

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5110

To add requirements for certain literacy activities carried out under the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 23, 2026

Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ) introduced the following bill; which
was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To add requirements for certain literacy activities carried
out under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
of 1965.

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 “Improving America’s
5 Literacy Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY STATE DEVELOPMENT**
 2 **GRANTS.**

3 (a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 2221(b) of the Elemen-
 4 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
 5 6641(b)) is amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (1)—

7 (A) in subparagraph (K), by striking
 8 “and” after the semicolon;

9 (B) in subparagraph (L), by striking the
 10 period and inserting “; and”; and

11 (C) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(M) does not include the use of a three-
 13 cueing model.”; and

14 (2) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(4) THREE-CUEING MODEL.—The term ‘three-
 16 cueing model’ means an instructional approach or
 17 model that—

18 “(A) uses meaning drawn from context,
 19 pictures, or syntax as the primary basis for
 20 teaching word recognition (commonly referred
 21 to as ‘meaning, structure and syntax, and vis-
 22 ual cues’ or ‘MSV’); or

23 “(B) teaches visual memory as the primary
 24 basis for word recognition.”.

1 (b) GRANTS.—Section 2222 of the Elementary and
 2 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6642) is
 3 amended—

4 (1) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the
 5 following:

6 “(c) DURATION; ANNUAL REVIEW; RENEWAL.—

7 “(1) DURATION.—A grant awarded under this
 8 subpart shall be for a period of not more than 5
 9 years total.

10 “(2) ANNUAL REVIEW.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
 12 conduct an annual review of each State edu-
 13 cational agency receiving a grant under this
 14 subpart, which shall include—

15 “(i) a review of the impacts of fund-
 16 ing under this subpart on student literacy
 17 outcomes;

18 “(ii) information about grant and
 19 subgrant recipients by geographic location;
 20 and

21 “(iii) a review of specific activities and
 22 strategies employed by such recipients to
 23 improve literacy outcomes.

24 “(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Sec-
 25 retary, or the Secretary’s designee, shall issue

1 an annual report summarizing the annual re-
2 view described in subparagraph (A) that shall
3 be made publicly available on the website of the
4 Department of Education.

5 “(3) RENEWAL.—Such grant may be renewed
6 for an additional 2-year period upon the termination
7 of the initial period of the grant if the grant recipi-
8 ent demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary
9 that—

10 “(A) the State has made adequate
11 progress; and

12 “(B) renewing the grant for an additional
13 2-year period is necessary to carry out the ob-
14 jectives of the grant described in subsection
15 (d).”;

16 (2) in subsection (d)(2)(E)—

17 (A) in clause (i), by striking “or” after the
18 semicolon;

19 (B) in clause (ii), by striking the period at
20 the end and inserting a semicolon;

21 (C) by adding at the end the following:

22 “(iii) demonstrates significant defi-
23 ciencies in reading or language arts, such
24 as through the results of the statewide aca-

1 demic assessments required under section
2 1111(b)(2); or”.

3 (D) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(F) An assurance that the State edu-
5 cational agency will use funds in accordance
6 with the limitations described in subsection
7 (e).”; and

8 (3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the
9 following:

10 “(e) AWARD CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall award
11 grants under this section to State educational agencies
12 that—

13 “(1) will use the grant funds to carry out evi-
14 dence-based activities, or support eligible entities
15 that carry out evidence-based activities, defined for
16 the purpose of this subsection as activities meeting
17 the requirements of section 8101(21)(A)(i)(I);

18 “(2) will use the grant funds to implement, or
19 support eligible entities that implement, instructional
20 strategies and materials that focus on phonemic
21 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and com-
22 prehension; and

23 “(3) do not use a three-cueing model.”.

1 **SEC. 3. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.**

2 Section 1003 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
 3 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6303) is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (e)—

5 (A) in paragraph (1)(F), by striking “and”
 6 after the semicolon;

7 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking the pe-
 8 riod and inserting “; and”; and

9 (C) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(3) an assurance that the local educational
 11 agency will comply with the requirements regarding
 12 literacy under subsection (j).”; and

13 (2) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(j) **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING LIT-**
 15 **ERACY.**—

16 “(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any other
 17 provision of this section, a State educational agency,
 18 in allocating funds to local educational agencies
 19 under this section, shall only allocate funds to local
 20 educational agencies that will ensure that literacy
 21 activities that are carried out using such funds
 22 are—

23 “(A) evidence-based, defined for the pur-
 24 pose of this subsection as activities meeting the
 25 requirements of section 8101(21)(A)(i)(I); and

1 “(B) implemented using instructional
2 strategies and materials that focus on phonemic
3 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and
4 comprehension.”.

5 **SEC. 4. RESEARCH ON LITERACY.**

6 (a) RESEARCH ON BROADER EVIDENCE IMPLEMEN-
7 TATION.—The Director of the Institute of Education
8 Sciences (referred to in this section as the “Director”)
9 shall conduct research to identify and evaluate State and
10 local strategies associated with significant improvements
11 in student literacy outcomes. Such research shall—

12 (1) examine State educational agencies and
13 local educational agencies that have demonstrated
14 sustained increases in literacy achievement, includ-
15 ing improvements on State assessments and the Na-
16 tional Assessment of Educational Progress;

17 (2) identify the instructional practices, cur-
18 ricular materials, professional development ap-
19 proaches, and policy supports implemented by such
20 agencies, such as family and community engage-
21 ment, student and teacher coaching, individualized
22 reading plans, teacher training, integration of cur-
23 riculum specialists, literacy instruction for English
24 learners, and early grade retention policies; and

1 (3) assess the extent to which such strategies
2 meet the definition of evidence-based under section
3 8101(21) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
4 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801(21)).

5 (b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 5 years
6 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director
7 shall—

8 (1) submit to the Committee on Health, Edu-
9 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the
10 Committee on Education and Workforce of the
11 House of Representatives a report containing the
12 findings of the evaluation carried out under this sec-
13 tion;

14 (2) disseminate findings regarding practices as-
15 sociated with improved literacy outcomes, including
16 through regional educational laboratories awarded
17 contracts under section 174 of the Education
18 Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9564); and

19 (3) make such report and findings publicly
20 available on the website of the Department of Edu-
21 cation.

22 **SEC. 5. RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.**

23 Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this
24 Act, shall be construed to—

1 (1) limit or alter the rights, protections, and in-
2 dividualized instructional requirements under the In-
3 dividuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.
4 1400 et seq.), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
5 of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), or the Americans with
6 Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.); or

7 (2) authorize any officer or employee of the
8 Federal Government to mandate, direct, or control a
9 State, local educational agency, or school's specific
10 instructional content, academic standards and as-
11 sessments, curricula, or program of instruction.

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