

1 State of Arkansas
2 91st General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2017
4

As Engrossed: S3/14/17

A Bill

SENATE BILL 502

5 By: Senator Elliott
6

For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO CREATE THE RIGHT TO READ ACT; TO REQUIRE
9 LICENSED TEACHERS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL TO BE
10 PROFICIENT IN SCIENTIFIC READING INSTRUCTION; TO
11 REQUIRE ALL OTHER LICENSED TEACHERS TO HAVE A CURSORY
12 KNOWLEDGE OF SCIENTIFIC READING INSTRUCTION; AND FOR
13 OTHER PURPOSES.
14

Subtitle

16 TO CREATE THE RIGHT TO READ ACT.
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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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22 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 17, Subchapter 4, is amended
23 to add an additional section to read as follows:

24 6-17-429. Right to Read Act.

25 (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Right to Read
26 Act".

27 (b)(1)(A) No later than 2023, the following shall have proficient
28 knowledge and skills to teach reading consistent with the best practices of
29 scientific reading instruction:

30 (i) A person who completes a state-approved educator
31 preparation program; and

32 (ii) A person seeking teacher licensure by
33 reciprocity or by adding an endorsement.

34 (B) No later than 2023, a person who completes a state-
35 approved educator preparation program other than a teacher of elementary
36 education program shall demonstrate an awareness of the best practices of



1 scientific reading instruction.

2 (2) Beginning no later than the 2022-2023 school year, each
3 state-approved educator preparation program shall post on its website
4 information describing its program to prepare teachers to teach reading using
5 scientific reading instruction aligned with but not limited to the content
6 measured by the stand-alone reading assessment adopted by the State Board of
7 Education under § 6-17-402.

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

11 (A) For teachers licensed at the elementary level,
12 professional development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining
13 a proficiency credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading
14 instruction; and

15 (B) For teachers licensed at a level other than the
16 elementary level, professional development for one (1) of the prescribed
17 pathways to obtaining an awareness credential in knowledge and practices in
18 scientific reading instruction.

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

22 (A) Be placed in probationary status; and

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

25 (d)(1) By the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year:

26 (A) All teachers employed in a teaching position that
27 requires an elementary education (K-6) license or special education (K-12)
28 license shall demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of
29 scientific reading instruction; and

30 (B) All other teachers shall demonstrate awareness in
31 knowledge and practices of the scientific reading instruction.

32 (2) All teachers who begin employment in the 2021-2022 school
33 year and each school year thereafter shall demonstrate proficiency or
34 awareness in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction as is
35 applicable to their teaching position by completing the prescribed
36 proficiency or awareness in knowledge and practices of the scientific reading

1 instruction credential either:

2 (A) As a condition of licensure; or

3 (B) Within one (1) year if the teacher is:

4 (i) Already licensed; or

5 (ii) Employed under a waiver from licensure.

6 (e) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program shall
7 include in its annual report to the Department of Education a description of
8 the provider's program to prepare educators to teach reading using scientific
9 reading instruction.

10 (f)(1)(A) A public school district that employs an educator in
11 violation of this section or that does not provide the professional
12 development as required under this section shall be in violation of the
13 Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and Schools Districts
14 and may be placed in probationary status by the department.

15 (B) A public school district placed in probationary status
16 under subdivision (f)(1)(A) of this section shall send written notification
17 to the parents of the students in the public school district of the reason
18 for being placed in probationary status.

19 (2) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program
20 that does not comply with the requirements of this section may be subject to
21 penalties up to and including having the provider's approval status revoked.

22 (g)(1) The department is vested with the authority to and shall
23 enforce this section.

24 (2) The department shall promulgate rules to implement this
25 section.

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27 /s/Elliott
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