

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1274

H. P. 1026

House of Representatives, March 24, 1977

On motion of Mrs. Mitchell of Vassalboro, referred to the Committee on Education. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Palmer of Nobleboro.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

AN ACT to Provide Regional Reading Consultants under the
Department of Educational and Cultural Services.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Sec. 1. 20 MRSA § 102, sub-§ 18 is enacted to read:

18. Regional reading consultants. To carry out the following provisions relating to regional reading consultants.

A. Reading consultants. Nine certified reading consultants assigned to the Division of Curriculum, shall be employed by the Department of Educational and Cultural Services. These shall be unclassified personnel. One consultant shall be assigned to each of 9 regions as determined by the commissioner.

B. Duties of reading consultants. The reading consultants shall work with teachers in the middle grades, that is, grades 4 to 6, to:

- (1) Improve the teacher's ability to teach reading skills to all students, including handicapped students, in content area subjects;
- (2) Assist teachers in the selection of appropriate techniques and materials to accommodate a wide range of student abilities in the regular classroom; and
- (3) Assist in the use of a management system to monitor the mastery of the student's reading skills.

C. Training of reading consultants. The Department of Educational and Cultural Services shall conduct training sessions for the reading con-

sultants upon their employment in order to prepare them for their assignments.

Sec. 2. Training of classroom teachers during 1978. The Department of Educational and Cultural Services will conduct workshop sessions for classroom teachers of middle grade students during the summer of 1978. Teachers attending these workshops will serve as resource people in their schools during the following academic year.

Sec. 3. Appropriation. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Educational and Cultural Services the sum of \$350,000 for fiscal years 1977-78 and 1978-79 to be used to carry out the purposes of this Act. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1977-78	1978-79
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES		
DEPARTMENT OF		
Personnel	(9) \$144,000	(9) \$144,000
Capital	3,000	3,000
ALL OTHER	28,000	28,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	\$175,000	\$175,000

STATEMENT OF FACT

Reading is a basic skill, and public schools have been traditionally responsible for the teaching of reading. Reading instruction has been an important part in the educational program in the early grades K-3. Federal funding programs, like Title I, have concentrated their financial support in early grades. In the middle grades 4-6, the teaching program emphasizes content areas; such as, social studies, basic sciences and English. Students in these grades may be grouped according to their abilities for reading instruction; but, for content area subjects, students are forced to use textbooks of a single grade level. An additional problem is that preservice teacher education programs in the past have not provided teachers with techniques and materials for teaching reading skills through content area subjects.

Available research suggests that large numbers of students in grades 4-6 do not, in fact, have the basic reading skills required to master content area subject matter. SRA achievement growth norms for reading achievement in Maine clearly show that Maine students are above the national norm in grades 1-3. By grades 4, 5 and 6, student achievement drops below the national average in reading achievement. While Maine assessment of educational progress reading achievement results of 17-year olds continue to cluster close to the national reading achievement norm, these results clearly identify large numbers of Maine students who have reading achievement far below the national average.

Employing reading specialists in the middle grades is designed to reverse the trend of decreasing reading achievement scores in grades 4 and 5. We believe that intervention at these grade levels will reverse a pattern of failure among students during later grade levels.

On March 1, 1976, Governor Longely proclaimed the month of April as "Right to Read Month" by recognizing that literacy has a personal and social value for the citizens of Maine. The State Board of Education, in December, 1976, in an official resolution, recognized the importance of literacy as a priority for all educational agency programs.

PROPOSED BUDGET BREAKDOWN:

Fiscal Year 1978		Fiscal Year 1979	
Salaries:	\$144,000.00	Salaries:	\$144,000.00
Travel:	13,500.00	Travel:	13,500.00
Rent & Office Supplies:	10,800.00	Rent & Office Supplies:	10,800.00
Workshop/Training Sessions:	2,000.00	Workshop/Training Sessions:	2,000.00
Educational Materials & Supplies:	4,700.00	Educational Materials & Supplies:	4,700.00