

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, January 22, 2026.

The committee on Senate Ways and Means to whom was referred the House Bill relative to teacher preparation and student literacy (House, No. 4683) (also based on Senate, No. 2855); reports, recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text of Senate document numbered 2924.

For the committee,  
Michael J. Rodrigues

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 29 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024 Official Edition,  
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 2NNNNNN, inserted by section 19 of chapter 73 of  
3 the acts of 2025, the following section:-

4                   Section 2000000. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the  
5                   commonwealth a separate, non-budgeted special revenue fund known as the Early Literacy Fund,  
6                   which shall be administered by the secretary of education. The fund shall be credited with: (i)  
7                   appropriations or other money authorized or transferred by the general court and specifically  
8                   designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds from public and private sources including, but  
9                   not limited to, gifts, grants and donations; and (iii) any interest earned on such money.

10 (b) Amounts credited to the fund shall be expended, without further appropriation, to: (i)  
11 develop a free, complete high-quality curriculum for kindergarten through grade 3 that meets  
12 frameworks established in section 1E of chapter 69 of the General Laws; (ii) implement section  
13 1E ¾ of said chapter 69; and (iii) provide grants to school districts to support: (1) updating  
14 curricula to meet the curriculum frameworks established in said section 1E ½ of said chapter 69;  
15 (2) purchasing materials related to such curricula; and (3) providing professional development to  
16 educators to support implementation of new curricula.

17 (c) Any unexpended balance in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall remain available  
18 for expenditure in subsequent fiscal years.

19 SECTION 2. The first sentence of the fifth paragraph of section 55A of chapter 15 of the  
20 General Laws, as appearing in the 2024 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out  
21 clauses (6) and (7) and inserting in place thereof the following 3 clauses:- (6) evaluate the  
22 alignment of literacy instructional materials and curricula with department-recommended  
23 evidence-based literacy instruction and high-quality curricula, as defined in section 1E ½ of  
24 chapter 69; (7) review the progress of overall student achievement; and (8) evaluate student  
25 performance, school and district management, overall district governance and any other areas  
26 deemed necessary by the office.

27 SECTION 3. Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
28 section 1E the following 2 sections:-

29 Section 1E ½. (a) As used in this section and section 1E ¾, the following words shall  
30 have the following meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:  
31 “Evidence-based literacy instruction”, literacy instruction that: (i) is based on methods  
32 backed by scientific research; and (ii) has a demonstrated record of success in increasing student  
33 competency in reading ability, vocabulary, oral language and comprehension through well-  
34 designed and well-implemented studies to produce measurable and positive effects on student  
35 learning outcomes.

36 “Five research-based areas in reading instruction”, phonemic awareness, phonics,  
37 fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; provided, however, that comprehension shall include  
38 oral reading, oral communication skills and reading comprehension.

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

40           (b) A district shall select a high-quality curriculum to meet the curriculum frameworks  
41           under section 1E for kindergarten through grade 3 literacy that: (i) includes instruction in the five  
42           research-based areas in reading instruction and oral language development; and (ii) utilizes and  
43           is based upon evidence-based literacy instruction.

44           (c)(1) A district may apply for and the department may grant a waiver for the district to  
45           use a kindergarten through grade 3 literacy instruction curriculum that does not appear on the  
46           department’s list of high-quality curricula and that has not already been reviewed by the  
47           department; provided, however, that any such literacy instruction curriculum shall utilize and be  
48           based on evidence-based literacy instruction and meet quality standards determined by the  
49           department.

50           (2) A waiver granted pursuant to this subsection may be approved for a period of not  
51           more than 5 years; provided, however, that the department may approve the renewal of such  
52           waiver if the district continues to utilize evidence-based literacy practices and meet quality  
53           standards as determined by the department. A district shall report to the department during the  
54           waiver period any student data as requested by the department.

55           (3) A district that receives a waiver under this subsection shall publicly post to its website  
56           any report submitted to the department with information required pursuant to paragraph (2) and  
57           curriculum samples.

58           (4) The department may audit waivers approved pursuant to this subsection at any time.  
59           The audit shall include, but not be limited to, a comprehensive review of the: (i) curriculum  
60           materials; (ii) instructional documentation; and (iii) instructional practices in the classroom.

61 (5) The department may rescind approval of a waiver approved pursuant to this  
62 subsection based on audit findings before the expiration of the waiver; provided, however, that if  
63 a waiver is rescinded, the department shall assist the district with implementing a high-quality  
64 curriculum.

65 (d) The department shall maintain and make available to school districts a free, complete  
66 high-quality curriculum for kindergarten through grade 3 that meets frameworks under section  
67 1E; provided, however, that such free, complete high-quality curriculum or a free curriculum  
68 certified pursuant to subsection (b) of section 1E ¾ shall meet any requirements under section  
69 27C of chapter 29.

70           Section 1E ¾. (a) The department shall provide tools and resources to aid districts in  
71           providing professional development aligned with evidence-based literacy instruction for literacy  
72           teachers, paraprofessionals and reading specialists in kindergarten through grade 3.

73 (b) The department shall create and maintain: (i) a list of department-approved  
74 professional development programs and vendors aligned with evidence-based literacy instruction  
75 best practices; (ii) a set of online training modules available at no cost to all teachers that provide  
76 training on the foundational practices and pedagogy aligned with evidence-based literacy  
77 instruction best practices; and (iii) a list of high-quality curricula. The department shall update  
78 said lists and modules to account for developments in best practices and curriculum.

