

Bill Summary
2nd Session of the 59th Legislature

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Author:	Sen. Pugh
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Bill Analysis

SB 1778 amends the Strong Readers Act. It directs the State Board of Education to approve one screening instrument, rather than no fewer than three, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. It requires a school district to provide at least monthly written progress updates to the parent or legal guardian of a student provided an individual reading intervention plan. It requires a district's strong readers plan to include a plan on how it will provide transitional instruction to certain students. The bill directs first-, second-, and third-grade students who are identified as having a significant reading deficiency to be provided intensive intervention services beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, it requires a first-grade student identified as not meeting grade-level targets in reading by the end of the first grade to be placed in a stand-alone transitional second-grade classroom or be promoted to the second grade while being provided targeted transitional intervention instruction in pull-out sessions. Also beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, the bill requires a second-grade student identified as not meeting grade-level targets in reading by the end of the second grade to be placed in a stand-alone transitional third-grade classroom or be promoted to the third grade while being provided targeted transitional intervention instruction in pull-out sessions. Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, it requires each third-grade student to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to third grade.

The measure allows such demonstration based on performance on the screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education or the statewide third grade English Language Arts assessment. A third-grade student who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to the fourth grade is to be given the screening instrument no fewer than two weeks prior to the start of the next school year to demonstrate grade-level proficiency, and if the student does so, he or she may be promoted to fourth grade. If the student fails to meet grade-level targets, he or she is to be retained in the third grade. It allows a third-grade student subject to retention to be promoted to the fourth grade only if the student has demonstrated growth in reading proficiency for two consecutive years based on a metric determined by the State Department of Education, in conjunction with the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. The bill states that if a third-grade student subject to retention transfers, the retention requirement cannot be altered by the receiving school. The measure allows the State Board of Education to use any gifts, grants, devises, and donations from any public or private source, as well as legislatively appropriated funds, to implement the Strong Readers Act. It also requires the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability to audit approved teacher education programs to ensure compliance with science of reading requirements. It directs the

Commission to place the accreditation of a non-compliant program on probationary status and to provide guidance for exiting probationary status.

Prepared by: Kalen Taylor