

**From:** Johnson, John W. DPI  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2024 1:13 PM  
**Subject:** Update on Act 20 Reading Legislation

Dear District Administrators,

I hope all of you are having a great start to the new year, and that your students, staff, and families are safe as many of us face this cold snap!

I'd like to take this opportunity to share a special update on Act 20, Wisconsin's reading legislation. This legislation will have significant impacts on reading instruction, while providing supports to those districts with the greatest early literacy needs.

### **Where to Find Information**

You can find answers to common questions about what is required from districts at this site <https://dpi.wi.gov/wi-reads/act-20-faq>. You can email questions or requests for support directly to [early.reading@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:early.reading@dpi.wi.gov); this inbox is monitored by multiple Department of Public Instruction (DPI) staff members. We also encourage you to reach out to your local Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) literacy consultants who regularly collaborate with DPI on all things Act 20 and your own district reading specialist.

### **Professional Development Requirement and ESSER III Motion 57 Funds**

K-3 educators and administrators must participate in a reading training that meets specific criteria by July 1, 2025. You may use funds granted through Motion 57 (this is known as the LETRS grant) to meet this requirement. As a reminder, DPI is currently asking districts to indicate whether they would accept additional Motion 57 LETRS grant funds to be used for an eligible reading training. The deadline for indicating you're interested is coming up fast – February 16. Districts make this selection in WISEgrants.

Any educators or administrators who have previously participated in a reading training that meets the criteria found in Act 20 do NOT need to participate in another reading training.

### **Early Literacy Curriculum Council, DPI's Recommended List of Early Literacy Curricula, and Partial Reimbursement Grants**

The council is actively reviewing vendor submissions of early literacy curricula. They have created a rubric to review instructional materials focused on the nine components of science-based early literacy instruction as outlined in Act 20. You can see the rubric that they are using at <https://dpi.wi.gov/wi-reads/information-vendors-and-publishers>. The council is focusing only on instructional materials that include all nine components of science-based early literacy instruction, which generally means core curricula. They have set a goal for themselves of sharing their initial recommended list with DPI by the first week of February. DPI must then share the list with the state Joint Committee on Finance and await their review. Once the review period has passed, DPI will publish the initial list of recommended early literacy curricula.

LEAs can indicate that they plan to purchase instructional materials from the recommended list and be eligible for a partial reimbursement grant once the list is published.

Note that Act 20 states that the maximum amount a district may receive is 50 percent of the purchase price, and that amount must be prorated based on the number of districts that apply and the amount of funding available. Districts will need to purchase the instructional materials and submit evidence to DPI of their purchase to eventually receive the partial reimbursement funds. To ensure that all interested districts can apply for and receive these grants, DPI may decide to establish a deadline of up to a year to apply for these grants. DPI is still making decisions about how to approach this with district needs and deadlines in mind.

Just a reminder that there is no requirement for a district to adopt instructional materials from the recommended list.

### **Required Reading Readiness Screener for 4K – Grade 3 Learners**

Act 20 states that there will be one single reading readiness screener for all learners in 4K through grade 3; districts will not have the option to select and implement their own reading readiness screener. DPI is currently working with the Department of Administration to procure this screener. We know that those vendors that currently provide this screener to Wisconsin districts plan to bid to be the single statewide screener. Districts can be proactive by setting aside time in district calendars for training on this screener at the beginning of next school year. DPI plans to require the vendor to provide training on administering the screener, as well as interpreting and applying results. At this time, we are imagining virtual or hybrid training options that include prerecorded trainings that districts can access on their own local calendars.

### **Resources Under Development**

DPI is currently working with a small group of Wisconsin Association of Supervision and Curriculum and Development representatives, district leaders, and CESA representatives to finalize a crosswalk tool that districts can use to evaluate their early literacy instructional materials and practices against the components of science-based early literacy instruction as outlined in Act 20. Again, we encourage you to work with your district reading specialist and local CESA literacy consultants to engage in this local work.

The State Superintendent's Reading Advisory Council is currently working on creating a template for a local reading remediation plan and personal reading plans. Each district is required to articulate and post their local reading remediation plan. Each district must develop and implement a personal reading plan for each learner, scoring below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on the reading readiness screener. Districts should approach these requirements from a systems view and an equitable multi-level system of support framework. DPI is also planning to develop templates for the required family communications, including guidance to accompany the required information about Special Education referrals and characteristics of dyslexia.

DPI recently made plans with Association of Wisconsin School Administrators to develop resources and guidance to support those schools that may have significant numbers of learners scoring below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on the reading readiness screener. Expect to hear more about this in the future.

In the next year, DPI plans to begin collaborating with partner organizations to develop a model promotion policy that districts can consider to meet the July 1, 2025 deadline of adopting a policy to promote learners from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **DPI is Hiring**

DPI is now accepting applications for the director of the Wisconsin Reading Center, a position created by Act 20. The individual in this position will support implementation of Act 20, including the roll-out of the statewide reading readiness screener, implementation of the statewide early literacy coaching program, and implementation of the partial reimbursement curriculum grants. Details about this position and how to apply can be found at <https://dpi.wi.gov/wi-reads>.

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