



General Assembly
January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6845

LCO No. 5199



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

***AN ACT ESTABLISHING A STATE-WIDE BOOK GIFTING PROGRAM
AND HOME READING GRANT PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Eligible children" means each child from birth until, and
3 including, such child's fifth birthday who resides in the state; and
- 4 (2) "Local book gifting program" means a program operated by a
5 nonprofit organization in the state that enrolls eligible children within
6 such organization's surrounding region to provide such children with
7 age-appropriate books on a monthly basis with the support of an
8 umbrella organization that operates an imagination library program,
9 such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- 10 (b) There is established a state-wide book gifting program for
11 children, to be administered by the State Librarian, for the purpose of
12 promoting the development of local book gifting programs throughout
13 the state. The State Librarian shall partner with a nonprofit organization
14 in the state to implement the state-wide book gifting program. Such

15 nonprofit organization shall, at a minimum, fulfill the following duties:

16 (1) Promote the state-wide development of local book gifting
17 programs in various regions of the state;

18 (2) Support local book gifting programs to increase the enrollment of
19 eligible children;

20 (3) Develop, promote and coordinate a public awareness campaign
21 to make (A) donors aware of opportunities to donate to the state-wide
22 and local book gifting programs, and (B) state residents aware of
23 opportunities to enroll eligible children in local book gifting programs;

24 (4) Solicit donations, gifts and other funding for the state-wide book
25 gifting program;

26 (5) Administer a contribution of any funds raised through or
27 appropriated to the state-wide book gifting program to any local book
28 gifting program that is unable to fully fund such local program for all
29 enrolled children;

30 (6) Coordinate and communicate with each local book gifting
31 program concerning enrollment statistics and any recommendations for
32 improvement of the state-wide book gifting program; and

33 (7) Report to the State Librarian concerning the status of and
34 improvements to the state-wide book gifting program at least annually.

35 (c) Not later than January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the State
36 Librarian shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of
37 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of
38 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
39 education concerning the state-wide book gifting program. Such report
40 shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the number of local book
41 gifting programs in the state, (2) the percentage of eligible children in
42 the state enrolled in such programs, (3) the amount of funds raised for
43 the state-wide book gifting program, (4) the amount of any unmet need
44 for funds by the local book gifting programs, and (5) any recommended

45 improvements to the state-wide book gifting program.

46 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) As used in this section:

47 (1) "Participating student" means a student in grades kindergarten to
48 five, inclusive, who enrolls in a home reading program; and

49 (2) "Home reading program" means a program established by a local
50 or regional board of education that mails one age-appropriate book a
51 week to a participating student in the school district for at least six
52 weeks, but not more than nine weeks.

53 (b) There is established a home reading grant program, to be
54 administered by the Department of Education, for the purpose of
55 addressing the literacy gap among students in grades kindergarten to
56 five, inclusive. The department shall provide matching grants to any
57 local or regional board of education that establishes a home reading
58 program in an amount that is not less than half of the cost of providing
59 such program, but not exceeding fifty dollars for each participating
60 student each school year. The department shall prioritize school districts
61 serving economically disadvantaged families when awarding grants
62 under the home reading grant program. To be eligible for a matching
63 grant, a home reading program shall, at a minimum, meet the following
64 requirements:

65 (1) Operates through a nonprofit organization in the state that is
66 capable of raising sufficient funds for the district portion of the
67 operational costs of the program;

68 (2) Incorporates not less than weekly communication with the
69 parents of each participating student through a phone call, text or
70 notification through a mobile application concerning such student's
71 progress in the program;

72 (3) Measures the progress of each participating student through an
73 online portal with exercises designed to evaluate reading
74 comprehension and fluency; and

75 (4) Collects and distributes disaggregated data concerning the
76 program, including, but not limited to, the level of parental engagement,
77 the number of books read and relevant demographic data.

78 (c) Not later than January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the
79 Department of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the
80 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
81 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
82 relating to education concerning the home reading grant program. Such
83 report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the number of home
84 reading programs in the state, (2) the amount of funds raised by each
85 nonprofit organization operating a home reading program, (4) the level
86 and rate of any progress made by participating students, and (5) any
87 recommended improvements to the home reading grant program.
88

89 Sec. 3. (Effective July 1, 2023) The sum of five hundred thousand
90 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Education from the federal
91 funds designated for the state pursuant to the provisions of Section 602
92 of Subtitle M of Title IX of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, P.L.
93 117-2, as amended from time to time, for the fiscal year ending June 30,
94 2024, for the home reading grant program established pursuant to
95 section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2023	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2023	New section
Sec. 3	July 1, 2023	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To establish a (1) state-wide book gifting program for children for the purpose of providing age-appropriate books to children in the state each month from birth until such children's fifth birthday, and (2) home reading grant program for the purpose of awarding state matching funds to any school district that provides age-appropriate books to children in grades kindergarten to five, inclusive.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]