-based reading research and instruction;
3. administer the coordinated statewide reading plan for students in grades kindergarten through three (see BACKGROUND);
4. administer the reading incentive program (see BACKGROUND);
5. assist local and regional boards of education in (a) administering reading assessments and (b) implementing school district reading plans;
6. provide information on and assistance with reading and literacy to parents and guardians;
7. address English language learner reading and literacy issues; and

8. develop and administer any other statewide reading and literacy initiatives for grades kindergarten through 12.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Intensive Reading Instruction***

By law, the education commissioner must create an intensive reading program for grades kindergarten through three and select five low-achieving elementary schools to participate each year, beginning July 1, 2014. The overall program includes: (1) an intensive reading instruction strategy, (2) reading intervention plans, and (3) summer school programs. The goals of these programs are to improve literacy and narrow the achievement gaps between student groups.

Participating schools must either:

1. be located in an educational reform district (a school district in a town that has among the ten lowest District Performance Index scores measuring a district's academic performance using statewide mastery test scores);
2. participate in the commissioner's network of schools, a group of up to 25 schools selected by the education commissioner for three to five years of intensive state assistance, supervision, and intervention; or
3. have a School Performance Index score among the lowest 5% of all schools, measured by students' academic performance on statewide mastery tests for reading and mathematics (CGS § 10-14u).

### ***Coordinated Statewide Reading Plan***

Existing law requires SDE to develop a statewide reading plan for students in grades kindergarten through three by January 1, 2014.

The plan must contain research-driven strategies to produce effective reading instruction and improve student performance. It

must accomplish several tasks, including the following:

1. align K-3 reading instruction and assessment methods with Common Core State Standards;
2. intervene with students reading below grade level, and enhance instruction with students reading at or above grade level;
3. coordinate reading instruction between home and school, creating opportunities for parent involvement;
4. instruct teachers on how to use student progress data to adjust instruction methods to improve student success and assist transition to the next grade level; and
5. train and test teachers enrolled in preparation courses and professional development.

The plan must also include incentives for schools that have demonstrated significant reading improvement. It is unclear when the plan must be put into effect (CGS § 10-14v).

### ***Incentive Program***

Existing law requires the education commissioner to establish, by July 1, 2014, an incentive program to increase the number of students who meet reading goals on Connecticut mastery tests. The program must demonstrate instruction methods that schools can use to increase by 10% the number of students meeting mastery test reading goals.

The commissioner may use the following incentives, among others, to reward participating, successful schools: public recognition, financial rewards, enhanced autonomy, and operational flexibility (CGS § 10-14w).

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/18/2015)