

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2019

A Bill

SENATE BILL 677

By: Senator Elliott

By: Representative Scott

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES, THE SCIENCE OF READING, AND DYSLEXIA SCREENING AND INTERVENTION SERVICES; TO REQUIRE A YOUTH NEWLY COMMITTED TO THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES TO UNDERGO A READING ASSESSMENT AND DYSLEXIA SCREENING DURING THE INTAKE PROCESS; TO REQUIRE THAT YOUTHS WHO READ BELOW THE REQUIRED PROFICIENCY LEVEL BE PROVIDED WITH APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION SERVICES; TO REQUIRE THAT YOUTHS CURRENTLY COMMITTED TO THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES RECEIVE INFORMATION REGARDING DYSLEXIA AND DYSLEXIA INTERVENTION SERVICES; TO REQUIRE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL WHO TEACHES IN THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES' EDUCATION SYSTEM DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY AND AWARENESS OF THE BEST PRACTICES OF SCIENTIFIC READING INSTRUCTION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO REQUIRE THAT YOUTHS UNDERGO READING ASSESSMENTS AND DYSLEXIA SCREENINGS; TO REQUIRE READING AND DYSLEXIA SERVICES; AND TO REQUIRE THAT DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES' TEACHERS KNOW BEST PRACTICES OF SCIENTIFIC READING INSTRUCTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:



SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings.The General Assembly finds that:

(1) The Division of Youth Services is part of the organizational structure of the Department of Human Services and offers a number of programs for juveniles;

(2) Among the programs and services offered by the division is an education system, and one (1) of the goals of the education system of the division is to ensure significant academic progress for each juvenile who is served by the division;

(3) The mission of the education system of the division is to provide, in a manner consistent with the administration of public education in this state and throughout the country, a system of high quality education programs that address the needs of juveniles who come in contact with the juvenile justice system;

(4) To accomplish the mission of the division, the division:

(A) Identifies and serves each juvenile with a disability in the division;

(B) Improves the individual academic achievement of each juvenile in the education system of the division;

(C) Provides an opportunity for progress toward state and local graduation requirements for each high-school-age juvenile in the education system of the division; and

(D) Provides an opportunity for postsecondary education preparation for each juvenile who enters with or achieves graduate status while in the education system of the division;

(5) The goal of the education system of the division is to coordinate with and not match the public school system in this state, and by offering courses in the core subject areas that meet state standards and graduation requirements, the division offers a consistent opportunity for all juveniles who are involved with the division to make adequate progress towards graduation; and

(6) Reading proficiency is the foundation for achieving the goal of the education system of the division and any other education system in this state.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 9, Chapter 31, is amended to add an

additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 5 – Science of Reading

9-31-501. Dyslexia screening – Intervention services.

(a) Within thirty (30) calendar days, excluding holidays, of being committed to the Division of Youth Services, a juvenile shall have his or her reading proficiency level assessed and a dyslexia screening shall be delivered with fidelity, as defined in § 6-41-602.

(b) If a reading assessment or dyslexia screening under subsection (a) of this section indicates that an individual is reading below the level of proficiency required to be a high-functioning reader, the individual shall be provided:

(1) Evidence-based reading intervention based on the science of reading; and

(2) Dyslexia intervention that is evidence-based according to the Department of Education’s compilation of appropriate intervention programs under Acts 2019, No. 83.

(c) An intervention plan provided for an individual who is reading below the level of proficiency required to be a high-functioning reader under subsection (b) of this section shall be administered with fidelity, as defined in § 6-41-602.

(d) Juveniles currently committed to the division shall be:

(1) Provided with information that explains what dyslexia is in common and easily understandable language;

(2) Offered and encouraged to submit to dyslexia screening; and

(3) Provided with dyslexia intervention with fidelity, as defined in § 6-41-602, in the same manner as required for newly committed juveniles under subsection (b) of this section.

9-31-502. Requirements for educators – Science of reading.

(a) An individual who teaches nonreaders and juveniles reading at a sixth-grade level or below in the education system of the Division of Youth Services shall:

(1) Have and demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills to teach reading consistent with the best practices of scientific reading instruction as required under the Right to Read Act, § 6-17-429; and

(2) Administer reading instruction with fidelity, as defined in § 6-41-602.

(b) An individual who teaches juveniles reading at a seventh-grade level or above in the education system of the division shall:

(1) Have and demonstrate awareness of the best practices of scientific reading instruction as required under the Right to Read Act, § 6-17-429; and

(2) Administer reading instruction with fidelity, as defined in § 6-41-602.

9-31-503. Rulemaking authority.

The Division of Youth Services:

(1)(A) Shall promulgate rules for implementing this subchapter.

(B) When adopting the initial rules to implement this subchapter, the final rule shall be filed with the Secretary of State for adoption under § 25-15-204(f):

(i) On or before January 1, 2020; or

(ii) If approval under § 10-3-309 has not occurred by January 1, 2020, as soon as practicable after approval under § 10-3-309.

(C) The division shall file the proposed rule with the Legislative Council under § 10-3-309(c) sufficiently in advance of January 1, 2020, so that the Legislative Council may consider the rule for approval before January 1, 2020; and

(2) May consult with the Department of Education and make use of Department of Education resources in order to implement this subchapter.

APPROVED: 4/17/19