

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

A Bill

SENATE BILL 502

4
5 By: Senator Elliott

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

20 (A) Be placed in probationary status; and

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

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

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

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

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

36 (A) As a condition of licensure; or

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

2 (i) Already licensed; or

3 (ii) Employed under a waiver from licensure.

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

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

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

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

20 (g) The department shall promulgate rules to implement this section.

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