79 SECTION 4. Section 1S of said chapter 69, as appearing in the 2024 Official Edition, is  
80 hereby amended by striking out, in line 41, the words “and (J)” and inserting in place thereof the  
81 following words:- (J) implementing evidence-based literacy instruction; and (K).

82                   SECTION 5. Said section 1S of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby further  
83                   amended by inserting after the word “subgroups”, in line 48, the following words:- ; and  
84                   provided further, that the district plan shall address the implementation of and compliance with  
85                   section 1E ½.

86                   SECTION 6. Said section 1S of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby further  
87                   amended by adding the following 2 subsections:-

88                   (h)(1) Annually, not later than August 15, the department shall identify a list of data  
89                   requirements that each district shall report to the department related to curricula consistent with  
90                   evidence-based literacy instruction under section 1E ½. The department shall make the list of  
91                   data requirements publicly available on the department’s website.

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

94                   (i) Annually, not later than December 31, the department shall: (i) aggregate data  
95                   collected from each district pursuant to subsection (h); (ii) prepare and publish a report on the  
96                   aggregated data; and (iii) file the report with the clerks of the senate and the house of  
97                   representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on  
98                   education. The department shall make the report publicly available on the department’s website.

99                   SECTION 7. Section 2 of chapter 70 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
100                   amended by inserting after the definition of “Equalized property valuation” the following  
101                   definition:-

102                   “Evidence-based literacy instruction”, as defined in section 1E ½ of chapter 69.

103            SECTION 8. Said section 2 of said chapter 70, as so appearing, is hereby further  
104    amended by inserting after the definition of “Excess effort” the following definition:-

105            “Five research-based areas in reading instruction”, as defined in section 1E ½ of chapter  
106    69.

107            SECTION 9. Section 38G of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
108    amended by inserting after the word “personnel”, in line 281, the following words:-

109            ; provided, however, that policies and guidelines shall align with evidence-based literacy  
110    instruction for educator preparation programs to be approved by the commissioner.

111            SECTION 10. Said chapter 71 is hereby further amended by striking out section 57A, as  
112    so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

113            Section 57A. The department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation  
114    with the department of early education and care, shall, subject to appropriation, issue guidelines  
115    to assist districts in developing screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate at  
116    least 1 potential indicator of a neurological learning disability including, but not limited to,  
117    dyslexia. Districts shall annually report to the department of elementary and secondary education  
118    on the procedures or protocols used for screening for risk of dyslexia including, but not limited  
119    to, evidence-based tools and assessments broken down by component skills for each grade level  
120    and timeframes for such assessments. The commissioner shall annually make publicly available  
121    on the department’s website data on which screening assessments are employed by each school  
122    district, including, but not limited to, kindergarten through grade 3 literacy screening  
123    assessments and whether the screening assessments utilized are approved by the department.

124                   SECTION 11. Said chapter 71 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 57A  
125                   the following 2 sections:-

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

129                   (b) The department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the  
130                   department of early education and care, shall issue regulations requiring districts to adopt  
131                   screening procedures and protocols for reading ability and progress in literacy skills for all  
132                   students in kindergarten through grade 3 using screening assessments. The regulations shall  
133                   include a threshold at which a student is determined to be significantly below the grade level  
134                   benchmark. The commissioner shall annually make publicly available on the department’s  
135                   website data on which screening assessments are employed by each district to conduct reading  
136                   screening.

137                   Section 57C. (a) Each district shall assess each student’s reading ability and progress in  
138                   literacy skills from kindergarten through at least grade 3, using a screening assessment approved  
139                   by the department of elementary and secondary education, at such intervals as determined by the  
140                   commissioner but in no event less than twice per school year. The department shall update  
141                   approved screening assessments to remain current with best practices and evidence-based  
142                   assessments. The screening assessment of the student’s reading ability and progress shall be  
143                   consistent with section 2 of chapter 71B, the department’s dyslexia guidelines issued pursuant to  
144                   section 57A and literacy guidelines issued pursuant to section 57B.

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

154 SECTION 12. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, in fiscal year  
155 2026, the comptroller shall transfer \$25,000,000 from the Education and Transportation Capital  
156 and Innovation Fund established in section 2DDDDDD of chapter 29 of the General Laws to the  
157 Early Literacy Fund established in section 2OOOOOO of said chapter 29.

158 SECTION 13. The department of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate  
159 regulations as it deems necessary to implement this act and to ensure that high-quality curricula  
160 meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

161 SECTION 14. School districts shall begin reporting required pursuant to paragraph (2) of  
162 subsection (h) of section 1S of chapter 69 of the General Laws in the 2027-2028 school year.

163 SECTION 15. Not later than December 31, 2027, the department of elementary and  
164 secondary education shall make publicly available on the department's website the first report  
165 required pursuant to subsection (i) of section 1S of chapter 69 of the General Laws.

166           SECTION 16. Prior to the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, each school district  
167   shall: (i) adopt high-quality curriculum for kindergarten through grade 3 literacy that meets the  
168   curriculum frameworks pursuant to section 1E ½ of chapter 69 of the General Laws; or (ii) have  
169   an approved curriculum waiver from the department of elementary and secondary education  
170   pursuant to said section 1E ½ of said chapter 69.

171           SECTION 17. Not later than 6 months following passage of this act, the department of  
172   elementary and secondary education shall develop a list of high-quality curricula and make  
173   available for school districts the free and complete high-quality curriculum for kindergarten  
174   through grade 3 as required pursuant to subsection (d) of section 1E ½ of chapter 69 of the  
175   General Laws.