

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
91st General Assembly
Regular Session, 2017

As Engrossed: S3/14/17
A Bill

SENATE BILL 502

By: Senator Elliott

For An Act To Be Entitled

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

Subtitle

TO CREATE THE RIGHT TO READ ACT.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 17, Subchapter 4, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-17-429. Right to Read Act.

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

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

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

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

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



scientific reading instruction.

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

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

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

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

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

(A) Be placed in probationary status; and

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

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

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

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

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

instruction credential either:

(A) As a condition of licensure; or

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

(i) Already licensed; or

(ii) Employed under a waiver from licensure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

/s/Elliott