

HOUSE No. 4683

House bill No. 4672, as changed by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading, amended and passed to be engrossed by the House. October 29, 2025.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to teacher preparation and student literacy.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 55A of chapter 15 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 56 to 59, inclusive, the words “(6)
3 review the progress of overall student achievement and; (7) evaluate student performance, school
4 and district management, overall district governance and any other areas deemed necessary by
5 the office” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- (6) evaluate the alignment of
6 literacy instructional materials and curricula with department-recommended evidence-based
7 literacy instruction and high-quality curricula, as those terms are defined in section 1E 1/2 of
8 chapter 69; (7) review the progress of overall student achievement; and (8) evaluate student
9 performance, school and district management, overall district governance and any other areas
10 deemed necessary by the office.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
12 section 1E the following 2 sections:-

13 Section 1E 1/2. (a) As used in this section and section 1E 3/4, the following words shall,
14 unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

15 “Evidence-based literacy instruction”, literacy instruction that is: (i) grounded in
16 scientific research methods; and (ii) demonstrated through well-designed and well-implemented
17 studies to produce significant and positive effects on student learning outcomes.

18 “Five research-based areas in reading instruction”, reading instruction that includes, but
19 shall not be limited to, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

20 “High-quality curriculum”, curriculum reviewed and approved by the department.

21 (b) No curricula selected to meet a curriculum framework pursuant to section 1E for
22 kindergarten through grade 3 literacy shall include implicit and incidental instruction in word
23 reading, visual memorization of whole words, guessing from context and picture cues, also
24 known as MSV or three-cueing; provided, that curricula selected to meet a curriculum
25 framework for kindergarten through grade 3 literacy may use pictures as a supplement to support
26 reading and literacy; and provided further, that said curriculum that uses pictures shall be in
27 compliance with subsection (c).

28 (c) Districts shall select high-quality curricula to meet the curriculum frameworks
29 pursuant to section 1E for kindergarten through grade 3 literacy that: (i) include instruction in the
30 five research-based areas in reading instruction; and (ii) utilize and are based upon evidence-
31 based literacy instruction.

32 (d)(1) A district may apply to the department for a waiver to use kindergarten through
33 grade 3 literacy instruction curriculum that does not appear on the department’s list of high-
34 quality curricula.

35 (2) In determining whether to approve a district’s waiver for a curriculum that is not
36 already on the department’s list of high-quality curricula, the department shall assess whether the
37 district’s curriculum utilizes evidence-based literacy instruction.

38 (e)(1) A district may apply to the department for a waiver to use a kindergarten through
39 grade 3 literacy instruction curriculum pilot program that utilizes curricula that the department
40 has not yet reviewed to determine if it is evidence-based literacy instruction.

41 (2) A district shall report to the department: (i) the degree to which the pilot’s
42 instructional approach is supported by some degree of scientific research; (ii) the methodology of
43 the pilot; (iii) the population that was instructed using the pilot curriculum and any demographic
44 differences between that population and the district’s student body at large; (iv) the duration of
45 any such pilot; and (v) any other considerations that the department deems relevant to the quality
46 and fairness of the pilot program’s execution and impact on student learning.

47 (3) In determining whether to approve a district’s application to participate in a pilot
48 program pursuant to this subsection, the department shall assess the quality of the proposed pilot
49 program, including, information received pursuant to paragraph (2).

50 (4) Curriculum for a pilot program that is assessed and approved by the department and
51 deemed to meet the requirements of this section shall be allowed to continue as an approved
52 literacy curriculum used for instruction in the district unless the pilot program is rescinded
53 pursuant to paragraph (7).

54 (5) A district that participates in a pilot program pursuant to this subsection shall publicly
55 post to its website any report submitted to the department with information required pursuant to
56 paragraph (2) and curriculum samples.

57 (6) The department may audit approved pilot programs at any time. The audit shall
58 include, but shall not be limited to: (i) an in-depth review of curriculum materials; (ii)
59 instructional documentation; and (iii) instructional practices in the classroom.

60 (7) The department may rescind approval of a pilot program based on audit findings
61 before the expiration of the pilot program.

62 (f) Annually, not later than October 31, each school district shall report to the department
63 the number of reading specialists, reading interventionists, literacy coordinators, school
64 librarians, library aides, education support professionals and other staff employed by the district
65 that directly support student reading and literacy development.

66 Section 1E ³/₄. (a) The department shall provide tools and resources to aid districts in
67 providing professional development aligned with evidence-based literacy instruction for literacy
68 teachers, paraprofessionals and reading specialists in kindergarten through grade 3.

69 (b) The department shall create and maintain:

70 (i) a list of department-approved professional development programs and vendors aligned
71 with evidence-based literacy instruction best practices; and

72 (ii) a set of online training modules available and free to all teachers that provide training
73 on the foundational practices and pedagogy aligned with evidence-based literacy instruction best
74 practices.

