

1 State of Arkansas
2 92nd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2019
4

A Bill

SENATE BILL 153

5 By: Senators J. English, Bledsoe, B. Davis, Irvin
6 By: Representatives Barker, Bentley, Brown, Capp, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Dalby, Della Rosa,
7 Lundstrum, J. Mayberry, Petty, Rushing, Speaks, Vaught
8

For An Act To Be Entitled

10 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND
11 THE RIGHT TO READ ACT; TO REQUIRE THAT A PUBLIC
12 SCHOOL INCLUDE IN ITS ANNUAL SCHOOL-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT
13 PLAN A LITERACY PLAN; TO REQUIRE THAT THE CURRICULUM,
14 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND GRADUATE STUDIES
15 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND
16 OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BE IN
17 ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCIENCE OF READING; TO REQUIRE
18 THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CREATE AN APPROVED
19 LIST OF CURRICULUM PROGRAMS THAT ARE SUPPORTED BY THE
20 SCIENCE OF READING; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

23 TO REQUIRE SCHOOL-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT,
24 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CURRICULUM, AND
25 GRADUATE STUDIES PLANS TO BE IN
26 ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCIENCE OF READING.
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30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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32 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings.

33 The General Assembly finds that:

- 34 (1) The Right to Read Act, § 6-17-429, addresses the science of
35 reading for current educators and those in an undergraduate teaching program;
36 (2) If educators do not have an understanding of scientific



1 reading instruction, many students will not receive the reading instruction
 2 necessary to read at grade level;

3 (3) The percentage of Arkansas students in grade three (3) who
 4 were "ready" or "exceeding" in reading on the 2018 ACT Aspire test was
 5 thirty-eight percent (38%);

6 (4) Dyslexia programs in Arkansas should be aligned to
 7 structured literacy as outlined by the International Dyslexia Association;
 8 and

9 (5) Educators throughout the state are in the process of
 10 completing the appropriate professional development requirements with respect
 11 to the science of reading and structured literacy, but public school
 12 districts have not provided those teachers with the necessary materials and
 13 resources to implement the methods required by science of reading and
 14 structured literacy programs in their classrooms.

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 16 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2914(b), concerning the annual
 17 submission of school-level improvement plans, is amended to read as follows:

18 (b)(1)(A) Beginning on May 1, 2018, and by May 1 annually thereafter,
 19 a public school shall submit to its public school district a school-level
 20 improvement plan for approval by the public school district and public school
 21 district board of directors for implementation in the following school year.

22 (B)(i) A public school district and an open-enrollment
 23 public charter school shall include a literacy plan in the annual school-
 24 level improvement plan required under subdivision (b)(1)(A) of this section.

25 (ii) The literacy plan required under subdivision
 26 (b)(1)(B)(i) of this section shall include without limitation a curriculum
 27 program and a professional development program that are:

28 (a) Aligned with the literacy needs of the
 29 public school district; and

30 (b) Based on the science of reading as defined
 31 by § 6-17-429(k)(1).

32 (2) School-level improvement plans shall be posted on the public
 33 school district's website by August 1 of each year.

34
 35 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-17-429(c), concerning the professional
 36 development requirements under the Right to Read Act, is amended to read as

1 follows:

2 (c)(1) Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, a public school
3 district and an open-enrollment public charter school shall provide the
4 following professional development in scientific reading instruction:

5 (A) For teachers licensed at the elementary level in
6 kindergarten through grade six (K-6), teachers with a special education
7 license in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), and teachers licensed as
8 reading specialists in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), professional
9 development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining a proficiency
10 credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction; and

11 (B) For teachers licensed at a level other than the
12 elementary level in kindergarten through grade six (K-6), teachers with a
13 special education license in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), and
14 teachers licensed as reading specialists in kindergarten through grade twelve
15 (K-12), professional development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to
16 obtaining an awareness credential in knowledge and practices in scientific
17 reading instruction.

18 (2) Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, a public school or
19 open-enrollment public charter school that does not provide the professional
20 development under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall:

21 (A) Be placed in probationary status; and

22 (B) Provide notice to parents that the public school
23 district has not met the requirements of this section.

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25 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-429(e)-(g), concerning educator
26 preparation and professional development programs required under the Right to
27 Read Act, are amended to read as follows:

28 (e) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program,
29 graduate program, or alternative preparation program shall include in its
30 annual report to the Department of Education a description of the provider's
31 program to prepare educators to teach reading using scientific reading
32 instruction.

33 (f) By the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the department
34 shall identify and create an approved list of materials, resources, and
35 curriculum programs for public school districts and open-enrollment public
36 charter schools that are supported by the science of reading and based on

1 instruction that is explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic,
 2 including without limitation:

3 (1) Dyslexia programs that are evidence-based and:

4 (A) Aligned to structured literacy; or

5 (B) Grounded in the Orton-Gillingham methodology;

6 (2) Evidence-based reading intervention programs; and

7 (3) Evidence-based reading programs that are grounded in the
 8 science of reading.

9 (g)(1) By the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, any public
 10 school district and open-enrollment public charter school purchasing a
 11 curriculum program shall choose a curriculum program from the department's
 12 approved list of curriculum programs created under subsection (f) of this
 13 section.

14 (2) A public school district or open-enrollment public charter
 15 school that chooses to purchase a curriculum program that is not from the
 16 department's approved list of curriculum programs shall submit the following
 17 to the department for approval of the alternative curriculum program:

18 (A) A rationale for choosing the alternative curriculum
 19 program; and

20 (B) Evidence-based research regarding the alternative
 21 curriculum program.

22 (h) By the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, a public school
 23 district and an open-enrollment public charter school shall establish a
 24 professional development program as required by § 6-15-2914(b)(1)(B) that
 25 shall:

26 (1) Include without limitation instruction based on the science
 27 of reading; and

28 (2) Be provided on an annual basis after the professional
 29 development required under subdivision (c)(1) of this section is complete.

30 ~~(f)(i)(1)~~ (A) A public school district or an open-enrollment public
 31 charter school that employs an educator in violation of this section or that
 32 does not provide the professional development as required under this section
 33 shall be in violation of the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public
 34 Schools and School Districts and may be placed in probationary status by the
 35 department.

36 (B) A public school district or an open-enrollment public

1 charter school placed in probationary status under subdivision ~~(f)(1)(A)~~
2 (i)(1)(A) of this section shall send written notification to the parents of
3 the students in the public school district of the reason for being placed in
4 probationary status.

5 (2) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program,
6 graduate program, or alternative preparation program that does not comply
7 with the requirements of this section may be subject to penalties up to and
8 including having the provider's approval status revoked.

9 ~~(g)(j)(1)~~ The department ~~is vested with the authority to and~~ shall
10 enforce:

11 (1) Enforce this section; and

12 (2) ~~The department shall promulgate~~ Promulgate rules to
13 implement this section.

14 (k) As used in this section:

15 (1) "Science of reading" means the study of the relationship
16 between cognitive science and educational outcomes; and

17 (2) "Structured literacy" means an approach by which licensed
18 personnel teach reading in an explicit, systematic, cumulative, and
19 diagnostic manner.

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