

Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) Act

The LEARN Act would support comprehensive state and local literacy programs to ensure that children from birth to grade twelve have the reading and writing skills necessary for success in school and beyond. Specifically, the bill would:

I. Provide federal support for literacy programs by:

- a) authorizing \$2.35 billion for comprehensive literacy programs, providing funds for both existing and new high-quality state and local school-based literacy programs that span birth to grade twelve, through the use of a state formula grant;
- b) allocating not less than 10 percent of the \$2.35 billion for children from birth to age five, not less than 40 percent for students in kindergarten to grade five, and not less than 40 percent for students grades six through twelve; and
- c) requiring a rigorous national evaluation of the programs that includes stringent conflict of interest restrictions for the programs' peer review process.

II. Enhance each state's role in improving literacy instruction by:

- a) supporting the formation of a state literacy leadership team made up of literacy experts and relevant stakeholders;
- b) supporting the development of a comprehensive state literacy plan, including a needs assessment and an implementation plan to ensure high-quality instruction in reading and writing from early childhood education through grade twelve;
- c) requiring each state to provide competitive subgrants to local educational agencies;
- d) targeting funding to schools with the greatest need (as defined by poverty or low student literacy achievement);
- e) requiring each state to provide technical assistance to local educational agencies on how to implement high-quality professional development programs for literacy instruction;
- f) requiring each state to review pre-service course work as well as state licensure and certification requirements, and make recommendations to improve training in high-quality literacy instruction; and
- g) allowing states with effective literacy instruction programs to keep and enhance their existing program structure;

III. Support the creation of local high-quality literacy programs in schools by:

- a) providing high-quality professional development for instructional staff that is job-embedded, ongoing, and research-based, providing teachers with expertise in literacy instruction appropriate to specific grade levels, analyzing data to improve student learning, and effective implementation of literacy instruction strategies;
- b) providing students with explicit, systematic, and developmentally appropriate instruction in reading and writing, including but not limited to vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, and the use of diverse texts;
- c) utilizing diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to inform and improve instruction and student learning at all age levels; and
- d) supporting schoolwide literacy programs and additional literacy supports to address the specific learning needs of struggling readers and writers, including English language learners and students with disabilities.