



ASSEMBLYWOMAN

**Blanca E. Rubio**

DISTRICT 48

## AB 1121 (Rubio): Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction

### SUMMARY

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AB 1121 addresses California's literacy crisis by ensuring all elementary teachers and administrators who teach reading to TK to 5<sup>th</sup> graders are trained through effective, evidence-based methods, as defined in current law. Additionally, the bill requires that instructional materials be aligned with evidence-based means of teaching literacy and the English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) framework (as defined in current law).

### BACKGROUND

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California has identified evidence-based literacy instruction as an essential foundation for teaching children to read in the ELA/ELD framework, Ed Code Section 44259, and SB 488 (Rubio).

### PROBLEM

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Despite the robust spending on K-12 education, California is facing a literacy crisis. Far too many children are not reading at grade level by the completion of third grade and will not complete elementary school with the literacy skills and language development needed for success academically and in life. The vast majority of children falling behind are economically disadvantaged, disproportionately Black and Latino, and English learners. Only 3 in 10 students from low-income families and 2 in 10 low-income Black, English learners, and students with disabilities are on grade level in ELA; overall, only 4 in 10 third-grade students are on grade level.

California is far behind other states' student reading levels. With approximately 28% of adults illiterate, California has one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the nation. Adults with limited literacy are at greater risk for remaining in poverty, less likely to be employed, more socially isolated, and less likely to live healthy lives. Additionally, our state has one of the widest proficiency gaps nationally in fourth-grade reading between low-income and non-low-income students and English learners and non-English learners.

These alarming statistics are a result of California's inadequate efforts to ensure that teachers are properly trained and provided with effective instructional materials. Although the state requires new teachers to be trained in effective literacy and evidence-based means of teaching foundational reading skills (Ed Code 44259), many current teachers and administrators have not received this essential training during the credential process. Therefore, through no fault of their own, some teachers are not properly equipped to effectively teach reading.

Further exasperating the issue, is instructional materials are being used in some classrooms that do *not* align with evidence-based means of teaching literacy, resulting in harm to children's reading development.

## **SOLUTION**

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AB 1121 requires paid professional development for current TK through 5th reading teachers and administrators who have not received training in evidence-based means of teaching literacy or reading skills as defined in current law and required for new teachers.

AB 1121 requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to update the state instructional materials list to align with evidence-based means of teaching literacy (as defined in current law) and the ELA/ELD framework. Local school districts would be required to adopt materials from the list but can receive a waiver from SBE to use other basic materials provided the materials are also in alignment with evidence-based means of teaching literacy (as defined in current law).

## **SUPPORT**

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Decoding Dyslexia CA (Co-sponsor)  
EdVoice (Co-sponsor)  
Families in Schools (Co-sponsor)

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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