



2025-2026 General Assembly

SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.36: Foundational Mathematics Instruction and High Quality Instructional Materials

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 7.36

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Section 7.36 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) establishes various requirements for mathematics instruction, assessment, and intervention, in low-performing elementary and middle schools. Additionally, it requires the Office of Learning Research at the North Carolina Collaboratory (OLR) to develop a series of mathematics pilots.

Instruction: Low-performing schools must provide at least 60 minutes of mathematics instruction per day in kindergarten through eighth grade that is on or above grade level.

Mathematics Screening Assessments: Low-performing schools must administer a mathematics screening assessment adopted and provided by the State Board of Education (SBE) to students in kindergarten through eighth grade at least three times a year. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must develop and issue a request for proposals for the mathematics screening assessment that requires a vendor to do all of the following:

- Provide an assessment that is aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the requirements of this section.
- Provide an assessment that is valid and reliable.
- Provide teachers and administrators with access to progress monitoring tools to track student progress.
- Provide assessment results to teachers and parents no later than 15 calendar days after the assessment is administered.
- Identify students in need of intervention.
- Report results of assessments to DPI.

DPI must ensure that mathematics screening assessment data is used to meaningfully inform instruction by providing guidance and professional development.

DPI must select a vendor for the mathematics screening assessments by January 15, 2028. The SBE must make the assessments available to low-performing schools for use beginning with the 2028-2029 school year.

Mathematics Success Plans: Low-performing schools must provide a Mathematics Success Plan (MSP) to students who demonstrate substantial difficulty developing mathematics skills based on the mathematics screening assessments. The MSPs must identify (i) specific skill deficiencies, (ii) goals and benchmarks for growth, (iii) how progress will be monitored, (iv) interventions that will be used, and (v) any additional services appropriate to improving the student's mathematics skills.

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High-Quality Instructional Materials: OLR must identify vendors that (i) offer high-quality instructional materials in kindergarten through eighth grade mathematics, (ii) include intervention materials with the purchase of mathematics instructional materials, and (iii) provide professional development on the mathematics instructional materials. OLR must provide a list of these approved vendors to DPI by April 30, 2027. DPI must distribute the list to public school units by June 1, 2027.

Low-performing schools must include in MSPs a list of any high-quality instructional materials approved by OLR that were used in the implementation of the MSP. Low-performing schools must report to DPI on any high-quality instructional materials used for that year by June 15. DPI must aggregate the responses from the low-performing schools and provide the list of high-quality instructional materials to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by August 15 of each year.

Mathematics Pilots: OLR must develop a series of mathematics pilots for students of all grade levels. OLR must compare the results of the pilots, including existing high-intensity tutoring programs, to evaluate the efficacy of the various pilots and programs. For the pilots, at a minimum, OLR must contract with the following vendors:

- Accelerate Learning, Inc.
- Carnegie Learning, Inc.
- Curriculum Associates, LLC.
- Zearn.

Additionally, OLR must consider, but is not required to include, the following vendors:

- Amplify Education, Inc.
- MIND Education.
- Other vendors identified as worthy of inclusion.

OLR must develop guidelines for the pilots and conduct as many different pilots as OLR deems feasible.

Evaluation: The North Carolina Collaboratory must evaluate the effects of the requirements of this section on instructional quality, teacher practice, and student outcomes. The Collaboratory must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the results of the evaluation by December 15, 2031.

This section became effective July 1, 2026. The requirements for low-performing schools apply beginning with the 2028-2029 school year.