

Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523

At-A-Glance

Overview of the Act:

- Requires all students in Grade 3 to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade beginning with the 2021-2022 school year;
- Implements steps to improve the reading proficiency of public-school kindergarten – Grade 3 students that ensures those students are able to read at or above grade-level by end of third grade;
- Develops dyslexia therapist certification endorsement by December 31, 2019;
- Requires public college and university teacher preparation programs to offer dyslexia therapy teacher preparation courses approved by IMSLE Council or IDA;
- Requires all teacher preparation programs authorized to prepare students for state licensure to seek accreditation by council or association for the accreditation of educator prep by December 31, 2020; and
- Requires State Superintendent to convene the Literacy Task Force and the Alabama Committee on Grade-Level Reading.

Key Terms Identified in the Act:

- **Literacy Terms** defined for the purpose of the act, including alphabetic principle, comprehension, decoding, dyslexia, encoding, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, phonological awareness, and vocabulary
- **Reading Intervention Program**
 - Provide explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential, and cumulative in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable;
 - Provide daily targeted small group reading interventions based on student need in phonological awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, sight words, vocabulary, or comprehension; and
 - Implemented during regular school hours.
- **Literacy Task Force** Convened by State Superintendent within 3 months after effective date of literacy act and meets a minimum of 2 times a year to provide recommendations on various literacy initiatives
- **Alabama Committee on Grade Level Reading** Requires the revision of 2011 Alabama Action Plan for Literacy through Grade 12 by June 20, 2020, in collaboration with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading group

Literacy Task Force Requirements Defined by the Act:

- Provides recommendations for the following: **1)** Comprehensive core reading and intervention programs; **2)** State continuum of teacher development for approved science of reading; **3)** Annual list of vetted and approved assessments which are valid and reliable reading screening, formative, and diagnostic assessment systems for selection and use by local education agencies; and **4)** Continued ARI funding based on measurable performance growth

Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523

At-A-Glance

- Works with the State Superintendent of Education on the following: **1)** Establish annual reading growth and proficiency targets; **2)** Determine whether effective summer reading camps can be held in conjunction or in partnerships with existing summer programs or community-based summer programs; and **3)** Establish criteria for minimum essential reading standards and the student reading portfolios and a definition of what constitutes mastery of all third-grade state reading standards
- Determines the number of students who scored deficient in schools not performing at the lowest 5% to assist State Superintendent of Education in distributing excess ASAP funds
- Work with state public teacher preparation programs and regional professional development inservice centers in establishing a state continuum of teacher development for approved science of reading that will reflect levels of literacy teacher development from preservice, reading specialist, to instructional leadership

State Superintendent of Education Requirements Defined by the Act:

- Monitors implementation and effectiveness of the ARI regional specialist and local reading specialist model and maintains communication among the district, school administration, and ARI state administrative staff;
- Certifies that each ARI regional literacy specialist or local reading specialist satisfies the minimum qualifications provided by the Act;
- Develops an evidence-based accountability reporting system for ARI;
- Submits a report to the Governor, et al by 12/31 annually on the status of teacher professional learning, student growth proficiency against grade level standards in reading;
- Provides a list of vetted and approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs with the advice of the task force;
- Distributes funds allocated as set out in the Act;
- Designates effective community-based summer programs;
- Provides guidelines for the administration and oversee Alabama Summer Achievement Program (ASAP)
- Approves professional learning;
- Vets and approves evidence-based reading strategies or programs and reading assessment;
- Provides guidelines for options for students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills starting with the 2021-2022 school year;
- Approves alternative standardized reading assessment;
- Establishes criteria for student reading portfolios and defines what constitutes mastery of all third-grade reading standards;
- Establishes uniform format for annual LEA data reporting and compiles annually by Dec. 1;
- Establishes annual reading growth and proficiency targets based on the annual progress reports;
- Provides universities annually accreditation standards for educator prep; and
- Provides preservice and in-service elementary teachers with professional learning activities.

Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523

At-A-Glance

LEA Requirements under the Act:

- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the ARI regional literacy specialist and local reading specialist model;
- Maintain communication among the district, school administration, and ARI state administrative staff throughout the academic year;
- Offer a comprehensive core reading program to all students based on science of reading which develops foundational reading skill;
- Prohibit use of curriculum that has no instructional time included;
- Administer reading assessments, reading intervention, comprehensive reading instruction, and dyslexic specific intervention consistent with the requirements of the Act;
- Provide appropriate reading intervention program to address specific deficiencies for **EACH** Grades K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency, or characteristics of dyslexia,
- Evaluate students after each grading period and provide additional tutorial support to any student determined to have a reading deficiency
- Provide dyslexia-specific intervention to students who have characteristics of dyslexia and all struggling readers
- Assist schools in providing written notification to the parent of any student who is retained in third grade for not achieving the reading level required for promotion;
- Annually, before September 30, report in writing to the State Superintendent all data required by Act
- Provide summer reading camps to **ALL** Grade K-3 students identified with reading deficiency, staffed with highly effective reading teachers, include a minimum of 70 hours in scientifically-based reading instruction and intervention
- Review student reading improvement plans for all incoming third grade students identified with reading deficiency and provide intensive interventions; frequent progress monitoring; before/after-school or both supplemental evidence-based reading intervention delivered by teacher or tutor with specialized reading training;
- Provide a read-at-home plan; and
- Provide intensive acceleration for all retained students.