75 SECTION 3. Section 1S of said chapter 69, as appearing in the 2024 Official Edition, is
76 hereby amended by striking out, in line 41, the words “and (J)” and inserting in place thereof the
77 following words:- (J) implementing literacy instructions based on evidence-based literacy
78 instruction; and (K).

79 SECTION 4. Said section 1S of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby further
80 amended by inserting after the word “subgroups”, in line 48, the following words:- ; and
81 provided further, that district plans shall address implementation and compliance with section 1E
82 1/2.

83 SECTION 5. Said section 1S of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby further
84 amended by adding the following 2 subsections:-

85 (h)(1) Annually, not later than August 15, the department shall identify a list of data
86 requirements that districts shall report on related to curricula consistent with evidence-based
87 literacy instruction pursuant to section 1E 1/2. The department shall publish the list of data
88 requirements on the department’s website.

89 (2) Annually, not later than October 31, each district shall report to the department the
90 data required by the department pursuant to paragraph (1).

91 (i) Annually, not later than December 31, the department shall aggregate data collected
92 from each district pursuant to subsection (h), prepare and publish a report on the aggregated data
93 and file the report with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate and the joint
94 committee on education. The department shall publish the report on the department’s website.

95 SECTION 6. Section 2 of chapter 70 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
96 amended by inserting after the definition of “Equalized property valuation” the following
97 definition:-

98 “Evidence-based literacy instruction”, as defined in section 1E 1/2 of chapter 69.

99 SECTION 7. Said section 2 of said chapter 70, as so appearing, is hereby further
100 amended by inserting after the definition of “Excess effort” the following definition:-

101 “Five research-based areas in reading instruction”, as defined in section 1E ½ of chapter
102 69.

103 SECTION 8. Section 38G of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
104 amended by striking out the twenty-fourth paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following
105 2 paragraphs:-

106 For the purposes of certifying educators, the board shall establish policies and guidelines
107 and the commissioner may approve preparation programs devoted to the preparation of teachers
108 and other educational personnel. Said policies and guidelines shall include alignment with
109 evidence-based literacy instruction for educator preparation programs. The department shall
110 require a fee for any application submitted to the department for review and approval of an
111 educator preparation program. The secretary of administration and finance shall annually set the
112 fee pursuant to section 3B of chapter 7 and the fee shall cover the costs pursuant to this
113 paragraph. A college or university or school or district or other institution offering such an
114 approved program shall certify to the commissioner that a candidate has demonstrated
115 satisfactory competence in the skills and knowledge expected of college graduates in the most
116 advanced nations and has completed the approved program.

117 The commissioner shall evaluate approved educator preparation programs to ensure that
118 candidates are prepared to meet the needs of all students in the commonwealth. The
119 commissioner shall meaningfully differentiate the performance of individual approved educator
120 preparation program providers, including, but not limited to, quality and outcomes of candidates
121 once they are employed. The review shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) program
122 implementation of evidence-based preparation in the five research-based areas in reading
123 instruction; and (ii) the extent to which new teachers' effectiveness addresses persistent
124 disparities in achievement. The commissioner shall annually publish data on approved programs,
125 including, but not limited to, the current approval status, enrollment, demographics of
126 candidates, areas of licensure being pursued and employment rate of graduates.

127 SECTION 9. Section 57A of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
128 adding the following sentence:- The commissioner shall annually publish data on which
129 screening assessments are employed by each school district, including, but not limited to,
130 kindergarten through grade 3 literacy screening assessments and whether the screening
131 assessments are approved by the department.

132 SECTION 10. Said chapter 71 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 57A
133 the following 2 sections:-

134 Section 57B. (a) For the purposes of this section and section 57C, the term "screening
135 assessments" shall mean tools and assessments that can be used to identify students at risk for
136 poor academic outcomes as determined by the department.

137 (b) The department, in consultation with the department of early education and care, shall
138 issue guidelines to districts requiring screening procedures and protocols for reading ability and

139 progress in literacy skills for all students in kindergarten through grade 3 using screening
140 assessments. The guidelines shall include a threshold at which a student is determined to be
141 “significantly below” the grade level benchmark. The commissioner shall annually publish data
142 on which screening assessments are employed by each district to conduct reading screening.

143 Section 57C. (a) Each district shall, not less than twice per year, assess each student’s
144 reading ability and progress in literacy skills from kindergarten through at least grade 3, using a
145 screening assessment approved by the department. The screening assessment of the student’s
146 reading ability and progress shall be consistent with section 2 of chapter 71B, the department’s
147 dyslexia guidelines issued pursuant to section 57A and literacy guidelines issued pursuant to
148 section 57B.

149 (b) If a screening assessment determines that a student is significantly below relevant
150 grade level benchmarks in specific literacy skills, the district shall determine which actions
151 within the general education program will meet the student’s needs, including, but not limited to,
152 differentiated or supplementary evidence-based reading instruction and ongoing monitoring of
153 progress. Not later than 30 days after a screening result that determines a student is significantly
154 below the relevant grade level benchmark, the district shall inform the student’s parent or
155 guardian of the screening results and the school’s response and shall offer the opportunity for a
156 follow-up discussion.

