



State Fiscal Note for Bill Number: 2023-H-5389

Date of State Budget Office Approval: Thursday, April 20, 2023

Date Requested: Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Date Due: Saturday, April 8, 2023

<i>Impact on Expenditures</i>		<i>Impact on Revenues</i>
FY 2023	N/A	FY 2023
FY 2024	\$38,163,780	FY 2024
FY 2025	\$38,667,541	FY 2025

*Explanation by State
Budget Office:*

This bill would establish state support for LEAs to hire site-based reading and mathematics specialists, as defined by the Rhode Island Teacher certification regulations. LEAs would receive direct state support for a period of three years after the date the specialist was hired. After accounting for any federal funds or federal, state, or local grants received toward the costs associated with such a position, the state shall reimburse LEAs an amount equal to one half (1/2) the cost of salaries and benefits that remain the responsibility of the LEA. To receive state reimbursement, LEAs of up to five hundred (500) students would be required to hire one reading and one mathematics specialist. Schools with enrollments between five hundred and one (501) and one thousand (1,000) would be required to hire two reading and two mathematics specialists, and schools with enrollments greater than one thousand (1,000) would be required to hire three mathematics and reading specialists. Schools or LEAs that eliminate existing reading and mathematics specialist positions and create new positions under this provision would not be eligible for reimbursement. Schools within the same LEA may also share reading and mathematics specialists provided that doing so would continue to uphold the requirements for the ratios stated above.

*Comments on
Sources of Funds:*

The state share for the salaries of reading and mathematics specialists under this bill would be financed through general revenue. With an effective date of July 1, 2023, there is no estimated fiscal impact until FY 2024.

*Summary of Facts
and Assumptions:*

The Rhode Island Requirements for Full Certification of a Reading Specialist/Consultant position require: (3) years of teaching experience; An advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution; Completion of a 300-hour internship; Demonstration of meeting content competencies as prescribed by the International Reading Association (IRA); and meeting all pedagogy and subject matter testing requirements for the reading certification area.

Similarly, the Rhode Island Requirements for Full Certification of a Mathematics Specialist/Consultant position require: (3) years of teaching experience; An advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution; Completion of a 300-hour internship; and demonstration of meeting content competencies as prescribed by the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE) for an Elementary Specialist.

RIDE's budget request for the 2024 Fiscal Year included a request for \$133,907 to finance the position of a Multilingual Learner (MLL) Specialist. This position was described as supporting specific training for school personnel and educators to better

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support this student population and improve achievement outcomes for this student population. The Rhode Island Certification Requirements for Full Certification of an English to Speakers of Other Languages Specialist/Consultant are almost similar to the requirements described above for Reading/Math Specialist roles. An MLL specialist must: Have three (3) year of teaching experience; Hold an advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution; and demonstrate meeting field competencies as prescribed by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Given the similarity of certification requirements for this position and the Reading/Math Specialist positions of this bill, the Budget Office assumes that the salary and benefit costs would be comparable. The Budget Office uses a benchmark of \$66,954 (\$133,907/2) to estimate the potential state share of the cost for a Reading/Math specialist position as outlined in this bill.

Using enrollment numbers as reported for each LEA on the RIDE website, the Budget Office estimated that a total of 460 math and 460 reading specialists, at most, would be needed to comply with the provisions of this bill. This assumes that all LEAs eligible to hire personnel under the stipulations of H-5389 would do so and hire all designated staff in a single fiscal year. Labor market conditions and hiring logistics may make it impractical for LEAs to recruit and hire all personnel within such a short timeline. In addition, given that only half of the salary and benefits cost is eligible for reimbursement by the state, and that it is not strictly necessary but instead voluntary to hire these specialist positions, some LEAs may choose not to recruit reading and mathematics specialists. The following estimates should therefore be considered as a maximum impact, assuming all specialists eligible to be hired according to the specifications of H-5389 will be hired.

According to data obtained from RIDE, there are currently 349 statewide FTEs for reading specialists and 1 FTE for a mathematics specialist. The number of new reading specialist positions that would be required across LEAs, following the provisions of this bill, is 111, and 459 newly required positions for mathematics specialists. Using the estimated salary costs above, the state share of $\frac{1}{2}$ salary and benefits for 107 reading specialist positions would be \$7,431,894. The state share of $\frac{1}{2}$ salary and benefits for 459 mathematics specialist positions would be \$30,731,886. The total yearly cost is estimated at \$38,163,780.

The estimates in this fiscal note do not consider any federal funds or federal, state or local grants that may exist and be used toward the cost of financing reading and math specialist positions. If eligible grants were to be used toward offsetting the cost of these positions, the state share of the cost would decrease accordingly.

*Summary of Fiscal
Impact:*

As stated above, this bill will impact school years beginning after July 1, 2023, thus FY 2023 will not be affected.

FY 2024: \$38,163,780

The estimate for FY 2025 uses the FY 2024 amount and applies an inflator of 1.32% to reflect the expected increase to education aid driven by student population growth and CPI.

FY 2025: \$38,667,541

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State of Rhode Island
**Budget
Office**
Department of Administration

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Budget Office Signature:

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