ARI Local Reading Specialist Requirements Defined by the Act:

- **Minimum Professional Qualifications** **1)** Alabama Professional Educator Certificate, **2)** BS degree and advanced coursework or PD in science of reading; **3)** Minimum of 2 years' experience as successful elementary or literacy teacher; **4)** Knowledge of scientifically-based reading research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis; and **5)** Strong knowledge-base in the science of learning how to read and science of early childhood education
- **Duties and Responsibilities** **1)** Collaboration with principal to create strategic plan for coaching; **2)** Facilitating schoolwide PD and study groups; **3)** Modeling effective reading

Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523

At-A-Glance

instructional strategies for teachers; **4)** Daily coaching and mentoring for teachers; **5)** Facilitating data analysis discussions and support teachers by using data to differentiate instruction; **6)** Fostering multiple areas of teacher PD, including exceptional student education and content area knowledge; **7)** Prioritizing time for teachers, activities, and roles that have GREATEST IMPACT on student reading achievement; **8)** Monitoring reading progress of ALL students minimum of 3 times a year and make recommendations for adjustment of instruction based on individual student needs; and **9)** Provide intensive, targeted PD for elementary school teachers at one school

- **Duties not allowable** Include administrative functions such as **1)** evaluator, **2)** substitute teacher, **3)** assessment coordinator, or **4)** school administrator

ARI Regional Literacy Specialist Requirements Defined by the Act:

- Provide support to LEAs through gradual release model
- Provide intensive support for elementary schools among lowest performing 5% of elementary schools until that school has improved core instruction to the extent the school is no longer among the lowest 5%
- Serves as resource for PD throughout the school to improve literacy instruction and student achievement
- Serves primarily one elementary school (if among lowest 5%) or multiple elementary schools
- Provides ongoing PD for teachers in analyzing students' reading data to impact instruction, administering and analyzing instructional assessments, differentiating instruction and intensive intervention, monitoring reading progress of all student's minimum of 3 times a year, and make instruction adjustment recommendations according to specific student needs
- Supports schools through monthly or quarterly onsite visits based on limited support definitions

Annual LEA Reporting Requirements Defined by the Act:

Annually, on or before September 30, each LEA shall report in writing to the State Superintendent of Education the following information on the previous school year by grade, number, and percentage of the following: **1)** All Grade K-3 students identified with reading deficiency on an SDE approved reading assessment; **2)** All Grade K-3 students screened for dyslexia characteristics; **3)** Students identified as demonstrating the characteristics of dyslexia and receiving dyslexia specific intervention and name of dyslexia-specific intervention being provided; **4)** All Grade K-3 students performing on grade level or above on SDE reading assessment; **5)** Students starting Grade 3 with a reading deficiency, including the specific area of reading deficiency; **6)** Grade 3 students who started 3rd grade with reading deficiency but completed 3rd grade on grade level as determined by 3rd grade state standardized assessment in reading; **7)** Eligible Grade K-3 students who attended ASAP or other mandatory summer reading program; **8)** Pre and post ASAP reading assessment scores or other mandatory summer camp data; **9)** Students retained in grades K – 3; **10)** Grade 3 students who demonstrated sufficient reading skills for promotion on the alternative reading assessment; **11)** Grade 3 students promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause; **12)** In succeeding years, the performance of students promoted with

Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523

At-A-Glance

good cause on the state standardized assessment in reading; **13)** By school, the number of teachers who are participating in or have completed PD in science of reading and who hold advanced certification in those areas; and **14)** By school the number of teachers who have completed training in dyslexia awareness, multisensory strategies, and satisfy the definition of a dyslexia interventionist as defined by SBE rules.

Ongoing Collaborative Efforts to Implement the Act:

- Literacy Task Force work by January 2020 includes some of the following:
 - Recommendations for K-3 formative assessments (as defined in the Act and the ETF)
 - Recommendations for core reading instruction and interventions
 - Professional learning/science of reading
- Clarification/Definition of Literacy Act Terminology or References
 - Annual reading growth
 - Proficiency targets
 - On-grade level
 - Mastery of third grade minimum essential state reading standards
 - Student's progress towards grade-level reading
 - Any child with a reading deficiency
 - Lowest achievement level
 - Alternative standardized reading assessment
 - Student reading portfolio
 - Science of reading
- Planning for before/after school and summer program support, funding, etc.
- LEA Reporting Requirements
- Comprehensive State Reporting Requirements
- Additional Regional Literacy Specialists
- Postsecondary collaboration for dyslexia therapist certification
- Ongoing development of resources and supports
- Other