157 SECTION 11. Chapter 238 of the acts of 2024 is hereby amended by striking out section
158 290 and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

159 SECTION 290. (a) As used in this section, “high-needs district” shall mean a school or
160 district with a high percentage of low-income students and English learners, which may include a
161 school or district implementing turnaround plans.

162 (b) The department of elementary and secondary education shall, subject to
163 appropriation, develop and administer a pilot program, in partnership with a college, university,
164 school, district or other institution offering an educator preparation program approved pursuant
165 to section 38G of chapter 71 of the General Laws, for teacher apprenticeships during which
166 participants shall complete a paid teaching apprenticeship for school years in a high-needs
167 district in a classroom with a highly proficient mentor teacher. The department of elementary and
168 secondary education shall determine qualifications of a highly proficient mentor teacher using
169 factors, including, but not limited to, recent evaluation ratings, student growth data and
170 demonstrated evidence-based practices. The program shall provide funds to candidates to support
171 earning a competitive wage, including, but not limited to, support for childcare, transportation,
172 textbooks and other core expenses, to ensure a diverse cohort are able to fully participate.

173 (c) The department of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate regulations
174 defining the apprenticeship and the target candidates to be admitted to the program.

175 (d)(1) Not later than 1 year after the completion of the pilot program, the department of
176 elementary and secondary education shall file a report with the clerks of the house of
177 representatives and the senate and the joint committee on education on the outcome of the pilot
178 program. The report shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) data on the demographics of
179 participants, participants’ licensure pass rates on the MTEL and hiring rates; and (ii) an
180 assessment of the feasibility of applying for status as a United States Registered Apprenticeship.

181 (2) Not later than 3 years after the completion of the pilot program, the department of
182 elementary and secondary education shall file a report with the clerks of the house of
183 representatives and the senate and the joint committee on education, which shall include, but
184 shall not be limited to, an evaluation of the impact of apprentices on student outcomes as
185 compared to teachers not participating in the pilot program using student growth measures and
186 an assessment of the feasibility of expanding to a teacher apprenticeship for all teacher
187 candidates or all candidates in high-needs districts.

188 SECTION 11A. Item 1596-2437 of section 2F of chapter 9 of the acts of 2025 is hereby
189 amended by striking out clauses (iv) and (v) and inserting in place thereof the following clauses:-
190 (iv) the coordination and alignment of assessment and screening, curriculum and professional
191 development across the departments of early education and care and elementary and secondary
192 education; (v) other professional learning initiatives and supports related to literacy assessment,
193 measurement and instruction for specific groups of learners or specific evidence based materials;
194 and (vi) investing in public school libraries and the hiring by school districts of reading
195 specialists, reading interventionists, literacy coordinators, school librarians, library aides,
196 education support professionals or other staff to support student reading and literacy
197 development; provided, that such staff shall be employees of the school district.

198 SECTION 11B. (a) The department of elementary and secondary education, in
199 collaboration with stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the Massachusetts Teachers
200 Association, the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association
201 of School Committees, Inc. and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Inc.,
202 shall study and make recommendations relative to the education workforce in public school
203 districts in the area of reading and literacy development.

204 (b) The study and recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to, an analysis
205 of: (i) existing student access to public school libraries and its impact on student reading and
206 literacy and recommendations to ensure equitable access to school libraries for all students; and
207 (ii) data reported by school districts to the department of elementary and secondary education on
208 the number of reading specialists, reading interventionists, literacy coordinators, school
209 librarians, library aides, education support professionals and other staff employed by the district
210 that directly support student reading and literacy development and the development of
211 recommended staffing levels based on that analysis. The staffing levels recommended by the
212 department shall be differentiated for school districts based on the unique learning needs of
213 districts' student populations, including, but not limited to, the number of low-income students,
214 emergent bilingual learners and students with disabilities enrolled in a school district.

215 (c) Not later than December 31, 2026, the department shall submit a report on its study
216 and recommendations to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the house and
217 senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education. The report shall
218 include an estimated cost for school districts to come into compliance with the recommended
219 staffing levels.

220 SECTION 12. The department of elementary and secondary education shall update or
221 promulgate new rules and regulations as it deems necessary to implement this act.

222 SECTION 12A. School districts shall begin reporting required pursuant to subsection (f)
223 of section 1E ½ of the General Laws not later than October 31, 2026 for the 2025-2026 school
224 year.

225 SECTION 13. School districts shall begin reporting required pursuant to paragraph (2) of
226 subsection (h) of section 1S of chapter 69 of the General Laws in the 2026-2027 school year.

227 SECTION 14. Not later than December 31, 2027, the department of elementary and
228 secondary education shall submit the first report required pursuant to subsection (i) of section 1S
229 of chapter 69 of the General Laws.